

Daniel in the Lions' Den: Not Just a Children's Bible Story

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction: Daniel 6:1-28

- A. The faith of Daniel has been an inspiration to many young people, when only 15-18 years old he purposed in his heart not to defile himself - Dan. 1:8
 - 1. Daniel should also be an inspiration to elderly people as an example of service and commitment in his golden years, for we can also read of his faith as old man, perhaps in his mid-eighties, at a time when lifespan was as it is now

I. THE TRAP IS SET - Daniel 6:1-9

- A. Daniel is successful
 - 1. He is appointed one of three governors over the kingdom - Dan. 6:1-2
 - a. The kingdom may be Babylon (Chaldea), recently conquered by the Medo-Persian empire - Dan. 5:30-31
 - b. The identity of Darius the Mede is possibly a man known as Gubara appointed by Cyrus of Persia to rule Chaldea
 - 2. Daniel distinguished himself above the others - Dan. 6:3
 - a. His success was due to his "excellent spirit," not cunning or political maneuvering, proving that one can be successful in business and politics without compromising character
 - b. Darius considers setting Daniel over the whole realm
- B. Daniel is envied
 - 1. His success leads to envy by others - Dan. 6:4
 - a. Even the godliest men can have their enemies - David, Christ
 - b. Made enemies by means of jealousy
 - 2. His noble character is attested to by his enemies - Dan. 6:4
 - a. They could make no charge against him, no fault or error in him
 - 3. His enemies determine there is only one way to defeat him - Dan. 6:5
 - a. Find some conflict between the laws of God and the laws of men
- C. Daniel is targeted
 - 1. The king is approached by Daniel's enemies - Dan. 6:6-7
 - 2. They propose a royal statute that no petition can be made of any god or man for thirty days, except the king, under penalty of being cast into the den of lions
 - 3. The king is encouraged to establish an unalterable decree - Dan. 6:8-9

II. THE TRAP IS SPRUNG - Daniel 6:10-17

- A. Daniel continues to pray fully aware the decree had been signed - Dan. 6:10
 - 1. Practicing a custom common among the Jews
 - a. Praying three times a day - Psalm 55:17
 - b. Praying toward Jerusalem - 1Kings 8:28-30
 - c. Praying on his knees - 1Kings 8:54
 - d. Praying with thankfulness to God in times of trouble - Phil. 4:6

- 2. His own custom since early days - Dan. 6:10
 - a. Though a great and powerful man, fervent prayer was not beneath him
 - b. Though aged, he had not grown weary of prayer
- B. Daniel is caught
 - 1. His enemies catch Daniel praying - Dan. 6:11
 - 2. His enemies report Daniel to the king - Dan. 6:12-13
 - 3. The king is forced to abide by his own decree - Dan 6:14-15
 - a. Displeased with himself, the king tries to deliver Daniel
 - b. Daniel's enemies pressure the king to abide by his decree
- C. Daniel is thrown into the lions' den
 - 1. Yet the king is hopeful - Dan. 6:16
 - 2. The den is closed with a stone and sealed - Dan. 6:17
 - 3. It would appear that Daniel's enemies have won. He is in the lions' den and it is sealed. Yet could any seal made by man ever keep God from accomplishing His plans
 - a. The sealed tomb of Jesus - Matt. 27:62-66

III. THE TRAP IS RUINED - Daniel 6:18-28

- A. Darius is worried - Dan. 6:18
 - 1. He spends the night fasting, and without musicians; he can't sleep
 - 2. His concern for Daniel is evident - Dan. 6:19-20
- B. Daniel is delivered
 - 1. Daniel answers the king with respect in spite of what the king did to him
 - a. Dan. 6:21-22
 - 1) An example of blessing those who persecute you
 - b. With word of God's great deliverance - Dan. 3:28
 - c. With affirmation of his innocence before God and guilty of no wrong before the king
 - 2. Darius removes Daniel from the den - Dan. 6:23
 - a. Daniel is delivered from the lions, because he believed in God
- C. The conspirators are executed
 - 1. Cast into the same trap intended for Daniel, along with their families - Dan. 6:24
 - 2. As often happens to those who set the trap get caught in it
 - a. Haman hung on the gallows he built for Mordecai - Est. 7:10
 - b. Psalm 7:14-16; Prov. 1:10-19
- D. God is exalted
 - 1. Darius makes a decree that the God of Daniel be feared - Dan. 6:25-27
 - 2. Yet another pagan king comes to realize Who is really in control
 - a. As did Nebuchadnezzar - Dan. 4:34-35
 - b. As did Belshazzar, only too late - Dan. 5:26-28
- E. Daniel prospers
 - 1. In the reign of Darius, who ruled Chaldea - Dan. 6:28
 - 2. In the reign of Cyrus of Persia (who also ruled over Darius) - Dan. 1:21

Conclusion:

- A. Daniel was approximately 15 to 18 when he was carried away into captivity and roughly 70 when he was thrown into the lion's den, and he died around 85. What were the noble qualities of this aged saint? He was a man:
 - 1. With an excellent spirit - Dan. 6:3
 - 2. Without fault in his business dealings - Dan. 6:4
 - 3. Faithful to those over him - Dan. 6:4
 - 4. Committed to prayer throughout his life - Dan. 6:10
 - 5. Willing to obey God rather than man - Dan. 6:10
 - 6. Who believed in his God - Dan. 6:23
- B. Daniel in the Lions' Den is a story that has thrilled many children
 - a. But its lessons are not just for children
 - b. Daniel is a role model for adults as well
 - 1) For politicians and business men
 - 2) For everyone involved in administrative affairs
 - 3) For all Christians, especially older ones
- C. Learn from Daniel:
 - 1. You are never too old to seek first the will of God - Matt. 6:33
 - 2. You are never too old to obey God rather than men - Acts 5:29