

Trouble, Trust, and Triumph: Facing our troubles, trusting in God’s sovereignty, and rejoicing in our triumphs

Learning from Daniel

COURSE OUTLINE

| | |
|--|----|
| Lesson 1 – Daniel was Exiled and Educated | 1 |
| Daniel Chapter 1 | 2 |
| Lesson 2 – Daniel Saved Many Lives | 3 |
| Daniel Chapter 2 | 4 |
| Lesson 3 – The God Who Comes to Our Fiery Furnace | 6 |
| Daniel Chapter 3 | 7 |
| Lesson 4 – God Can Humble and Exalt Anyone | 9 |
| Daniel Chapter 4 | 10 |
| Lesson 5 – Honoring Versus Disrespecting God | 12 |
| Daniel Chapter 5 | 13 |
| Lesson 6 – Reordering Our Disordered Loves and Desires | 15 |
| Daniel Chapter 6 | 16 |
| Resources | 18 |

Trouble, Trust, and Triumph: Facing our troubles, trusting in God's sovereignty, and rejoicing in our triumphs -- *Learning from Daniel*

Lesson 1 – Daniel was Exiled and Educated

Opening Questions

1. What is the meaning of your name?
2. How did you experience your first day at college?

Introduction

The book of Daniel is written by Daniel in the sixth century B.C. Daniel, whose name means "God is my Judge," was a young Jewish man. Along with other Jews, he was taken as a captive by the king of Babylon and was brought to Babylon. He lived as a captive and an exile. He was not an immigrant or a refugee but shared the feeling of living in a foreign country with a different culture.



To think about:

Daniel was chosen to be educated with the best education that Babylon had for the purpose of serving the king of Babylon. Would Daniel be a proud man? Would Daniel be loyal to the king of Babylon or his true King and God? If you were Daniel, what would you do?

From the Bible: Read Daniel 1:1-7



Discussion Questions

1. Why does the Bible say "the Lord gave" the king of Judah into the hands of the king of Babylon (v.1-2)? Did the king of Babylon not defeat the king of Judah by his own power and army?
2. What qualities did the king of Babylon use to recruit young Israelites to serve him, and how did he seek to gain their mind, body, and loyalty for himself (v.3-5)?
3. Why do you think they were given a Babylonian name (v.6-7)?



Read Daniel 1:8-21

4. Daniel and his friends did not want to defile themselves with the king's food because, perhaps, they were afraid that the food had been offered to the Babylonian idols or the food was unclean according to the dietary Jewish law (v.8). They wanted to be loyal and faithful to their God and not to the king of Babylon. Their choice pleased God. What did God do for them (v.9)? How does this show God's sovereignty?
5. What concern did the chief of eunuchs have for Daniel's request (v.10)? What did Daniel request as a test (v.11-13)? What was the result of the test (v.14-16)?
6. What did God give to Daniel and his three friends (v.17)?
7. What did the king of Babylon find when he examined Daniel and his friends (v.18-20)?
8. Daniel knew that God was his *true King* and not the king of Babylon. He was loyal to God, and he trusted God's sovereignty. What would you do if you were Daniel living in Babylon, whose people had a different culture and a different belief system? Who are we fundamentally loyal to in our lives? Do we know who our true King and God is (see Philippians 3:20-21)? How do we live our lives with this view in this world?
9. What does it mean to you knowing that God is completely sovereign and in control over all things, including all people? How does this knowledge impact how you live your life? Has God ever drawn your attention to his sovereignty? Do you trust him?

Notes

Sovereignty:

supreme power or authority.

God is in control over all things.

Captive:

a person who is taken as a prisoner.

Babylon: was a very powerful ancient city; is in present-day Iraq.

Exile: the state of being barred from one's native country, typically for political or punitive reasons.

Philippians 3:20-21

"But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself."

Daniel 1

Daniel Taken to Babylon

¹In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. ²And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the vessels of the house of God. And he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and placed the vessels in the treasury of his god.

³Then the king commanded Ashpenaz, his chief eunuch, to bring some of the people of Israel, both of the royal family and of the nobility, ⁴youths without blemish, of good appearance and skillful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding learning, and competent to stand in the king's palace, and to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans. ⁵The king assigned them a daily portion of the food that the king ate, and of the wine that he drank. They were to be educated for three years, and at the end of that time they were to stand before the king.

⁶Among these were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah of the tribe of Judah.

⁷And the chief of the eunuchs gave them names: Daniel he called Belteshazzar, Hananiah he called Shadrach, Mishael he called Meshach, and Azariah he called Abednego.

Daniel's Faithfulness

⁸But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's food, or with the wine that he drank. Therefore he asked the chief of the eunuchs to allow him not to defile himself. ⁹And God gave Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs, ¹⁰and the chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel, "I fear my lord the king, who assigned your food and your drink; for why should he see that you were in worse condition than the youths who are of your own age? So you would endanger my head with the king."

¹¹Then Daniel said to the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had assigned over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, ¹²"Test your servants for ten days; let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink. ¹³Then let our appearance and the appearance of the youths who eat the king's food be observed by you, and deal with your servants according to what you see." ¹⁴So he listened to them in this matter, and tested them for ten days.

