



Trust Exhibited

Believers can trust God in all circumstances.

DANIEL 6:10-24

One of the benefits of walking with God for many years is seeing firsthand how He can be trusted and that the Bible is right about everything. The Bible is right about money, true contentment, sex and marriage, leadership, relationships, and so much more. Long-term believers who live by God's principles see them validated again and again.

**In what areas of life do you find it most difficult to trust God?
What does trusting God look like?**

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

DANIEL 6:1-28

Babylon fell to the Medes and the Persians around 539 BC. Darius, a Mede, was given the jurisdiction of Babylon at the age of sixty-two (Dan. 5:31).

Daniel had been taken into exile by the Babylonians around 605 BC and held in captivity for seventy years. When Babylon was overtaken by the Medes and Persians, he was likely in his eighties. He must have been known by Darius, for Darius gave him an important role within the new kingdom. Daniel became one of three principal administrators. Apparently, he did an extraordinary job, for Darius decided to make him the head of government under his authority. Daniel's position and promotion created animosity amongst the other officials in the province (6:6-7), for they devised a plot to get rid of him. They went to Darius and requested he enforce an edict that if anyone was found worshiping a god or man except Darius for thirty days, he would be thrown into the lions' den (6:7). They knew Daniel's loyalty to the Lord and that each day he prayed three times to the Lord.

When Daniel defied the king's edict, all the officials went before Darius to inform him that Daniel had resisted the king's order. Daniel was subsequently thrown into the lions' den (6:16). The king could not sleep that night and hurried to the lions' den at dawn, crying out in the hope of hearing Daniel's voice (6:18-20). Daniel replied that God's angel had shut the lions' mouths (6:21-22). Removed from the den, Daniel was found to be unharmed (6:23). The king then ordered Daniel's accusers and their families be thrown into the den, where they all perished (6:24).

Darius sent word throughout his kingdom that people should honor Daniel's God (6:25-27). After his deliverance, Daniel continued serving in the Persian court (6:28).

As you read Daniel 6:10-24, highlight expressions of dependence on God. How does Daniel's faithfulness to God reflect God's faithfulness and trustworthiness?

THE TRAP SET (DAN. 6:10-14)

¹⁰ When Daniel learned that the document had been signed, he went into his house. The windows in its upstairs room opened toward Jerusalem, and three times a day he got down on his knees, prayed, and gave thanks to his God, just as he had done before.

¹¹ Then these men went as a group and found Daniel petitioning and imploring his God. ¹² So they approached the king and asked about his edict: “Didn’t you sign an edict that for thirty days any person who petitions any god or man except you, the king, will be thrown into the lions’ den?” The king answered, “As a law of the Medes and Persians, the order stands and is irrevocable.”

¹³ Then they replied to the king, “Daniel, one of the Judean exiles, has ignored you, the king, and the edict you signed, for he prays three times a day.” ¹⁴ As soon as the king heard this, he was very displeased; he set his mind on rescuing Daniel and made every effort until sundown to deliver him.

VERSES 10-11

A resolve to serve God was at the core of Daniel’s life. In Daniel 1:8, Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king’s food. Throughout his days in Babylon, he was known as a man who followed the ways of God. His enemies “could find no charge or corruption, for he was trustworthy, and no negligence or corruption was found in him” (Dan. 6:4).

Daniel was aware of the decree by the king that forbade prayer to any god other than the king for thirty days, and he was well aware of the implications. Yet he did not let that change his routine. Daniel would not let the king’s decree stop his faithfulness to the Lord: ***three times a day he got down on his knees, prayed, and gave thanks to his God, just as he had done before.***

Daniel’s practice followed the law of the Lord. In 1 Kings 8, when Solomon dedicated the temple to the Lord, he established that the Israelites would face Jerusalem—the home of the temple—to pray. Daniel did that.

Daniel did not use prayer as a protest against Persian custom or culture. Rather, he simply maintained the spiritual discipline he already practiced. In chapter 1, Daniel went against King Nebuchadnezzar when he asked to eat food that went against the

king's command. By asking to eat different food, Daniel was not making a political statement against the king. Rather, he was living by his spiritual convictions.

Seemingly, he knew of his enemies' plot. Perhaps they had previously made threats against him. But Daniel was not afraid; he went to his house and prayed as always. Daniel's trust in the Lord was his security. As followers of the Lord, we can have confidence in the Lord in the face of our enemies.

Where is the line for believers when it comes to ignoring or knowingly disobeying laws that restrict religious freedom?

KEY DOCTRINE: *Religious Liberty*

Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. (See 1 Pet. 2:12-17.)

VERSES 12-14

King Darius saw that his law was being used against him. Daniel had proven himself to be loyal to the king. In fact, verse 14 states that when Darius heard the report about Daniel, he became *displeased* and *set his mind on rescuing Daniel*.

The law was intended to be used to prove one's loyalty to the king. Darius recognized that deceitful people have their own agendas. These people were not interested in being loyal to the king; they were interested only in ridding themselves of Daniel.

Would you consider the decree more of a trap for Daniel or for Darius? How were both men being disrespected by the officials?

THE DOOR SHUT (DAN. 6:15-18)

¹⁵ Then these men went together to the king and said to him, “You know, Your Majesty, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no edict or ordinance the king establishes can be changed.” ¹⁶ So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions’ den. The king said to Daniel, “May your God, whom you continually serve, rescue you!” ¹⁷ A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den. The king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signet rings of his nobles, so that nothing in regard to Daniel could be changed. ¹⁸ Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting. No diversions were brought to him, and he could not sleep.

