



A Systematic Expository Study of the Word of God

Special Study:
THE PRESERVATION OF THE RIGHTEOUS
Daniel 6:11-28

“Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all” (Psalm 34:19). Many are the trials, troubles, persecutions of the righteous but the Lord delivers him out of them all. Daniel’s persecutors were the creation of envy, jealousy and hatred. Whenever a man is blessed and promoted by the Lord to a place of honour and greater usefulness, envious and jealous men quickly rise up to pull him down. It seems there’s always a price to pay for promotion and greater usefulness. God had lifted up Daniel to a strategic place of prominence and influence and those around him immediately began to plot how they might bring him down. God had put Daniel where He wanted him to be and He had also put the others where He wanted them to be. Darius recognized Daniel’s ability, wisdom, skill, understanding and spiritual insight. The ungodly presidents and princes were not satisfied with their lot and they burned with envy, rage, jealousy and bitterness against him. Even though he had done them no wrong, they wanted him dead!

In their jealousy and hatred, they sought to find fault in Daniel’s life and administration. There was no error or fault found in this faithful man. They could not find anything he did that he should not have done (sins of commission) or anything he did not do that he should have done (sins of omission). How could anybody so hate such a man as Daniel to want to get rid of him at all costs? They themselves confessed that there was nothing to condemn him for. Yet, they conspired to cast him alive into a den of lions! Always remember this: not everyone accused of sin or crime by the world is guilty before God. Joseph was not guilty but he was imprisoned. David was not guilty but jealous rage in Saul wanted him dead. Mordecai was not guilty but the pride of Haman wanted to hang him on the gallows. Jeremiah was not guilty but the people said, ***“This man is worthy to die.”*** Peter was not guilty but Herod sought to put him to death. Paul was not guilty but the multitude said, ***“Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.”*** And Daniel was not guilty but those who made themselves his enemies without any justifiable reason conspired to throw him into the lions’ den. Beware of envy: it can lead to bitterness, hatred, sin, death and damnation in hell.

THE DECREE AND THE PROSECUTION OF THE RIGHTEOUS

Daniel 6:11-17; 3:8-12; Esther 3:4-8; Psalm 94:20,21; Jeremiah 38:4-6; Acts 5:27-33; Psalms 34:12-22; 91:11-16.

“Daniel prayed, and gave thanks before his God, AS HE DID AFORETIME.” Daniel did not pray because of the decree, he had always been committed to the devotional life of prayer. He was brought to Babylon at the age of (about) 17. He lived in Babylon through the 70-year period of the Babylonian empire (Jeremiah 25:12). Daniel was already about 87 years of age when Darius took the kingdom at the age of 62. Daniel had committed himself to a devotional life of prayer before Darius, the king, was born. The new decree could not stop Daniel from praying. Daniel was accused of not regarding the king (Daniel 6:13) but they should be accused of not regarding Daniel and the God of Daniel, their Creator. He was also accused of not regarding the decree which the king had signed but they should be accused of not regarding the law of the King of kings.

“Then the king, when he heard these words, was sore displeased with himself”, and not with Daniel. Now, the king awoke to the truth of the whole plot. Flattery had exalted him to the position of a god but reality abased him to the level of a fool! He sought to deliver Daniel but he could not do it. His own decree was stronger than him, his own edict had sealed the death of the most trustworthy servant of the king. If men would so regard the decrees of earthly kings that they could not change them, how much more should we regard ***“the decree of the most High”*** (Daniel 4:24) and ***“the doctrine of Christ”*** (2 John 9). If the king could not change a one-month decree of an earthly kingdom to favour his most preferred subject, should any of us change God’s eternal decree or doctrine to favour or excuse anyone? Daniel said nothing to defend himself. He committed himself to God and calmly accepted the sovereign will of the all-wise, almighty God. He was cast into the lions’ den but God sent an angel ahead of him to shut the lions’ mouths.