¹⁵At the end of ten days it was seen that they were better in appearance and fatter in flesh than all the youths who ate the king's food. ¹⁶So the steward took away their food and the wine they were to drink, and gave them vegetables.

¹⁷As for these four youths, God gave them learning and skill in all literature and wisdom, and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

¹⁸At the end of the time, when the king had commanded that they should be brought in, the chief of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. ¹⁹And the king spoke with them, and among all of them none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Therefore they stood before the king. ²⁰And in every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his kingdom.

²¹And Daniel was there until the first year of King Cyrus.

Notes

Judah: one of the twelve tribes of Israel and became the southern kingdom with **Jerusalem** as the capital city.

Babylon: was a very powerful ancient city; is in present-day Iraq.

Besiege: to surround with armed forces.

Vessel: a container.

The house of God: the temple of God.

Blemish: flaw; imperfection.

Chaldeans: people who ruled Babylonia.

Eunuch: men, whose testicles have been removed, in charge of the king's palace.

Defile: to desecrate or spoil.

Steward: a person with responsibility to manage or look after; a manager.

Enchanter: a person who uses magic, especially to put someone under an enchantment spell.

Trouble, Trust, and Triumph: Facing our troubles, trusting in God's sovereignty, and rejoicing in our triumphs -- *Learning from Daniel*

Lesson 2 – Daniel Saved Many Lives

Opening Questions

1. What is one of the most memorable or unusual dreams you have ever had?
2. What is one of the most memorable experiences of God answering your prayer?

Introduction

There is no doubt that because we cannot see God with our own eyes, we often see our life problems as bigger than God. God seems to be "small," and our problems are "bigger." However, God wants us to learn and grow in trusting him—that he is sovereign over all things, including our lives and all the problems we have. Sometimes God lets very difficult situations, including crisis, come to our lives to test our faith and trust in him.



To think about:

The Bible tells us in Hebrews 11:1 that faith in God is: (a) confidence in what we hope for and (b) assurance about what we cannot see. If God were to test us, would we be found to have enough faith and trust in him? Which one would we see *bigger*, our problem or God?

From the Bible: Read Daniel 2:1-16



Discussion Questions

1. Why did the king insist magicians, sorcerers, enchanters, and astrologers tell him both his dream and its interpretation (v.1-9)?
What rewards and punishments did he put before them (v.5-6)?
2. How did they answer the king and try to reason with him (v.4, 7, 10-11)?
How did the king respond to their answer, and what was his decision for them (v.12)?
3. What did Daniel ask of the king, and why do you think he dared to ask that (v.13-16)?



Read Daniel 2:17-49

4. What did Daniel and his friends ask of God, and how did God respond (v.17-19)?
5. How did Daniel thank God (v.20-23)? How did Daniel's words to God show his humility, faith in God, knowledge about God, wisdom, and poetic language skill?
6. How did Daniel introduce the true God to the king (v.27-28)?
How did Daniel remain humble and not show off (v.30)?
7. What else did Daniel say about God to the king (v.37-38, 44-45)?
8. How did the king honor the true God and acknowledge his sovereignty (v.47)?
How did the king honor Daniel (v.46-48)? How did Daniel honor his friends (v.49)?
9. Panic during crisis shows our desperation, but prayer shows our hope and trust in God. Daniel's trust in God saved himself, his three friends, and all the other wise men in Babylon. What can we learn from Daniel's trust in God's sovereignty? Has your hope and trust in God ever been tested?
10. All kingdoms and governments in this world will be replaced and will one day be no more. Only God's kingdom remains forever. How do we live our lives with this perspective (see Matthew 6:33, Philippians 3:20-21, 1 Peter 2:11)?
11. Consider Daniel's crisis, faith, prayer, courage, and effort to save many lives. How does Daniel point to Jesus? How is Jesus *the true and better Daniel*?

Notes

Sovereignty:

supreme power or authority.

God is in control over all things.

Matthew 6:33

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Philippians 3:20-21

"But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself."

1 Peter 2:11

"Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul."

Daniel 2

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

¹In the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his spirit was troubled, and his sleep left him. ²Then the king commanded that the magicians, the enchanters, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans be summoned to tell the king his dreams. So they came in and stood before the king. ³And the king said to them, "I had a dream, and my spirit is troubled to know the dream." ⁴Then the Chaldeans said to the king in Aramaic, "O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation." ⁵The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, "The word from me is firm: if you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you shall be torn limb from limb, and your houses shall be laid in ruins. ⁶But if you show the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. Therefore show me the dream and its interpretation."

⁷They answered a second time and said, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show its interpretation." ⁸The king answered and said, "I know with certainty that you are trying to gain time, because you see that the word from me is firm— ⁹if you do not make the dream known to me, there is but one sentence for you. You have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the times change. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can show me its interpretation."

¹⁰The Chaldeans answered the king and said, "There is not a man on earth who can meet the king's demand, for no great and powerful king has asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or Chaldean. ¹¹The thing that the king asks is difficult, and no one can show it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh."

¹²Because of this the king was angry and very furious, and commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be destroyed. ¹³So the decree went out, and the wise men were about to be killed; and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill them. ¹⁴Then Daniel replied with prudence and discretion to Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon. ¹⁵He declared to Arioch, the king's captain, "Why is the decree of the king so urgent?" Then Arioch made the matter known to Daniel. ¹⁶And Daniel went in and requested the king to appoint him a time, that he might show the interpretation to the king.

