



**Because he believed in his God
Daniel 6:18-28**

18 Now the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; and no musicians were brought before him. Also his sleep went from him.

19 Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions.

20 And when he came to the den, he cried out with a lamenting voice to Daniel. The king spoke, saying to Daniel, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?"

21 Then Daniel said to the king, "O king, live forever!

22 "My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you."

23 Then the king was exceedingly glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no injury whatever was found on him, because he believed in his God.

24 And the king gave the command, and they brought those men who had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions -- them, their children, and their wives; and the lions overpowered them, and broke all their bones in pieces before they ever came to the bottom of the den.

25 Then King Darius wrote: To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you.

26 I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom men must tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. For He is the living God, And steadfast forever; His kingdom is the one which shall not be destroyed, And His dominion shall endure to the end.

27 He delivers and rescues, And He works signs and wonders In heaven and on earth, Who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.

28 So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

I don't know if you've ever spent a night like Darius, unable to sleep, literally worried to distraction afraid of what will happen in the morning, but desperate for the sun to rise so you can actually get it over with.

Darius worried as one who had no real hope. He knew perhaps the stories of how Daniel's God had delivered Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and he had probably also heard the story of the hand that had written on the wall in the middle of Belshazzar's profane feast. But he had never personally experienced the power of this God whom Daniel served.

In that respect it's interesting to consider that Darius' experience of Daniel's God is kind of like the experience most modern people have coming to the story of the Lion's den. They know the story, they've met Christians who serve the God who delivered Daniel, but they still don't personally trust in the ability of that God to deliver people out of real danger.

So at the break of day, Darius hurries to the lion's den and asks in a voice the NKJV rightly describes as lamenting – and who do you usually lament over but the dead - *“Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions”*

He probably half-expects to simply hear the roaring of the lions in reply, but to his amazement out comes the voice of Daniel from behind the rock. This God who Daniel served has delivered Him!

Now Darius clearly wasn't sure that God could do that, and Daniel's enemies, the satraps who had conspired to have him thrown in hadn't even considered that to be a possibility. That's why their law just required that someone be thrown into the Lion's den, not actually put to death.

Who was the only one who was sure that God *could* deliver Daniel in this scenario? The answer is Daniel himself. Daniel trusted God, and his faith in

God and God's promises were what saw him through the most difficult and terrible event of his life.

Now, Daniel knew that God *could* miraculously deliver him even from being eaten by hungry lions, but we have no reason to believe that Daniel knew for certain that that was what God was planning to do. When Daniel went up to pray as he always did, he did not know that God would keep him alive even if he was thrown into the lion's den, but he went to pray anyway, because he knew that whatever God had planned it would be for his good. Daniel trusted God in the same way that Job did when he declared in the middle of his own trials ***"Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him."***

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego also didn't know that the Lord was planning to bring them safely out of the fiery furnace that is why they answered Nebuchadnezzar:

Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up."

Regardless of what God was planning on doing, they weren't afraid. They trusted God and were enabled to do what was right, because they loved and trusted the God they believed in.

You see they knew that they would either be delivered in this world, or by dying obtain something even better – eternal life. That is what has made Christians like the apostle Paul so fearless in their proclamation of the gospel:

Phil. 1:19 For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

20 according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death.

21 For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

In Daniel's case this time, God was magnified by his deliverance from death, and Daniel boldly tells the king why it was he was able to survive all night in pit filled with hungry lions. Because his God had sent an angel to close their mouths.

Now several commentators including Matthew Henry believe that the *Malak*, messenger or angel who was sent to be with Daniel in that pit was the same person who was sent to deliver Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fire furnace – that is the Son of Man – and it is very possible that Daniel spent a joyful night in that den in the presence of Jesus. And in the presence of Christ, who would care about lions? Why would you be afraid? That is why Jesus rebuked the disciples for their little faith when he was with them in the boat during the storm. ***What have you to fear if your God is right there with you?***

Well, Daniel says that one of the reasons that God chose to deliver him was to vindicate him of the charge of disloyalty. To show that he had done no wrong to the king and it was only an unjust law that had put him in the wrong with the government.

Darius realizes that Daniel has been falsely accused, and his vindication is clear to everyone, and so now the law of retribution applies to those who have accused him falsely.

***Deut. 19:18 "And the judges shall make careful inquiry, and indeed, if the witness is a false witness, who has testified falsely against his brother,
19 "then you shall do to him as he thought to have done to his brother; so you shall put away the evil from among you.***

I should comment that in our BCO we have a similar caveat. If someone brings charges against someone in a church discipline case, and they are shown to be false and malicious, then that person is tried for violating the ninth commandment.

Now in ancient Persia as Herodotus tells us, it wasn't just the evil doer, but his family who paid for crimes like these, because this was considered an act of treason. I am not saying that it was just, clearly it wasn't, but that was Persian law, not God's law.

Its now shown quite clearly that the reason that the lions didn't eat Daniel wasn't that they weren't hungry. They are ravenous, and the men who accused Daniel don't even hit the floor before they've been set upon and gobbled up.

