

BIBLE CLASS 22.06 2023 THE BOOK OF DANIEL CHAPTER 6

6.—DANIEL IN THE LIONS DEN.

After the fall of Babylon in 536 B.C. Darius the Mede being about 62 years old was made ruler over the realm of the Chaldeans. The Medes united with the Persians in a kind of dual monarchy of the Medes and Persians. Cyrus borrowed the traditions of kingship from the Medes, who had ruled an empire when the Persians were merely their vassals. Cyrus divided his Kingdom into 127 provinces and over these were three presidents the most senior being Daniel. These three presidents are represented by the three ribs in the mouth of the bear in chapter 7 verse 5. These three presidents supervised taxation and ensured that the King received all that he was due. It would appear that Daniel was preferred above the other two princes, because of his reliability. In fact he followed the same standards that the apostles advocated for the early Christians to follow and those who claim to follow the Lord Jesus today, as Paul wrote to the Colossians Servants, obey in all things *your* masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: ²³ And whatsoever ye do, do *it* heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; ²⁴ Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. (Col 3:22-24) The same spirit that dwelt in The Lord Jesus who taught his followers, “ Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak”. (Mat 26:41) Daniel because of his integrity, found himself surrounded with envious fellow-servants, who desired to find occasion to bring about his fall from approval. In this position he has an experience well deserving our notice and attention. His enemies try to find out something against him, but cannot. At last they say one to another, “We shall not find occasion against him except **in the matter of his God.**” They could find nothing incorrect, nothing unfaithful and nothing dishonourable in his common dealings. They could only find fault with him about his religion. Now let us remember that Daniel is one of our brethren, an approved brother, one declared in advance to be the beloved of God, one, therefore, to whom we may safely look as a standard by which to judge ourselves. Is it with us as with him, that no one can truthfully point the finger of scorn at us on the score of integrity? Brothers and sisters may work very hard to assist and support others, who claim themselves eligible for welfare that they are not entitled to. It would be so much easier if brothers and sisters tried to be like Daniel.

In the affairs of his God, the enemies of Daniel thought they could contrive a way to get the better of him and they decided to set a trap to bring him down from his high office. The trap they laid for him brings out another aspect of Daniel's character, from which we may draw profit. They obtained the king's consent to a law, that no man should make any petition to any god or man save the king only. What did this prove? It proved that Daniel was a man of prayer, and that his enemies knew it. Let us measure ourselves again here by the standard supplied in Daniel. We must not only maintain integrity towards men, we must also be well-pleasing to God. Integrity is truly pleasing to Him, but there is something else to go along with it. It is revealed that prayer is the acceptable offering of righteous lips. This is beautifully represented in the symbolism of the Revelation. An angel stands before the throne with a censer in his hand, from which ascends a cloud of incense. This incense, it is declared, represents the prayers of the saints. Now incense is a fire-caused cloud of sweet smelling vapour, which disperses itself through the air with a grateful soothing effect to those who may be within reach of it. The use of such a figure to represent the prayers of the saints shows clearly the estimation in which they are held by the Almighty Father, to whom they are addressed. The question is, do we contribute our portion of this incense-cloud, causing Him pleasure? Daniel was in the habit of doing it three times a day. (Dan. 6:10). David says, "Seven times in a day do I praise Thee." (Psalm 119:164.) The Lord himself frequently appears, in the course of the gospel narratives, in the same attitude. He withdraws and spends even whole nights in prayer. Left to our own thoughts on the subject, we might have thought that in his case prayer was not necessary. But the Lord Jesus stands before us in the act of thanksgiving, supplication, and prayer to the Father of all. His example is itself sufficient, for it shows what manner of men and women we ought to be, as those who are striving to be acknowledged as his brothers and sisters in the day of his glory. Prayer is needful for us and well-pleasing to God. It is a source of comfort and strength and purification; but to be effective, it must be real. It must not be a mere repetition of words, like the prayer-saying abomination of modern superstition. It must be an act of conscious address to the Deity. To be such, certain conditions are necessary. There must first be a true confidence in God's existence, and that though He is "in heaven," He is present everywhere by the spirit. If a man lack this confidence, his petitions will be as words spoken to the heedless air. He will feel as a child feels, that he is speaking into space with nobody to hear.

How does Daniel act in the presence of the trap set for him? Here we shall find another distinct and useful lesson. The decree came out that nobody was to pray to any god or man but to the king only, on pain of death by wild beasts. Now, if Daniel had been like some people, he would have got round the corner of this danger by some deception. He would have said: "Prayer is a thing between God and me. I need not let these men know that I pray during the next 30 days. I will pray, but I need not get down on my knees or do anything else by which they will know it. Why should I run myself into danger? Why should I needlessly expose myself to destruction? I can pray walking on the street or lying in my bed. I will not rob God of His due; but I will take care to run clear of the trap which these men have laid." Did Daniel act in this worldly-wise manner? Not at all! "When Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house, and his window being open in his chamber towards Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime. Then these men assembled and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God." (6:10–11.) The lesson is plain. Never conceal our obedience to God from a fear of the consequences. Confess Christ before men—not with Pharisaical pretense, not with the behavior of a man who wants to be taken notice of, but with the frankness and courage of a man determined to do the will of God, at the risk of whatever the cost that it is in the power of man to inflict.