God Reveals Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

¹⁷Then Daniel went to his house and made the matter known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, ¹⁸and told them to seek mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his companions might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. ¹⁹Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.

²⁰Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might. ²¹He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding; ²²he reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him. ²³To you, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, for you have given me wisdom and might, and have now made known to me what we asked of you, for you have made known to us the king's matter."

²⁴Therefore Daniel went in to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon. He went and said thus to him: "Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon; bring me in before the king, and I will show the king the interpretation."

²⁵Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste and said thus to him: "I have found among the exiles from Judah a man who will make known to the king the interpretation."

Notes

Magician: a person who is skilled in performing magic.

Enchanter: a person who uses magic, especially to put people under an enchantment spell.

Sorcerer: a wizard; a person who has magic power.

Chaldeans: (here is) astrologers. In chapter 1: people who ruled Babylonia.

Aramaic: a Semitic language originated among the Arameans in the ancient region of Syria, and quickly spread to Mesopotamia and eastern Asia Minor.

Decree: an official order issued by a legal authority.

Haste: hurry.

Exile: the state of being barred from one's native country, typically for political or punitive reasons.

²⁶ The king declared to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, “Are you able to make known to me the dream that I have seen and its interpretation?” ²⁷ Daniel answered the king and said, “No wise men, enchanters, magicians, or astrologers can show to the king the mystery that the king has asked, ²⁸ but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream and the visions of your head as you lay in bed are these: ²⁹ To you, O king, as you lay in bed came thoughts of what would be after this, and he who reveals mysteries made known to you what is to be. ³⁰ But as for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because of any wisdom that I have more than all the living, but in order that the interpretation may be made known to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your mind.

Daniel Interprets the Dream

³¹ “You saw, O king, and behold, a great image. This image, mighty and of exceeding brightness, stood before you, and its appearance was frightening. ³² The head of this image was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its middle and thighs of bronze, ³³ its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. ³⁴ As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. ³⁵ Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

³⁶ “This was the dream. Now we will tell the king its interpretation. ³⁷ You, O king, the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, and the might, and the glory, ³⁸ and into whose hand he has given, wherever they dwell, the children of man, the beasts of the field, and the birds of the heavens, making you rule over them all—you are the head of gold. ³⁹ Another kingdom inferior to you shall arise after you, and yet a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. ⁴⁰ And there shall be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron, because iron breaks to pieces and shatters all things. And like iron that crushes, it shall break and crush all these. ⁴¹ And as you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom, but some of the firmness of iron shall be in it, just as you saw iron mixed with the soft clay. ⁴² And as the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly brittle. ⁴³ As you saw the iron mixed with soft clay, so they will mix with one another in marriage, but they will not hold together, just as iron does not mix with clay. ⁴⁴ And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever, ⁴⁵ just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure.”

Daniel Is Promoted

⁴⁶ Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face and paid homage to Daniel, and commanded that an offering and incense be offered up to him. ⁴⁷ The king answered and said to Daniel, “Truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery.” ⁴⁸ Then the king gave Daniel high honors and many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon. ⁴⁹ Daniel made a request of the king, and he appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego over the affairs of the province of Babylon. But Daniel remained at the king's court.

Notes

v.32-34:

The statue's head of gold represented Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian empire (606-539 BC). **The chest and arms of silver** represented the Medo-Persian empire which conquered Babylon in 539 BC. **The middle (belly) and thighs of bronze** represented the Greek empire. Alexander the Great defeated the Medo-Persian empire in 330 BC.

The legs of iron represented the Roman empire who conquered the Greeks in 63 BC.

The feet of clay and iron represented the splitting of the Roman empire into a mixture of strong and weak nations.

The stone that struck the image represented God's kingdom ruled by Christ.

Chaff: the casing of seeds.

Threshing floors: where farmers work to separate grain from chaff.

Homage: showing respect publicly.

Prefect: a chief officer.

Trouble, Trust, and Triumph: Facing our troubles, trusting in God's sovereignty, and rejoicing in our triumphs -- *Learning from Daniel*

Lesson 3 – The God Who Comes to Our Fiery Furnace

Opening Questions

1. What things seem threatening to you (fire, accident, ocean, dark street etc.)?
2. Have you ever been arrested by authorities or know someone who has?

Introduction

How far are you willing to sacrifice yourself for the person you love? The God of the Bible is the God who loves his covenant people and is willing to sacrifice himself for us. There is no other god in human history who is like him. Jesus Christ came to this world to die on the cross for the punishment of all our sins against God, so we can receive God's forgiveness and have a new life with him by trusting our lives to him.



To think about:

Being tested of our faith in God can be challenging. Many followers of Jesus Christ in other countries face life-or-death kinds of tests in their lives. If this come to us, will God find us faithful to him? Will we fail or succeed?

