

“THE ESSENCE OF INTEGRITY”

DANIEL 6:1-11

Theme: The integrity of a righteous person is attributable to his interaction with God.

I. Integrity Is Dependent upon the Presence of God’s Spirit – 6:1-3

A. *THE CHALLENGE TO INTEGRITY* – vv. 1-3

1. What incredible events had transpired in the overthrow of Babylon and the execution of Belshazzar.
2. The Persians stormed into the city while most of the leadership was drunk and distracted by the festival.
3. Arrests must have been swift – Daniel being among those who as a leader of the conquered kingdom, would be suspected as a threat to the stability of the new rulers.
4. It’s hard to know how Daniel found such immediate favor in the eyes of the Persians that in appointing *“120 satraps over the kingdom, that they should be in charge of the whole kingdom, and over them three commissioners (of whom Daniel was one),”* Daniel was elevated to such a prominent role.
 - a) Perhaps Darius had heard of the way Daniel had pronounced doom upon the Babylonians and assumed this meant that he favored the Persians.
 - b) Perhaps it was that the reputation of Daniel of being in touch with the Most High God attracted them.
5. Whatever it was, Daniel was elevated to great prominence.
6. The reality is that this transition would have provided Daniel great temptation to succumb to the pressure to conform to the new rule of the Persians.
 - a) These people would not appreciate Daniel’s history as the Babylonians had appreciated it.
 - b) Yesterday’s victories do not provide today’s triumphs – he had to make decisions regarding how he could preserve his convictions in the face of those who were newly empowered pagans.

B. *THE CAPACITY FOR INTEGRITY* – v. 3

1. We are told that: *“Daniel began distinguishing himself among the commissioners and satraps because he possessed an extraordinary spirit ...”*

2. It is clear that Daniel here is ascribing glory to God for the remarkable accomplishments that existed in his resumé – cp. **5:14**.
3. It was on account of this *“extraordinary spirit”* that *“the king planned to appoint him over the entire kingdom.”*
4. His position most likely dealt with financial management of tax collection – *“that the king might not suffer loss”* has a financial context.
5. Whatever his responsibilities on behalf of the king, Daniel knew God’s grace that enabled him to excel in whatever duties assigned to him.

II. Integrity Is Dignified through Persecution – **6:4-9**

A. *IT IS DIGNIFIED ON THE BASIS OF EVIDENCE* – **v.4**

1. At this point, great resentment builds by those who became jealous of Daniel’s imminent promotion.
2. Several factors most likely served as a basis of this resentment:
 - a) Jealousy due to the king’s intention to promote him.
 - b) Resentment because Daniel was of the old Babylonian regime and shouldn’t be trusted.
 - c) Hostility because Daniel was a Jew and was faithful to Yahweh instead of the Persian gods.
3. *“Then the commissioners and satraps began trying to find a ground of accusation against Daniel in regard to government affairs.”*
4. Consider the vast potential for abuse, pilfering, and embezzlement that would have existed in being one of three leaders responsible for at least 40 “satraps” who also were involved in the collection of tax money.
5. As they sought corruption in Daniel, they only ran across evidence of efficient management that made them wish their own departments were running as smoothly.
6. *“They could find no ground of accusation or evidence of corruption, inasmuch as he was faithful, and not negligence or corruption was to be found in him.”*
7. Daniel had sought to do what his God expected of him in this responsible position – cp. **Colossians 3:22-24**.

B. *IT IS DIGNIFIED ON THE BASIS OF EXPECTATION* – **vv.5-9**

1. As his enemies began to conclude that they were unable to find

unethical or disloyal conduct, they received a clear picture of Daniel's testimony.

2. Whenever a person lives a consistent life of godliness before the world, it is clear that their life is not absorbed with the same treacheries embraced by the world.
3. His enemies thought they could nail him because they themselves could have been nailed.
4. In perceiving they couldn't "get him," they began to understand the reason - his faithfulness service to his God.
5. Daniel's reputation and character then enabled his enemies to project that it would be preferable for Daniel to die than to lose favor with the God that had blessed him so.
6. *"Then these men said, 'We shall not find any ground of accusation against this Daniel unless we find it against him with regard to the law of his God.'"*
7. They expected that if they could create a conflict between the *"law of his God"* and the law of Persia, Daniel's faithfulness would require him to *disobey* the law of Persia.
8. *"Then these commissioners and satraps came by agreement to the king and spoke to him" – calling for just such a conflict.*
9. In a false sense of devotion to the king, they requested that Darius *"establish a statute and enforce an injunction that anyone who makes a petition to any god or man besides you, O king, for thirty days, shall be cast into the lions' den."*
10. Because of the irrevocability of the *"law of the Medes and Persians,"* once signed, it could not be rescinded even by the king.
11. *"Therefore, King Darius signed the document, that is, the injunction."*

III. Integrity Is Devoted to Godly Practices – 6:10-11

A. *THE PROOF OF INTEGRITY – v. 10*

1. Because his enemies chose the issue of prayer, Daniel's reputation of praying must have been well established.
2. Daniel knew that there was no hope of a repeal of the law, and consequently *"when Daniel knew that the document was signed, he entered his house (now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem); and he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously."*

3. *“Any attempt on Daniel’s part to evade the issue by continuing his prayers in secret or at such times when he could not be detected would have been a confession of fear and of unbelief. He would have at once appeared as serving his God only as long as outward circumstances proved to be agreeable. He would have stamped himself as a man who was ready to serve his God and to be known as His follower and worshiper when there was no price to be paid and no penalty to be feared.”¹*
4. Hence, Daniel proves that the conclusions and expectations drawn by his enemies were correct: Daniel’s honesty and uprightness stemmed from an unshakable loyalty and faithfulness to his God .

B. THE PRAYERS OF INTEGRITY – v. 11

1. We are told that Daniel was *“praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously.”*
2. Daniel’s prayers were especially significant in that later in the book, at a point describing an earlier experience by Daniel to the current context, Daniel gained an awareness of the fact that the 70 year exile of Israel was about to end and prayed a prayer of confession - cp. **Daniel 9:1-19;** cp. **Jeremiah 25:11-12.**
3. This prophecy of Jeremiah’s was fulfilled the very first year that Cyrus the Persian conquered Babylon and left Darius the Mede as king over Babylon - cp. **2 Chronicles 36:21-23.**
4. The return of the Jews was made in Cyrus’ first year 538/37 B.C. which means probably only a few months before the episode of Daniel and the lion’s den.
5. Daniel may have even been involved in the drafting of the decree that permitted the Jews to return to Jerusalem.
6. Thus, Daniel’s *“giving thanks before his God”* was specifically focused on the graciousness of God in answering his prayer of confession by allowing his countrymen to return to Judah.
7. To abandon this great God was not possible for Daniel and thus, even understanding that it could cause him great personal cost, prayed *“as he had been doing previously.”*

The integrity of a righteous person is attributable to his interaction with God.

¹Leupold, pp. 26-261.