Caught in the act of disobeying the new law, Daniel was cast among the lions. He did not know he would be saved from them. He had no revelation on this point. He probably thought he would be torn to pieces in a moment. He braved the danger. He was prepared for such an eventuality, like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, his companions, who, in a similar predicament with regard to the fiery furnace, while proclaiming God's ability to deliver them, said that even if He did not deliver them, they should refuse to bow down to the golden image. Is it necessary to point the lesson? Let us not be intimidated by the cry of recklessness and imprudence when we propose to obey God rather than man. It is easy to call righteousness by wrong names, as it is easy to gild over unscriptural things by clever titles. Let us be led of the spirit in all circumstances and we shall be safe. A thorough course of well-doing in the fear of God, and a fearless encounter of all the consequences of duty, will give us a place by the side of Daniel in the kingdom and age to come, when a compromising course for present advantage would entail the terrible result, that we should be pronounced unfit for the divine service and the divine glory of that glorious state.

Did our Lord and His apostles give us any indication of their acquaintance with the activities of Daniel? In Matthew 21:44, Jesus says, "Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." What is this but an allusion of the plainest kind to Daniel 2:34, 35? Indeed, unless we saw that it was taken from the prophet, the words would be mystifying. Thus our Lord knew, used and sanctioned the former half of Daniel.

In Hebrews 11., we have the register of those who had obtained a good report through faith; and amongst others, we read, in verse 33, 34, of those "who stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire." Clearly this is a reference to Daniel in the lions' den (chap. 6.), and to his three companions in the fiery furnace. (chap. 3.) This, then, is a proof of the use of the former half of the book. But, it may be objected, what sanction of its authority does such an allusion prove? Could not the words of the next verse, "others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection," refer to some faithful living in the days of the Maccabees?

Daniel's deliverance was a miracle, a divine act, but not an inexplicable or unreasonable one. The angel commissioned in the case (Dan. 6:22) acted on the nervous systems of the brutes, with the restraining power which even a high human magnetism possesses in a small degree, but which in the hand of an angel, who is spirit-substance itself, is irresistible where ever it is brought to bear. Under its influence, the lions felt no more inclination to eat Daniel than to eat stones. But when the influence was removed, on Daniel's liberation, the native ferocity of the animals came back with redoubled power, and enabled them to mutilate and destroy Daniel's enemies (thrown to them) before they reached the bottom of the den in their fall. The reasonableness of God's intervention on behalf of his faithful servants, does not require explanation.

The fact that Darius allowed his pride to comply with the discontents plan of flattery caused him to be very displeased with himself, tried in every way to deliver Daniel. But he was reminded by these men that the Law of the Medes and Persians held that no decree nor statute that the King establishes could be changed. So the King bowed reluctantly to their demands and Daniel was thrown into the Lion's den but not before the King assured him that his God whom he served continually, he will deliver you. Daniel fell into the den and his executioners put a large stone and put it over the mouth of the den and then the king sealed it with his own signet and with the signet of his lords. So there was no possibility that the King

could have tried to save Daniels life. How this reminds us of the sacrifice made by the Lord Jesus Christ. The Jewish leaders were jealous toward Jesus and they conspired to destroy him as Peter maintained at the feast of Pentecost, **“Him, Jesus, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by wicked hands have crucified and slain”** The Lord Jesus was placed in the tomb and the stone was rolled to the opening, The Pharisees went to Pilate and gained permission to seal the stone as Matthew records “So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch. (Mat 27:65-1)

However the king passed the night with sleeplessness and early in the morning he came to the lion’s den and cried out with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: *and* the king spoke and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou serve continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? (Dan 6:20) Immediately a voice was heard, “O king, live for ever. My God has sent his angel, and has shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: because before him I was found blameless and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.” Then was the king exceeding 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 manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God. (Dan 6:21-23) Here again in Daniels experience there is a likeness to the power of resurrection, even as the Lord Jesus was brought back from the dead.

The King then commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast *them* into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den. (Dan 6:24) In like manner after Jesus ascended into heaven having assured his disciples that, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. ⁹ Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen. (Mat 28:18-20)

For nearly 40 years the disciples of the Lord Jesus proclaimed the Great salvation to Jews and gentiles alike. But the majority of the Jews rejected Jesus as their Messiah and rightful King, and as a result the Lord Jesus of whom Peter writes, as concerning baptism, “The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

²² Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; **angels** and **authorities** and **powers** being made subject unto him. (1Pe 3:21-22)

This was manifest in AD70 when the Lord Jesus executed his power to cause the Roman Legions to destroy the land of Judaea with its capital city Jerusalem and its Temple, thousands of Jews were taken captive and were enslaved, and the land promised to Abraham became a Roman province. All destroyed in a similar way that Daniels adversaries were **all** destroyed.