From the Bible: Read Daniel 3:1-18



Discussion Questions

1. Why did the king make a golden image (statue)?
2. Who did the king order to worship the statue on the dedication day (v.1-7)? What was the punishment for those who disobeyed the order (v.6)?
3. Do you know of a present-day world leader who has built a statue and ordered his people to worship it? How about *a non-physical statue or image*, such as an ideology?
4. Who brought an accusation against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Daniel's close friends) to the king (v.8-12)? What do you think is the reason for their accusation?
5. How did King Nebuchadnezzar compare himself to other powers or authorities, including God (v.15)? Do some present-day world leaders behave in a similar way?
6. What was the answer of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to the king (v.16-18)? What do you think of it? What were they sure and unsure about?



Read Daniel 3:19-30

7. What was the king's reaction to their answer, and what did he do (v.19-20)? What happened to his mighty soldiers who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and threw them into the burning fiery furnace (v.20-22)?
8. What happened as soon as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were inside the fiery furnace (v.23-25)? Who came to be with them inside the fiery furnace?
9. Why did he not bring them out of the fiery furnace but remained to be with them inside the fiery furnace? What does this teach us about the way God rescues us in our own *fiery furnace*? How do we remain faithful to God if he does not rescue us from our own *fiery furnace* (trial, suffering, sickness, accident, etc.)?
10. Why did suddenly the king recognize the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego as "the Most High God" (v.26)? How did he acknowledge and honor the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego above other gods (v.28-29)? What can we learn about faithfulness to God and trusting his sovereignty in all situations (see also James 1:2-4)?
11. How does *the fiery furnace* point to *the cross of Christ*?

Notes

Sovereignty:

supreme power or authority.

God is in control over all things.

Covenant:

a binding agreement with promise of faithfulness.

When we believe in Jesus and trust our lives to him, we enter into a covenant relationship with God.

James 1:2-4

"Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."

The Gospel (good news):

Jesus Christ came from heaven to this world to sacrifice himself and to die on the cross, bearing the punishment of all our sins against God as our substitute.

He came to rescue us from our ultimate suffering and death.

Daniel 3

Nebuchadnezzar's Golden Image

¹ King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and its breadth six cubits. He set it up on the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. ² Then King Nebuchadnezzar sent to gather the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

³ Then the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces gathered for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. And they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

⁴ And the herald proclaimed aloud, "You are commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, ⁵ that when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. ⁶ And whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace." ⁷ Therefore, as soon as all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, all the peoples, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

The Fiery Furnace

⁸ Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and maliciously accused the Jews. ⁹ They declared to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live forever! ¹⁰ You, O king, have made a decree, that every man who hears the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, shall fall down and worship the golden image. ¹¹ And whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into a burning fiery furnace. ¹² There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These men, O king, pay no attention to you; they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

¹³ Then Nebuchadnezzar in furious rage commanded that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought. So they brought these men before the king. ¹⁴ Nebuchadnezzar answered and said to them, "Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up? ¹⁵ Now if you are ready when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, well and good. But if you do not worship, you shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you out of my hands?"

¹⁶ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. ¹⁷ If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. ¹⁸ But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

Notes

Cubit: an ancient measurement equal to 46 cm or 18 inches.

Satrap: a provincial governor in the ancient Persian empire.

Prefect: a regional governor; a chief officer.

Magistrate: a civil officer.

Herald: an official messenger bringing news.

Chaldeans: people who ruled Babylonia.

Maliciously: with ill will or intention to do harm; wickedly.

Decree: an official order issued by a legal authority.

¹⁹ Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with fury, and the expression of his face was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He ordered the furnace heated seven times more than it was usually heated. ²⁰ And he ordered some of the mighty men of his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace.

²¹ Then these men were bound in their cloaks, their tunics, their hats, and their other garments, and they were thrown into the burning fiery furnace. ²² Because the king's order was urgent and the furnace overheated, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. ²³ And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell bound into the burning fiery furnace.

²⁴ Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up in haste. He declared to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the fire?" They answered and said to the king, "True, O king." ²⁵ He answered and said, "But I see four men unbound, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods."

²⁶ Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the burning fiery furnace; he declared, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here!" Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out from the fire. ²⁷ And the satraps, the prefects, the governors, and the king's counselors gathered together and saw that the fire had not had any power over the bodies of those men. The hair of their heads was not singed, their cloaks were not harmed, and no smell of fire had come upon them.

²⁸ Nebuchadnezzar answered and said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him, and set aside the king's command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God. ²⁹ Therefore I make a decree: Any people, nation, or language that speaks anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins, for there is no other god who is able to rescue in this way." ³⁰ Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

Notes

A son of the gods: could be an angel of God or *the Son of God* (a more popular interpretation) -- the Christ, the promised Savior before he came to this world, was born as a man, and be given the name Jesus. Jesus took our *ultimate fiery furnace* – the punishment of all our sins against God on the cross – so we may receive his life and God's forgiveness by believing in him and trusting our lives to him.

Singed: slightly burnt.

Trouble, Trust, and Triumph: Facing our troubles, trusting in God’s sovereignty, and rejoicing in our triumphs -- *Learning from Daniel*
Lesson 4 – God Can Humble and Exalt Anyone

Opening Questions

1. What is the reason we boast about our accomplishments?
2. Why is humility not easy to learn?

Introduction

Sin, according to the Bible, is any lack of conformity to the perfect character of God. God’s character is the standard for what is good, right, true, and honorable. We sin against God in our thoughts, words, and actions. All sin is ultimately saying to God, “I don’t want you to be God. I don’t like your rules. I want to have my own rules. I want to be a god for myself.” Sin is a rejection of God. We are born with a sinful nature, and we all sin very naturally. Our pride and self-centeredness are at the root of all our sins.



