

September 22  
Daniel 6

In chapter 6 another of Daniel's major themes gets prominence again -- the theme of prayer. As an old man in the court of yet another king (Darius), prayer is still the foundation -- the cornerstone upon which the life of Daniel is built. Three times a day -- at regular times he would withdraw from the affairs of the empire and get alone with God. Even when that practice was made illegal by the foolish decree of Darius, Daniel, now around 80 years old, refused to alter his practice -- he didn't change the time of his daily prayers nor does he retire to a more secret location to ensure safety -- He just keeps doing what he knows will honor God despite the possible consequences to his health and safety. The discipline of regular fervent prayer was the backbone of Daniel's success all through his life and nothing would make him swerve from his devotional habit -- not even the threat of death.

I wonder today if prayer is that important to us. Sadly, I think I probably know the answer to that question -- it isn't. But it needs to be. As I look down the annals of time and think about the people who have made the most significant impact upon their generations for God. I can see people of incredible diversity and difference. There is one thing though that all of them had in common: they were all people of prayer, men and women who were mighty in prayer. Three times a day for all those years Daniel withdrew from society to go and pray. What would happen if we cultivated that same devotional habit?

I am sure that you took due note today of the tremendous hatred that the Babylonian satraps had for Daniel. Perhaps some of them were native Babylonians and they hated the fact that a foreigner, a Hebrew had been given authority over them. Maybe it was just the fact that Daniel was righteous and they were evil -- I don't know. I do know that it fits a pattern. Very often in the pages of scripture we find the righteous being hated without cause simply because their very presence constitutes an implied threat, a challenge to the ungodly. We saw it in the story of Cain and Abel and again in the story of Joseph and his brothers. David suffered at the hand of Saul simply because he was the chosen one of God. Our Lord Jesus Christ was hated beyond measure just because He was holy. And Jesus said to His disciples (and by extension also to us) "Remember how they treated Me and expect to be treated at least as badly as I was." Daniel's story is proof that it really does work that way. His verse, had he possessed the New Testament scripture, His life verse might well have been, "Blessed are the persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

There will be times when we will stand in very difficult circumstances for no other reason than that we chose to honor God. If that happens to you, hold your chin

up high and rejoice because great is your reward in heaven. As for Daniel, so for you.

Now everyone knows the conclusion of the story of Daniel and the lion's den. Daniel is saved because the angel shuts the lion's mouth. Just another miracle in the series of Miracles in the lives of these great servants of God in Babylon.

Not only is Daniel saved, but his enemies are thrown into the pit in his place and the lion's make rather short work of them. This chapter ends, as have most of the chapters in this Book with a king on his face admitting the sovereignty of Jehovah the God of Israel. Remember -- that is one of the major themes of this Book. The Lord is sovereign over all the kingdoms of this earth. It always works that way because God is the sovereign ruler. Peter's words in I Peter chapter 5 make it so clear. "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that he may lift you up at the proper time. Cast all your cares upon him because he cares for you!" At the end of the day it is Daniel, the servant of Jehovah, who is standing tall and straight and his enemies have all disappeared!