THE DELIVERANCE AND PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTEOUS

Daniel 6:18-23,25-28; 3:15,17,28,29; Jeremiah 32:27; Luke 1:37; Psalm 34:7; Acts 12:7-11; 27:23-25; Hebrews 11:33; 7:25; 2 Timothy 4:17,18.

The king had great sincerity and great anxiety over Daniel but he could not deliver him. The following morning, after Daniel was cast into the lions' den, the king went there to find out what had happened. He did not send a servant, but he went in person. He had strong affection and great love for Daniel. He knew that Daniel served the living God and that he served Him continually. Was God able to deliver His faithful servant from the lions? Daniel was still alive! Alive in the lions' den! The living God is mighty and powerful. God had sent an angel to protect Daniel. That single angel shut the mouths of all the lions, so they were not able to hurt or harm him.

Angels are mighty and powerful and they are **"sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation"** (Hebrews 1:13,14). An angel ministered and guided in the choice of Rebekah for Isaac (Genesis 24:7). An angel encouraged and strengthened Gideon for his great task and commission (Judges 6:12). An angel destroyed 185,000 valiant enemies of God's people in one night (Isaiah 37:36). An angel fed and strengthened Elijah at the time of his distress and discouragement (1 Kings 19:5-8). An angel shut the mouths of lions in the den and Daniel's life was protected and preserved for a prophetic ministry (Daniel 6:22). An angel appeared to Zacharias to announce the birth of John (Luke 1:11-17). An angel appeared to Mary, the virgin to reveal the coming of Christ through her (Luke 1:26-37). An angel guided Philip to lead the eunuch of Ethiopia to salvation in Christ (Acts 8:26-39). An angel opened the prison doors and released the Apostles to preach **"all the words of this life"** (Acts 5:19,20). An angel delivered Peter from imprisonment and death, and smote Herod the great enemy of the church (Acts 12:7-11,21-24). Angels still minister to God's faithful people today, though they are often invisible (Psalms 34:7; 91:11; Matthew 4:11; Luke 22:43; Acts 27:23).

"Then was the king exceeding glad" because Daniel was alive, in health and unhurt. **"He believed in his God"**, his faith in God kept him and preserved him from all evil. Then the king made a decree that all people in his kingdom should recognize God as the living God.

THE DESTINY AND PERDITION OF THE REPROBATES

Daniel 6:24; Deuteronomy 19:18-20; Esther 7:10; Psalms 9:15-17; 7:15,16; 57:6; Proverbs 28:10; Deuteronomy 24:16; 2 Chronicles 25:4; Ezekiel 18:4,20.

"And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions." It must be remembered that Daniel had no voice or hand in the punishment or execution of his persecutors. As a believer who was wholeheartedly committed to the Word of God, he had charity towards all and malice towards none. Throughout this chapter, he was remarkably quiet and he did not raise his voice in protest or self-defence. But justice caught up with the evil doers. They were cast into the same den of lions into which they had cast Daniel. Very often, wicked men fall into the same pit they dig for others. God always turns the malice and cruelty of wicked men upon their own heads.

"Those men, their children, and their wives" were **"cast into the den of lions."** This extreme action of Darius was contrary to the express Law of God (Deuteronomy 24:16; Ezekiel 18:4,20). Yet, there were times when God Himself and the people of God acted in the same way because their family members were partakers and supporters of evil men (Genesis 20:7,18; Numbers 16:30-33; Joshua 7:10-13,22-26; Esther 5:14; 7:10; 9:25; Acts 5:1-2,3-10; Matthew 27:24,25). The wives and the children of the wicked often suffer shame and anguish, sorrow and loss when the husband, the father, is suffering the penalty of his crime. The painful effects of crime do not terminate on the guilty individual himself. When a man is condemned for crime, the consequences are not confined to himself alone. For the sake of our souls and for the sake of the eternal happiness of our loved ones, **"we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world"** (Titus 2:11-14).

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