To think about:

Everyone is looking for a better life. The Bible tells us that the ultimate *best life* is found only in Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:17 tells us, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” When we trust our lives to Jesus Christ, we become a new creation, and God gives us a new heart—a heart that loves him.

From the Bible: Read Daniel 4:1-18



Discussion Questions

1. Although King Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged Daniel’s God as *the Most High God* (v.2), he still did not believe him as the only true God or completely submit to him. Why do many people who have high power behave like this?
2. What visions did God give the king in his dream (v.10-16)? What did God tell the king about God’s sovereignty (v.17)?



Read Daniel 4:19-37

3. Why was Daniel dismayed after hearing from the king about his dream (v.19)?
4. Who is the tree that grows and becomes strong in the king’s dream (v.22)?
5. Why will God chop down the tree? What does this mean for the king (v.24-25)?
6. The stump of the tree will not be destroyed. What does this mean for the king (v.26)? What advice did Daniel give to the king (v.27)? Did the king do it for the next twelve months (v.28-30)? What do you think is the reason?
7. All sins that we do are a rebellion against God. Our pride refuses God’s way for our lives and for right living with God. Our pride makes us want to live our own way. God’s way—for us to be humble before him—does not align with our pride. What happened to the king after he boasted about himself against God (v.31-33)?
8. What was the first thing that the king did when his reason returned to him at the end of the seven periods of time (v.34-35)?
9. What did he receive back (v.36)? What did he learn from this experience (v.37)? What can we learn from this story?
10. Think about Jesus’ humility in Philippians 2:6-11. How does Jesus’ humility pay the price for all our sins and pride against God?

Notes

Sovereignty:

supreme power or authority.
God is in control over all things.

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God.

Philippians 2:6-11

“⁶ who, though he [Jesus Christ] was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Daniel 4

Nebuchadnezzar Praises God

¹ King Nebuchadnezzar to all peoples, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you! ² It has seemed good to me to show the signs and wonders that the Most High God has done for me. ³ How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion endures from generation to generation.

Nebuchadnezzar's Second Dream

⁴ I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and prospering in my palace. ⁵ I saw a dream that made me afraid. As I lay in bed the fancies and the visions of my head alarmed me. ⁶ So I made a decree that all the wise men of Babylon should be brought before me, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. ⁷ Then the magicians, the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the astrologers came in, and I told them the dream, but they could not make known to me its interpretation.

⁸ At last Daniel came in before me—he who was named Belteshazzar after the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods—and I told him the dream, saying, ⁹ “O Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you and that no mystery is too difficult for you, tell me the visions of my dream that I saw and their interpretation. ¹⁰ The visions of my head as I lay in bed were these: I saw, and behold, a tree in the midst of the earth, and its height was great. ¹¹ The tree grew and became strong, and its top reached to heaven, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth. ¹² Its leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in it was food for all. The beasts of the field found shade under it, and the birds of the heavens lived in its branches, and all flesh was fed from it.

¹³ “I saw in the visions of my head as I lay in bed, and behold, a watcher, a holy one, came down from heaven. ¹⁴ He proclaimed aloud and said thus: ‘Chop down the tree and lop off its branches, strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the beasts flee from under it and the birds from its branches. ¹⁵ But leave the stump of its roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze, amid the tender grass of the field. Let him be wet with the dew of heaven. Let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth. ¹⁶ Let his mind be changed from a man's, and let a beast's mind be given to him; and let seven periods of time pass over him. ¹⁷ The sentence is by the decree of the watchers, the decision by the word of the holy ones, to the end that the living may know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will and sets over it the lowliest of men.’ ¹⁸ This dream I, King Nebuchadnezzar, saw. And you, O Belteshazzar, tell me the interpretation, because all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known to me the interpretation, but you are able, for the spirit of the holy gods is in you.”

Notes

Alarm: to feel frightened.

Decree: an official order issued by a legal authority.

Enchanter: a person who uses magic, especially to put people under an enchantment spell.

Chaldean: a person who had knowledge in prediction and fortune-telling.

Belteshazzar: a Babylonian name given for Daniel which means “Bel (the chief Babylonian god) protect his life.”

Lop off: to make shorter.

Strip off: to remove.

Beast: an animal, especial a large and four-footed one.

Amid: in the middle of; surrounded by.

Seven periods of time: could mean seven years, seven seasons, or simply a period of time that God has planned—in the Bible, the number seven often suggests perfection or completion.

Daniel Interprets the Second Dream

¹⁹ Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was dismayed for a while, and his thoughts alarmed him. The king answered and said, “Belteshazzar, let not the dream or the interpretation alarm you.” Belteshazzar answered and said, “My lord, may the dream be for those who hate you and its interpretation for your enemies! ²⁰ The tree you saw, which grew and became strong, so that its top reached to heaven, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth, ²¹ whose leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in which was food for all, under which beasts of the field found shade, and in whose branches the birds of the heavens lived— ²² it is you, O king, who have grown and become strong. Your greatness has grown and reaches to heaven, and your dominion to the ends of the earth.

