

## **Dan. 6 (LD 34, Q/A 94-95) "When Rulers Require Idolatry"**

**For the Children:** Many believers throughout history have been told that if they do not bow down and worship an idol, they will be put to death. Many have died for their faith. Others have stood firm and amazingly lived to tell about it. Daniel was one who lived. You know the story about the lions' den. But this is not just a story about a man's faith. It is about how God kept His church from being destroyed. The devil was trying to stop the church from praying. Without prayer, the church would die. Daniel served God by keeping on with his prayers. The perfect prayers of the Lord Jesus were even more important for us. Jesus' work on the cross made it possible for us to pray and for God to find our prayers acceptable. **Questions:** How important is prayer to you? How does the devil try to stop us from praying today? Why would it be so bad to stop praying?

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### **Introduction:**

#### **First Point: The Order to Pray to a Creature**

- 1) Faith Provokes: King Darius appointed satraps and commissioners to protect his interests from corruption and mismanagement. But Daniel excelled in this, because the Holy Spirit was within him, giving him faith, wisdom and prophecy. The king was ready to put him in charge of the other officials. But Daniel's faithfulness, advancement and the blessings he received made the others jealous. They tried to find a way to accuse him, but soon realized that they would have to attack his faith to bring him down.
- 2) The Attack on Religion: The officials persuaded the king to make an irrevocable law that for 30 days, no petitions could come before god or man, only before Darius. This defied the king and provided a way to unite a diverse population. Satan's plan was to end true worship and prayer. No doubt he hoped that this would end the church and prevent the Christ from coming from Israel. Ultimately, it could end the world.

#### **Second Point: The Refusal to Go against God**

- 1) An Immediate Response: Daniel's response was to pray immediately – not to invite arrest, but because he had no hesitation in sticking to his custom, praying 3 times a day facing Jerusalem i.e., continuing what he could of the old Temple worship of Jerusalem. Moreover, the king's edict made prayer all the more urgent. This demonstrates the positive side of the 1<sup>st</sup> commandment, as per LD 34: acknowledging the true God; trusting Him alone; looking to Him for every good; loving, fearing and honouring Him.
- 2) The Better Prayer: Important as this was, it pointed to a greater Prayer. Our prayers are only acceptable to God through Christ. Our prayers are only possible and effectual through Him – included in that, because He refused to stop praying, even on the cross. The power of prayer comes from Him. His victory prevents Satan from silencing prayer. See LD 45.

#### **Third Point: The Vindication of True Worship**

- 1) A Miraculous Deliverance: The king was unable to rescue Daniel, though he was hopeful that God would deliver him. God's angel did indeed shut the lions' mouths. The accusers, by contrast, were taken before they hit the ground. Daniel's innocence was confirmed. He went on to enjoy success with Darius and Cyrus.
- 2) What This Teaches: This ending shows the power of Christ's victory over Satan. The devil cannot crush the church. It also shows the importance of true worship and prayer. As the king's words in vss. 26-27 show, the events work to the glory of the Living God. It also shows that God will ultimately and graciously vindicate those who put Him first.

### **Conclusion:**