Darius is so impressed by this that he too sends out a decree like the one Nebuchadnezzar sent out after Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were delivered by God from the fire furnace. Like Nebuchadnezzar before him, Darius too says there is no God who can deliver like this and that His dominion is over all the earth. But you'll remember that Nebuchadnezzar did not become a believer in God till he himself was humbled. I think its telling that Darius still refers to God in the edict as Daniel's God, and he talks impersonally of God as the deliverer of Daniel. Do you remember though after Nebuchadnezzar was humbled and then became a believer how he talked personally about what God had done to and for him? Darius is impressed, but it's the way someone who is still standing on the outside looking in speaks.

I don't personally see any evidence that the Darius made the transition from saying *Daniel's God*, to *My Lord and My God* and that is the difference between being a God fearer and a Christian, the difference between someone who speaks of the *Good Lord* and the *Good book* and someone who has actually tasted and seen that the Lord is Good, and has a personal relationship with the Lord, and reads his word not just as a good book, but God's words to Him.

Let me give you three applications of all this, from least to most important:

1) *We learn from Daniel that Christians should be the best of citizens*, the only time we should hear about Christians being arrested is when the laws of the state go against the laws of God. When that happens, as when the

Sanhedrin told the Apostles not to preach Jesus anymore, then they must say ***“We ought to obey God rather than man”*** and know that they haven’t done anything really wrong.

Now please understand that in this world, that can and will happen. As Paul warned in 2nd Timothy 3:12 – ***“Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution”***

Now at present in America, you probably won’t have to go through what Issa and Parvah Motamadi are going through in Iran, but the anger of those who hate Christ and the gospel is increasing and the day may come when you are forced to decide for instance between your career and the God in who you trust. Let me give you a recent example of just such a decision – ***P.D. story.***

2) Know this, like Daniel you will find that faith in Christ will carry you through the worst of temporal trials. ***So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no injury whatever was found on him, because he believed in his God,*** I have seen that deliverance in the lives of other Christians and have experienced it myself more times than I can mention.

So don’t waver! Far too often, the time of the testing of our faith comes, and we panic, we figure God can’t get us through this, and we have to go with some sort of pragmatic answer. We have to choose the world’s way. The Apostle Peter went through that experience, and thought the only way to save his skin was to deny Christ. He realized his terrible mistake, repented for his sin, and was restored. What was the result. Later in Acts 12 we see him in far worse straights, captured by Herod, scheduled for execution and an angel comes and delivers from prison. But you see at the point Peter didn’t even expect deliverance, he was sleeping soundly, he trusted God and knew that whether he lived or died, he would lose nothing.

3) Finally, remember that Faith in Christ will carry you through something far more important than a temporal trial. Daniel was cast into the Lion’s den, a place of Judgment and great danger, but he was safe. ***He was was taken up out of the den, and no injury whatever was found on him, because he believed in his God.*** Brothers and Sisters we will all come before the Judgment seat of the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. There is only one way that we will be found innocent in that day, and that is through faith Alone. If like

Daniel we believe, then we will be saved. But what is meant by believing? Well listen to what Willhelmus A'Brakel wrote: *“To believe is to accept, surrender to, lean upon, rely upon, and entrust one’s self to Jesus in order to be justified, sanctified, and glorified. By this faith, Old Testament believers have been justified. “Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness” Rom. 4:2–3 ... Justification is a work of God as righteous Judge. If God is to justify anyone and pronounce the sentence of acquittal, there must be a perfect righteousness—a righteousness no one had of himself in the Old Testament, even as none have it in the New Testament. Therefore, if anyone is to be justified, the righteousness of the Surety must be applied to him—from God’s side this happens on the basis of suretyship by way of imputation, and from man’s side by way of the acceptance by faith upon the basis of the divine offer. There is no room here for a turning away, overlooking, or passing by of something as unnoticed. God’s judgment is righteous and in truth; one is either guilty or righteous. If God did indeed justify Old Testament believers—which He most certainly did, as we have shown from the justification of Abraham—then the full righteousness of the Surety has been applied to them, and they have thus been fully acquitted from their sins and have been declared the heirs of salvation.”*

If today you do believe in Jesus, as Daniel, and Abraham, and a host of other saved sinners, because that are sinners saved by grace, then you have nothing to fear from death or judgment and the grave. Daniel went down into that den, but he had nothing to fear from those lions, he was declared innocent and no judgment came upon Him, and then dawn broke, the rock was rolled away and Daniel rose up out of that place. Believers you too will someday go down into the ground, but you too will have nothing to fear from judgment, because there you will sojourn with Christ and then someday the dawn will break and you will be called forth to resurrection life. All of that of course is not because you are perfectly innocent, anymore than Daniel was perfectly innocent, it is on account of the Cross and the Empty tomb. It is because of the completed work of Christ. His blood that atones for sin and his righteousness that establishes us as righteous.

But if you don't believe, then you will be no more ready for judgment than Daniel's enemies, whose entire lives were spent pursuing the idols of this world were.