²³ And because the king saw a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, ‘Chop down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump of its roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze, in the tender grass of the field, and let him be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven periods of time pass over him,’ ²⁴ this is the interpretation, O king: It is a decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king, ²⁵ that you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. You shall be made to eat grass like an ox, and you shall be wet with the dew of heaven, and seven periods of time shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will. ²⁶ And as it was commanded to leave the stump of the roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be confirmed for you from the time that you know that Heaven rules. ²⁷ Therefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you: break off your sins by practicing righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed, that there may perhaps be a lengthening of your prosperity.”

Nebuchadnezzar's Humiliation

²⁸ All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. ²⁹ At the end of twelve months he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, ³⁰ and the king answered and said, “Is not this great Babylon, which I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty?” ³¹ While the words were still in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, “O King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: The kingdom has departed from you, ³² and you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. And you shall be made to eat grass like an ox, and seven periods of time shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will.” ³³ Immediately the word was fulfilled against Nebuchadnezzar. He was driven from among men and ate grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair grew as long as eagles' feathers, and his nails were like birds' claws.

Nebuchadnezzar Restored

³⁴ At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and praised and honored him who lives forever, for his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation; ³⁵ all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, “What have you done?”

³⁶ At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my majesty and splendor returned to me. My counselors and my lords sought me, and I was established in my kingdom, and still more greatness was added to me. ³⁷ Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble.

Notes

Dismayed: to feel distress or shock.

Break off: to remove.

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God.

Righteousness: the quality of being blameless or morally right with God.

Iniquity: sin.

Reason: sanity.

Extol: to praise excitedly.

Trouble, Trust, and Triumph: Facing our troubles, trusting in God's sovereignty, and rejoicing in our triumphs -- *Learning from Daniel*

Lesson 5 – Honoring Versus Disrespecting God

Opening Questions

1. Have you ever played a game that requires solving riddles or puzzles?
2. What causes people to disrespect others? Has anyone disrespected you?

Introduction

One of the reasons people disrespect others is their ignorance or lack of understanding of others. When we fail to understand the impact of our actions and words to others, it can lead to disrespectful behavior. Another reason is pride. When we look down on others around us, our pride can dominate us.



To think about:

There is no law in this world that would punish us for having a bad thought without committing the action. However, God judges our thoughts, as well as our words and actions. "For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7b).

From the Bible: Read Daniel 5:1-12



Discussion Questions

1. What did King Belshazzar do for a thousand of his nobles (v.1)?
2. Daniel was not present at the banquet, either because he had not been invited or because his former high status did not continue under Belshazzar. What did the king do at the banquet that was very disrespectful to God (v.2-4)?
3. What do you think a proper punishment should be for a disrespectful behavior to: (a) a police officer, (b) a president of your country, and (c) God the Creator of the Universe?
4. What supernatural phenomenon happened at the banquet (v.5)? How did this affect the king (v.6)?
5. What did the king do, and what result did he get (v.7-9)? What suggestion did the queen give him (v.10-12)?



Read Daniel 5:13-31

6. What reward did the king offer to Daniel if he was able to read and interpret the writing on the wall (v.13-16)? What was Daniel's thought about getting rewards (v.17)? Which one is more important: telling the truth to honor God or getting rewards?
7. The king and the queen assumed Daniel had *the spirit of the gods* (v.11, 14), but Daniel introduced the Most High God (the true God) to them, all the lords, and the wise men in the banquet (v.18). What did Daniel say about the Most High God and Nebuchadnezzar (v.18-21)?
8. What did Daniel say about King Belshazzar, and how did Daniel show the king's sin against God (v.22-23)? Why was Daniel not afraid of speaking the truth and of showing the king's sin against God? Where did Daniel get his courage?
9. What did Daniel say about the writing on the wall and its interpretation (v.24-28)?
10. What reward did Daniel receive (v.29)? What happened to the king that night, and how did that fulfill what God had said through the writing on the wall (v.30-31)?
11. How does Jesus' perfect life of honoring God pay the price for all our disrespectful and sins against God (see Philippians 2:6-8 and 2 Corinthians 5:21)?

Notes

Sovereignty:

supreme power or authority.

God is in control over all things.

Versus: against;

in contrast to.

Supernatural phenomenon:

unnatural event or occurrence.

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God.

Philippians 2:6-8

"⁶ who, though he [Jesus Christ] was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

2 Corinthians 5:21

"For our sake he [God the Father] made him [Jesus Christ, the Son of God] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

Daniel 5

The Handwriting on the Wall

¹King Belshazzar made a great feast for a thousand of his lords and drank wine in front of the thousand. ²Belshazzar, when he tasted the wine, commanded that the vessels of gold and of silver that Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken out of the temple in Jerusalem be brought, that the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them. ³Then they brought in the golden vessels that had been taken out of the temple, the house of God in Jerusalem, and the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines drank from them. ⁴They drank wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone.

⁵Immediately the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace, opposite the lampstand. And the king saw the hand as it wrote.

