

“FAITH UNDER PRESSURE”
STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF DANIEL
Daniel 6:1-28
“Faith that Shut the Mouths of Lions”

Introduction: Amazing stories of faith and miracles usually occur in the context of crisis, suffering, or persecution. The people of God were in a long season of chastisement during the Babylonian captivity. The Babylonian empire has come to an end and the Media-Persia empire is in effect. This is the last narrative style message of Daniel.

Who is Darius the Mede? Darius the Mede is possibly the same person as Cyrus the Persian (Ezra 1:1; Ezra 5:13; Isaiah 44:28; Isaiah 45:1). Cyrus and Darius were 62 years old when Babylon was conquered (Daniel 5:31). Darius is a royal title not a personal name. Darius is called the son of Ahasuerus which is a generic Persian royal title (Daniel 9:1). Cyrus was the grandson of the king of the Medes named Astyages. Cyrus’s father, Cambyses I, was the king of Persia. The Medes were the stronger part of the empire in the beginning and Persia became more dominant later. Achaemenes, Cyrus ancestor established Anshan (Persian) kingdom in 700 BC around the time of Isaiah’s prophecy. The Media-Persian Empire is referred to as the Achaemenid Empire. Cyrus assumed the throne of Persia in 559 BC, conquered Media in 550 BC, and Babylon in 539 BC.

SECTION I: PERSECUTION IS A PROMISE BUT BEING A HATER IS A CHOICE (Daniel 6:1-9).

- A. Daniel’s political career included serving as ruler over the province of Babylon, chief of the wise men, (Daniel 2:48), 3rd ruler in the Babylonian Empire (Daniel 5:29), and governor in Media - Persia Empire. Darius considered promoting Daniel above the governors (Esther 10:3).
- B. The governors and satraps tried to sabotage Daniel. Daniel’s work ethic was impeccable, so they turned to his religious devotion. OT Israel had civil and ceremonial laws enforced by the government (Hebrews 2:1-4). The laws were established by God and judgements were made in consultation with God (Leviticus 24:13-16; Deuteronomy 17:6). Christians are directed or led by the Spirit not the Law of Moses (Galatians 5:18). The politicians introduced legislation for the purpose of sabotaging Daniel’s career. No one could pray for 30 days, except the king. Violation is punished by death in the lion’s den (Proverbs 30:29-30). They manipulated the king through a disguised attempt to establish religious and military authority.
- C. Consistent prayer develops and sustains our intimacy with Christ. You grow into prayer through diligence and regular practice. Prayer is critical for a healthy soul. You need to pray because it is a spiritual activity of communion with God. God helps us in our prayers (Romans 8:26-27; Romans 8:34; Luke 18:1; Matthew 6:5-8; 1 Timothy 2:1-5).
- D. The political enemies used the tradition of the Medes and Persians to enact a foolish statute. “Does not alter” means once the law is signed it is irrevocable. This put the law above the power of the king to change it. The king did not discern the wicked agenda.

SECTION II: ARE YOU GUILTY OF PRAYING WITHOUT CEASING? (Daniel 6:10-19)

- A. It is clear that Daniel was aware of the 30 day ban on prayer. Daniel is in his eighties by now and has been praying several times a day for 70 years. What would your life look like if you tried this for 1 year? Don’t neglect your own soul. Cultivate your soul in intimacy with God through prayer.

- B. The haters made the accusation personal. The king was disappointed that he made a bad decision. The haters used the tradition of the Medes and Persians to trap king into condemning Daniel. What would happen if the king refused to enforce the statute? Would his life be traded for Daniel's? We have a King who traded His life for ours!
- C. The king spoke by faith that God would deliver Daniel. The king failed to find a political solution, so he trusted in God. The king fasted for Daniel's deliverance. He realized his power was limited so he depended on the power of God. Can we commit to fight in prayer and fasting for one another?

SECTION III: THE LION OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH SAVES FROM THE JAWS OF DEATH (Daniel 6:20-28).

- A. Daniel explained how God sent His Angel (Messenger) to shut the lion's mouth. Daniel was not hurt. Daniel was innocent before God and the king. God controls animals, including lions (1 Kings 13:26; 2 Kings 17:25; 1 Samuel 17:37; Judges 14:5-6). The Angel of God is an Old Testament pre-incarnate appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the 2nd member of the Trinity. Angel of God is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah (Revelation 5:5).
- B. The king commanded Daniel to be released. No injury was on Daniel because he believed in God. He demonstrated his faith consistently through his lifestyle. The haters were thrown into the lion's den with their families. They manipulated the king and tried to embarrass him. They conspired against Daniel and displayed open disagreement with the king's judgement.
- C. Darius makes a declaration to the nations. He commanded all people to tremble and fear before God. God is living God as opposed to lifeless idols. God is steadfast forever (immutable). God's kingdom is indestructible. God's dominion is eternal. God delivers, rescues, and works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth. He delivered Daniel from the lions. Daniel continued to prosper in the reign of Darius, (and/even) Cyrus.

DANIEL WAS THROWN IN THE LIONS DEN BECAUSE OF ENVY. THE LION OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH, THE LORD JESUS, WAS HANDED OVER TO BE CRUCIFIED BECAUSE OF ENVY (MATTHEW 27:18). DANIEL WAS SEALED IN THE LIONS DEN; THE LORD JESUS WAS SEALED IN THE TOMB AFTER HIS CRUCIFIXION (MATTHEW 27:66). DANIEL WAS FOUND ALIVE THE NEXT DAY ESCAPING DEATH; THE LORD JESUS WAS RESURRECTED ON THE THIRD DAY DEFEATING DEATH!

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