

Is God Able?

Daniel 6:18-28; 2 Timothy 1:12

January 8, 2023

Greg L. Price

The most fundamental question we face when we call out to the Lord in the time of trouble, affliction, or sorrow is this: Is God able to deliver us? That is quite different from asking: HOW will He answer my prayer? Or WHEN will He deliver me? We may not know HOW or WHEN our great and glorious Savior will deliver us, but we cannot even ask the HOW or WHEN questions until we first answer this question: Is God able to deliver us? Is He able to save me and my children? Is He able to heal me or a loved one? Is He able to restore a relationship? Is He able to provide for all my needs? Is God able (Matthew 9:27-28)? Faith lays hold of God's infinite ability to do all His holy will, not HOW and WHEN He will do so.

If God is not able, then Scripture is filled with lies and our faith in Christ is in vain. We are utterly hopeless. But if God is able (and He is), then we have a firm hope in this life (whatever we may face) and a certain hope in the life to come that He is able to keep all His promises to us by His faithfulness and almighty power. It was in God's infinite power that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego placed their faith—not in HOW or WHEN He would save them (Daniel 3:17).

As King Darius approached the lions' den into which Daniel had been cast, this was the question he asked Daniel (Daniel 6:20). Who is the God in whom you believe? Is He the God of the Bible, who is infinite in power? Or is he a god of your own imagination, limited in power by man's will? Only the Almighty God can save us and provide all that we need. Is He the object of your faith today, right now? If He is, grow in trusting Him. If not, God grant you faith in Him. Our main points are: (1) The Anxiety of a Guilt-Ridden Conscience (Daniel 6:18-20); (2) The Deliverance of the Righteous out of Trouble (Daniel 6:21-23); (3) The Consequences that Follow God's Deliverance of the Righteous (Daniel 6:24-28).

I. The Anxiety of a Guilt-Ridden Conscience (Daniel 6:18-20).

A. As the conspiracy against Daniel unfolded, the decree that all in Babylon were to pray to only King Darius was set in motion.

1. Daniel willingly walked into their trap and prayed unto Jehovah as he had always done: kneeling before his window facing Jerusalem. This he did so that he would neither become a stumbling block to unbelievers in hindering their coming in faith to the Lord nor to believers in hindering their growth in faith in the living God.

2. When Darius realized the conspiracy against Daniel, he was "sore displeased with himself" (Daniel 6:14). He regretted the irrevocable law of the Medes and the Persians that he had signed. His conscience was smitten with guilt/sorrow over his part in yielding to the flattery of the conspirators, and spent the rest of the day seeking to save Daniel—no doubt consulting with all the legal experts in Babylon until the sun set at which time Daniel was cast into the lions' den (Daniel 6:14).

3. After this a large stone was rolled into place over the mouth of the lions' den (Daniel 6:17). From all that could be seen from an earthly perspective, Daniel was in a hopeless situation. This is always where walking by sight and feelings will lead us—to hopelessness. Take inventory in your life and see if this is not always the case (let us repent).

B. After leaving the lions' den, Darius went to his palace and ate nothing (not necessarily religious fasting) and had no entertainment. He tossed about all night as his "sleep fled from him" (Daniel 6:18).

1. This is the anxiety and restlessness that proceeds from a conscience smitten by God that knows he had a significant part (though unwittingly) in putting Daniel into the doom of the lions' den.

Moreover, he was not willing to risk any danger to himself and his position as king in order to rescue Daniel. All the steps he took were calculated to retain and not jeopardize his royal throne. The anxiety of a smitten conscience haunted and hounded him throughout the night (Isaiah 48:22).

2. To know the moral conflict and battle in our conscience and yet to try to forget it or bury it with pleasure, busyness, or addictions does not bring a true and lasting peace, but a mere temporary relief just to renew its conflict once again as we lay awake at night.

3. It is even more dangerous for us to reach a place where our conscience becomes calloused and insensitive to God's conviction of sin in our lives (1 Timothy 4:1-2; Romans 1—God gave them over). When sinning against God's law becomes easy, beware! Let that not happen!

4. The only remedy appointed by the Lord to bring healing and peace to a conscience that is smitten by our violation of God's law is the full and free forgiveness of God through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 10:22). God's sure and certain forgiveness for all sin (great or small) is received through faith in Jesus, and that faith in Jesus is evidenced by confession, repentance, submission, and new obedience. There is nothing on earth that brings us closer to heaven than when we walk with a clear conscience before God and man (Acts 24:16). That will make heaven, heaven—a pure conscience before God and man.

5. Walk not by feelings, but by faith in God's promise.

C. After tossing and turning all night, at the breaking of dawn's light, Darius rushes to the lions' den (Daniel 6:19), and as he was approaching it, he cried out loudly, lamenting for Daniel (Daniel 6:20).

1. Darius asks a most important question: Is thy God able to deliver thee? He does not ask that question from a heart of saving faith in the one true living God. He is merely using the name of God that Daniel used ("the living God", Jeremiah 10:10). Darius refers to "the living God" not as his God, but as Daniel's God ("Is THY God able to deliver thee?").