⁶Then the king's color changed, and his thoughts alarmed him; his limbs gave way, and his knees knocked together. ⁷The king called loudly to bring in the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the astrologers. The king declared to the wise men of Babylon, "Whoever reads this writing, and shows me its interpretation, shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around his neck and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom." ⁸Then all the king's wise men came in, but they could not read the writing or make known to the king the interpretation. ⁹Then King Belshazzar was greatly alarmed, and his color changed, and his lords were perplexed.

¹⁰The queen, because of the words of the king and his lords, came into the banqueting hall, and the queen declared, "O king, live forever! Let not your thoughts alarm you or your color change. ¹¹There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the spirit of the holy gods. In the days of your father, light and understanding and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods were found in him, and King Nebuchadnezzar, your father—your father the king—made him chief of the magicians, enchanters, Chaldeans, and astrologers, ¹²because an excellent spirit, knowledge, and understanding to interpret dreams, explain riddles, and solve problems were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar. Now let Daniel be called, and he will show the interpretation."

Notes

Belshazzar: the son of King Nabonidus. Nabonidus ruled the Babylonian Empire from 556-539 BC. Belshazzar co-ruled with him from 553-539 BC.

Nebuchadnezzar ruled 43 years until he died in 562 BC. After three other kings ruled for short terms, Nabonidus and Belshazzar ruled the empire.

Father: here means ancestor or predecessor.

Vessel: container to hold liquid, such as a cup and bowl.

The temple in Jerusalem: the temple of God in Jerusalem, the capital city of Israel.

Concubine: a woman who lives with a man but has lower status than his wife or wives.

Plaster: a mixture for spreading on walls to form a smooth and hard surface when dried.

Enchanter: a person who uses magic, especially to put people under an enchantment spell.

Daniel Interprets the Handwriting

¹³ Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king answered and said to Daniel, “You are that Daniel, one of the exiles of Judah, whom the king my father brought from Judah. ¹⁴ I have heard of you that the spirit of the gods is in you, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in you. ¹⁵ Now the wise men, the enchanters, have been brought in before me to read this writing and make known to me its interpretation, but they could not show the interpretation of the matter. ¹⁶ But I have heard that you can give interpretations and solve problems. Now if you can read the writing and make known to me its interpretation, you shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around your neck and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.”

¹⁷ Then Daniel answered and said before the king, “Let your gifts be for yourself, and give your rewards to another. Nevertheless, I will read the writing to the king and make known to him the interpretation. ¹⁸ O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father kingship and greatness and glory and majesty. ¹⁹ And because of the greatness that he gave him, all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him. Whom he would, he killed, and whom he would, he kept alive; whom he would, he raised up, and whom he would, he humbled. ²⁰ But when his heart was lifted up and his spirit was hardened so that he dealt proudly, he was brought down from his kingly throne, and his glory was taken from him.

²¹ He was driven from among the children of mankind, and his mind was made like that of a beast, and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys. He was fed grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, until he knew that the Most High God rules the kingdom of mankind and sets over it whom he will. ²² And you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, though you knew all this, ²³ but you have lifted up yourself against the Lord of heaven. And the vessels of his house have been brought in before you, and you and your lords, your wives, and your concubines have drunk wine from them. And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see or hear or know, but the God in whose hand is your breath, and whose are all your ways, you have not honored.

²⁴ “Then from his presence the hand was sent, and this writing was inscribed. ²⁵ And this is the writing that was inscribed: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, and PARSIN. ²⁶ This is the interpretation of the matter: MENE, God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end; ²⁷ TEKEL, you have been weighed in the balances and found wanting; ²⁸ PERES, your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.”

²⁹ Then Belshazzar gave the command, and Daniel was clothed with purple, a chain of gold was put around his neck, and a proclamation was made about him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom. ³⁰ That very night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was killed.

³¹ And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old.

Notes

Exile: the state of being barred from one's native country, typically for political or punitive reasons.

Judah: a region in the south of Israel, where Jerusalem was—the capital city.

Mede: an Iranian who inhabited ancient Media (northwestern Iran).

Persian: a person from Persia or Iran. The Medes and Persians joined forces to overthrow Babylon. This event was foretold by God through Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel chapter 2—the silver chest and arms of the statue represented the Medo-Persian empire which conquered Babylon in 539 BC.

Trouble, Trust, and Triumph: Facing our troubles, trusting in God's sovereignty, and rejoicing in our triumphs -- *Learning from Daniel*

Lesson 6 – Reordering Our Disordered Loves and Desires

Opening Questions

1. Has one of your accomplishments ever made someone else unhappy or jealous of you?
2. Why do we envy? How can we not envy what others have?

Introduction

Augustine, a famous theologian and a philosopher, said that what defines a person more than anything is what they love, and the reason people are discontent in life is because they have *disordered loves*. He also said that the essence of sin is disordered love. Sin is ultimately a lack of love for God and his commands for our lives.



To think about:

God tells us, “For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice” (James 3:16). The heart of the problem is the problem of our hearts. From our hearts come envy, jealousy, and other disordered desires. We need God to perform a spiritual heart surgery for us, giving us a new heart that loves him more than anything including ourselves.