VERSES 15-17

Daniel’s opponents pressed the king to fulfill his obligation, and ***the king gave the order*** to throw ***Daniel into the lions’ den***. Persian protocol gave him no choice. It seems unusual for a king to follow a charged man to the place of execution. Moreover, it would appear to be out of place for a king to offer a defendant a word of prayer, considering that the offender had acted against the king. Yet, King Darius did: ***“May your God, whom you continually serve, rescue you!”***

Darius attempted to encourage Daniel, perhaps by reminding Daniel of the various things Daniel had told him about his God. Conceivably, that was what caused Darius to express a desire for God to deliver Daniel. At this point, we should remember that Darius was not a follower of the Lord. Yet his plea was genuine. It was made to God for Daniel’s deliverance, and to Daniel to not give up on his God.

The word translated *den* in verse 16 may also mean “pit.” This den may have been a large natural or man-made pit. The overhead entrance was sealed with a ***stone*** and the king’s insignia was placed on it. The likelihood of someone escaping was extremely slim, so this seems a bit excessive. Daniel’s silence may suggest his enemies were concerned the king might advocate some type of chicanery to protect Daniel.

Interestingly, Jesus’ opponents also wanted to ensure the sealing of His tomb after He was buried (Matt. 27:66). Both the action against Daniel and the action against Jesus were endorsed by the ruling government, and anyone who witnessed either of these two

events would have thought the matter was concluded. Of course, no one foresaw God’s dramatic intervention in either case.

What is the significance of no recorded words being attributed to Daniel in response to the charges and sentencing?

VERSE 18

When Darius found that he was trapped, he went to his palace, refused to be entertained, and fasted through the night. He was genuinely concerned for his friend. Perhaps his fasting was an act of piety, or perhaps he simply refused to eat when he knew his friend had surely died. He refused any ***diversions*** and ***could not sleep***.

We can turn to God in prayer when we and others face persecution. God is always with us, even when circumstances seem to suggest He is not. Jesus’ death on the cross provides the ultimate example of this truth; Jesus was fulfilling God’s plan perfectly but seemed to be alone and rejected. The night before He went to the cross, Jesus assured His followers they would face persecution in this world. However, He told them they should not fear, because He had overcome the world (John 16:33).

What actions could the king have taken? What do the actions he took reveal about his understanding of God and prayer?

THE TABLES TURNED (DAN. 6:19-24)

¹⁹ **At the first light of dawn the king got up and hurried to the lions’ den.** ²⁰ **When he reached the den, he cried out in anguish to Daniel. “Daniel, servant of the living God,” the king said, “has your God, whom you continually serve, been able to rescue you from the lions?”** ²¹ **Then Daniel spoke with the king: “May the king live forever.** ²² **My God sent his angel and shut the lions’ mouths; and they haven’t harmed me, for I was found innocent before him.**

And also before you, Your Majesty, I have not done harm.”²³ The king was overjoyed and gave orders to take Daniel out of the den. When Daniel was brought up from the den, he was found to be unharmed, for he trusted in his God.²⁴ The king then gave the command, and those men who had maliciously accused Daniel were brought and thrown into the lions’ den—they, their children, and their wives. They had not reached the bottom of the den before the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.

VERSES 19-23

The next morning, the king *hurried to the lions’ den*. He had no reasonable expectation that Daniel was still alive. In fact, the words translated *to Daniel* also could be rendered “for Daniel”; that is, the king may have been lamenting his decision to throw his trusted official to the lions.

To the king’s delight, he discovered Daniel was unharmed. Daniel’s God had overcome the foolish king’s edict. Daniel explained: *My God sent his angel and shut the lions’ mouths*.

God rescued Daniel. He protected His servant from wrongful death and did so to glorify Himself. However, that is not always the case. Hebrews 11:35-40 states that there have been many faithful followers who have experienced persecution and were not rescued from death. God does not deliver every faithful person from harm but assures His faithful followers He will always be with them (Josh. 1:5).

How does God vindicate His faithful followers through both sparing their lives and through their deaths?

VERSE 24

The men who tried to take Daniel’s life were not innocent. They had acted *maliciously* to deceive the king and to destroy Daniel. Consequently, the king immediately ordered that they be *thrown into the lions’ den*.

The judgment included Daniel’s accusers and *their children, and their wives*. Perhaps some of them had willingly participated in the

deceit, or perhaps Darius wanted to ensure future generations of family members would not try to retaliate. At any rate, these people ***had not reached the bottom of the den before the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.*** What they had planned as Daniel’s demise became their own.

The account of Daniel in the lions’ den reminds us that we can trust God in all circumstances. Others may try to limit our worship or discourage us from taking our faith too seriously. In some places today, believers face persecution and death for their faith. Nevertheless, we can trust that God knows our situation and will act in our situation to bring honor to Himself as we remain faithful to Him.

How is God’s presence part of the vindication for a believer when facing persecution?

BIBLE SKILL: *Use multiple Scripture passages to understand a major doctrine.*

The Bible assures us that God will never leave us or forsake us (Heb. 13:5). Read the following Bible passages from the Book of Daniel and take note of how they illustrate this teaching: Daniel 1:8-16; 2:13-23; 3:8-30; 6:16-22; 12:1-3. How do the passages in Daniel support Hebrews 13?

APPLY THE TEXT

- Believers must worship God alone even when others try to limit their worship.
- We can turn to God in prayer when we and others face persecution.
- God vindicates faithful believers for His honor.

Evaluate your faithfulness to spiritual disciplines, including prayer. What actions do you need to take to practice basic spiritual disciplines more effectively?

As a group, discuss ways of being advocates for other believers who may be facing religious persecution. How can you raise your awareness of and prayer for these believers?

List ways God has been honored through your faithfulness to Him. How can you better position yourself to bring honor to God?

PRAYER NEEDS