2. "The living God" may have been just a name for Daniel's God to Darius, but it is filled with great significance to us who believe that our God is able to do all of His holy will. Our God is life. That is an eternal attribute of God and not something He has received from someone else (like everything else). He is the Giver of life and the Preserver of life. He alone gives eternal life through Jesus Christ who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6). Thus, Daniel's life was not in the power of Darius, or the conspirators, or even in the power of the lions to take his life away. Daniel's life was in the almighty power of "the living God" to give or to take away (and so is ours/loved ones). The gods of false religion are impotent and lifeless before "the living God" of Daniel (Isaiah 45:22).

3. This "living God" was the object of Daniel's faith. He created everything and gave everything life; therefore He is able to save by His almighty power even Daniel who is cast into a den of hungry lions.

4. Is God able? Yes, He is able because He is "the living God." That is the beginning point of faith in God. He is able to do all His holy will. Is that the God in whom you trust for your salvation (2 Timothy 1:12)? If He is able to keep my eternal salvation (that which is most important), what is He not able to provide that you need here upon earth (2 Corinthians 9:8)? There is no hope, dear ones, if God is not able, if God is powerless, if God is not the living God. When we are overwhelmed and buried beneath those dark fears and that sense of hopelessness, is it not because we are walking by sight and by our feelings rather than walking by faith in the God who is able, in "the living God" who made us, redeemed us, has preserved us, is sanctifying us, and shall glorify us?

5. Faith begins there: God is able to do all His holy will. Faith does not begin with WHEN or HOW He will accomplish His holy will in our lives or the lives of others. He knows what is best—He is infinitely wise. Our job is not to tell God WHEN or HOW He must work, but to rest in His sovereign power to do all His holy will. That's our place of peace/rest.

II. The Deliverance of the Righteous out of Trouble (Daniel 6:21-23).

A. Daniel greets the king and assures the king that he is alive and gives the reason why he is alive.

1. “O king, live for ever” (Daniel 6:21) means “Long live the king” to reign justly on God’s behalf, not in rebellion against God.

2. “My God”—i.e. Daniel’s God, not Darius’ God. How does God become “my God”, and not simply God in a general sense? By faith alone in Christ alone “the living God” becomes my own personal God to save me, forgive me, declare me righteous, adopt me, sanctify me, provide all that I need in this life, and glorify me. God could not give more to us if He gave us the whole universe than to give to us Himself—I am His and He is mine (a most blessed union that can never be broken).

3. God’s angel was sent to subdue the hungry and powerful lions through the night (just as He sent His angel to preserve Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace). On both occasions, the Lord visited those who trusted in Him and communed with them in seemingly impossible situations to give us hope in Him (the Angel of Jehovah?). God’s angels are constantly sent on such missions for the preservation of His people (Hebrews 1:14)—not to be worshipped.

4. Darius was up all night, tossing and turning, while safe in his palace. Daniel was at perfect peace in a lions’ den all night while communing with the Lord (Isaiah 26:3-4). That is what faith in the living God does in all of the lions’ dens we face—the lions’ den becomes a place of worship.

5. Daniel reproves the king and the conspirators when he says God preserved him because he was “innocent” before God and man (Daniel 6:22). The king should have rescued him, but God, THE KING, did.

B. Daniel is then taken as one who was doomed to die in the lions’ den out from it (Daniel 6:23). This was a picture of Christ’s resurrection.

1. Daniel was willingly cast into the lions’ den as one doomed to die and a stone was placed over the mouth of the den with a seal attached to it (just as the crucified Jesus was willingly cast into the tomb, and a great stone rolled over the entrance with a seal attached to it).

2. Darius came “very early in the morning” as did the women (Mark 16:2—“And very early in the morning the first day of the week”).

3. The angel of the Lord was present with Daniel just as God’s angel appeared at the resurrection of Jesus.

4. The stone was removed (implied in Daniel’s case) and Daniel was brought forth alive just as was true of Jesus Christ.

5. Daniel appeared before witnesses to confirm that he was alive and well for the encouragement of all who trust in “the living God”. So likewise Jesus appeared unto His disciples and 500 witnesses to confirm that He was alive and well for the confirmation that He is “the living God” whose sacrifice for sin on the cross was accounted by His Father as payment in full for all of the sins of His beloved children.

6. It is not Daniel’s deliverance that is our hope, but Christ’s.

III. The Consequences that Follow God’s Deliverance of the Righteous (Daniel 6:24-28).

A. This graphic portrayal is necessary for at least two reasons.

1. The wicked who conspire against God’s people shall not escape God’s righteous judgment (Proverbs 11:8). If this depiction of the judgment that fell on the wicked in this case is graphic, how much more is the torment of everlasting fire in hell? God’s law does not approve of wives and children suffering for the sins of husbands and fathers, unless they were party to the conspiracy (Deuteronomy 24:16).

2. The graphic language here shows that the lions were man-eating lions and that God had worked a miracle in restraining the nature of the lions for the good of Daniel (so God does every day for His

people).

B. A similar decree is made here as was made by Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 3:29. God is extolled by heathens who are forced to acknowledge His greatness and power—every knee shall bow. This is not a willing profession of saving faith, but the words of a defeated foe. This is why there is always hope even in the darkest of nights that we face in whatever lions' den we may be in. "The living God" is our God. He subdues lions. He subdues kings. He subdues fiery furnaces by His almighty, sovereign power. He is King. He alone is the living God.

Copyright 2023 Greg L. Price.