From the Bible: Read Daniel 6:1-18



Discussion Questions

1. Why did Daniel become distinguished above all the other high officials and satraps, and what did the king plan to do for him (v.1-3)?
2. Why couldn't the high officials and satraps find a ground for complaint about Daniel and his work (v.4)? What was one area that they might find a complaint (v.5)?
3. What plan did they bring to the king to trap Daniel? What punishment did they request for the law breaker (v.6-9)? Why do you think they wanted Daniel to die?
4. What did Daniel do after he knew the king had signed the order (v.10)? Why do you think he was not afraid to die? What happened to him afterwards (v.11-13)?
5. Why was the king so distressed (v.14)? What did the accusers tell the king (v.15)?
6. What did the king have to do, and what did he say to Daniel (v.16-17)? What happened to the king that night (v.18)?



Read Daniel 6:19-28

7. What did the king do early in the morning, and what did he find? What happened to the lions and Daniel (v.19-22)? How do we see God's sovereignty in Daniel's situation?
8. What did the king do next (v.23-24)? How did the king acknowledge the sovereignty of the God of Daniel? What did he do (v.25-27)? What do you think of it?
9. What happened to Daniel after his trouble passed (v.28)?
Daniel served several kings and was faithful to each of them, as well as to his God. Daniel was not even afraid to tell the kings about his God and his trust in his God. What can we learn from Daniel? How can we *orderly* and *truly* love God and others?
10. Just as Daniel was betrayed by other community leaders, Jesus was also betrayed by other community religious leaders. They got him crucified. Unlike Daniel, God did not save Jesus, because he was bearing the punishment of all our sins on the cross as our substitute. How does Jesus' sacrifice and death: (a) pay the price for all our disordered desires and sins against God, (b) give us a new life in him, (c) reorder our loves, and (d) make us righteous people before God (see 2 Corinthians 5:21 and Romans 8:1)?

Notes

Sovereignty:

supreme power or authority.

God is in control over all things.

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God.

2 Corinthians 5:21

“For our sake he [God the Father] made him [Jesus Christ, the Son of God] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

Romans 8:1

“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

Daniel 6

Daniel and the Lions' Den

¹It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom 120 satraps, to be throughout the whole kingdom; ²and over them three high officials, of whom Daniel was one, to whom these satraps should give account, so that the king might suffer no loss. ³Then this Daniel became distinguished above all the other high officials and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him. And the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom.

⁴Then the high officials and the satraps sought to find a ground for complaint against Daniel with regard to the kingdom, but they could find no ground for complaint or any fault, because he was faithful, and no error or fault was found in him. ⁵Then these men said, "We shall not find any ground for complaint against this Daniel unless we find it in connection with the law of his God."

⁶Then these high officials and satraps came by agreement to the king and said to him, "O King Darius, live forever! ⁷All the high officials of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the counselors and the governors are agreed that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce an injunction, that whoever makes petition to any god or man for thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. ⁸Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which cannot be revoked." ⁹Therefore King Darius signed the document and injunction.

¹⁰When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously. ¹¹Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and plea before his God. ¹²Then they came near and said before the king, concerning the injunction, "O king! Did you not sign an injunction, that anyone who makes petition to any god or man within thirty days except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?" The king answered and said, "The thing stands fast, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be revoked."

¹³Then they answered and said before the king, "Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or the injunction you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day." ¹⁴Then the king, when he heard these words, was much distressed and set his mind to deliver Daniel. And he labored till the sun went down to rescue him. ¹⁵Then these men came by agreement to the king and said to the king, "Know, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no injunction or ordinance that the king establishes can be changed."

¹⁶Then the king commanded, and Daniel was brought and cast into the den of lions. The king declared to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, deliver you!" ¹⁷And a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet and with the signet of his lords, that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel. ¹⁸Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; no diversions were brought to him, and sleep fled from him.

Notes

Satrap: a provincial governor in the ancient Persian empire.

Prefect: a regional governor; a chief officer.

Distinguished: successful.

Ordinance: an authoritative order.

Injunction: an authoritative warning.

Revoke: to cancel.

Distressed: suffering from anxiety or sorrow.

Fasting: abstain from all or some kinds of food or drink.

Diversion: an instance of turning something aside from its course.

Flee: to run away.

¹⁹ Then, at break of day, the king arose and went in haste to the den of lions. ²⁰ As he came near to the den where Daniel was, he cried out in a tone of anguish. The king declared to Daniel, “O 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, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm.”

²³ Then the king was exceedingly glad, and commanded that Daniel be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no kind of harm was found on him, because he had trusted in his God. ²⁴ And the king commanded, and those men who had maliciously accused Daniel were brought and cast into the den of lions—they, their children, and their wives. And before they reached the bottom of the den, the lions overpowered them and broke all their bones in pieces.

²⁵ Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: “Peace be multiplied to you. ²⁶ I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for he is the living God, enduring forever; his kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion shall be to the end. ²⁷ He delivers and rescues; he works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, he who has saved Daniel from the power of the lions.” ²⁸ So this Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

Notes

Haste: hurry.

Maliciously: with ill will or intention to do harm; wickedly.

Decree: an official order issued by a legal authority.

Resources

The ESV Study Bible. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008.

Serendipity Bible. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998.

Life Application Study Bible. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publisher, Inc., 1991.

Nielson, Jon. *Knowing God's Truth: An Introduction to Systematic Theology*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2023.