

DANIEL IN THE LION'S DEN

Daniel 6

INTRODUCTION

On February 5, 1676, the celebrated scientist Sir Isaac Newton wrote in a letter to Robert Hooke, also a renowned scientist, *“If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.”*

Here is the greatest mind of the seventeenth century, to whom we owe much of what we know about gravity and optics, and from his pen we have this very modest statement.

Paul's second prayer in Ephesians that God recorded for our blessing:

- Eph 3:14-19
- in verse 18, that we may be able to comprehend with all the saints
- not just those alive in our lifetime, but with ALL believers
- the saints of church of history
- the saints that God captures for us in His holy, inerrant Word – like Daniel

→ Daniel 6

Proposition: Five Virtues in the Man of God – Daniel

1. Incredible Integrity
2. Intestinal Fortitude
3. Incessant Service
4. Indomitable Faith
5. Incomparable Success

So That: You would be this kind of man

1st Virtue of the Man of God, Daniel ...

I. Incredible Integrity 6:1-5

Point – Daniel – Spiritual Giant – Man of Highest Integrity

Proof – Dan 6:1-5 – “It seemed good to Darius to appoint 120 satraps over the kingdom, that they would be in charge of the whole kingdom, ²and over them three commissioners (of whom Daniel was one), that these satraps might be accountable to them, and that the king might not suffer loss. ³Then this Daniel began distinguishing himself among the commissioners and satraps because he possessed an extraordinary spirit, and the king planned to appoint him over the entire kingdom. ⁴Then the commissioners and satraps began trying to find a ground of accusation against Daniel in regard to government affairs; but they could find no ground of accusation or *evidence of corruption*, inasmuch as he was faithful, and no negligence or corruption was *to be* found in him. ⁵Then these men said, “We will not find any ground of accusation against this Daniel unless we find *it* against him with regard to the law of his God.”

“Darius” – is another name for Cyrus.

- The word “Darius” is a title
- Title of king of Persia in the book of Ezra
- Used on inscriptions in archaeology for five different Persian rulers.

“Daniel” – The name Daniel has three syllables and each one has a meaning in Hebrew.

- “Dan” means “judge”.
- The little “ee” sound (i) means “my”.
- And “el” means “God”.
- So Daniel’s name means “God, my Judge”—“God is my Judge” or “God is my Vindicator”

v. 3 – “this Daniel began distinguishing himself among the commissioners and satraps because he possessed an extraordinary spirit”

- attitude
- experience
- lived through the Babylonian regime as the prime minister
- wisdom
- he had a sense of history
- leadership ability
- administrative ability

The first year of Cyrus/Darius, around 538 or 537 B.C., he gave a decree that the Jews could go back to Judah. 70 years of Babylonian captivity is now over.

Daniel is in his 80's. And he is the king's choice to be the prime minister.

v. 4 - “he was faithful, and no negligence or corruption was to be found in him”

- the man who succeeds is the man who works.
 - almost 90 years old and he gets all of the people in political office around him, digging around to try to find something and they've got nothing
- integrity, honesty, purity

“**negligence**” – the sin of omission

“**corruption**” – the sin of commission

- they can't find anything he did that he shouldn't have done and anything that he didn't do that he should have done
- there is no secret sin, no corruption

“above reproach” (1 Tim. 3:10; Tit. 1:6f) – example *par excellence*

v. 5 - “We will not find any ground of accusation against this Daniel unless we find *it* against him with regard to the law of his God.”

- he was aligned with God and His Word
- lined up with the black and white clear truth that God gives us in the Bible
- that is what Daniel had on the strength of his integrity

Illustration – It is said that as the great Michelangelo painted the ceiling of the Sistine chapel--lying on his back for endless hours to finish every detail with great care--a friend asked him why he took such pains with figures that would be viewed from a considerable distance. “After all,” the friend said, “Who will notice whether it is perfect or not?” “I will,” replied the artist. He understood the integrity of his work.

The great educator, author, and orator, Booker T. Washington describes meeting an ex-slave from Virginia in his book Up From Slavery:

“I found that this man had made a contract with his master, two or three years previous to the Emancipation Proclamation, to the effect that the slave was to be permitted to buy himself, by paying so much per year for his body; and while he was paying for himself, he was to be permitted to labor where and for whom he pleased.

Finding that he could secure better wages in Ohio, he went there. When freedom came, he was still in debt to his master some three hundred dollars. Notwithstanding that the Emancipation Proclamation freed him from any obligation to his master, this black man walked the greater portion of the distance back to where his old master lived in Virginia, and placed the last dollar, with interest, in his hands.

In talking to me about this, the man told me that he knew that he did not have to pay his debt, but that he had given his word to his

master, and his word he had never broken. He felt that he could not enjoy his freedom till he had fulfilled his promise.”

This man had such powerful integrity!

Application – God has these examples for us, especially in Scripture, to teach us to have incredible integrity. The man who succeeds is the man who works and trusts God.

2nd Virtue of the Man of God, Daniel ...

II. Intestinal Fortitude

6:6-15

Point – Bulldog tenacity for the Lord. Iron will, we see as part of God’s common plan for the believer, and it is beautiful as it shines for His glory.

Proof – **Dan 6:6-15** – “Then these commissioners and satraps came by agreement to the king and spoke to him as follows: “King Darius, live forever! ⁷All the commissioners of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the high officials and the governors have consulted together that the king should establish a statute and enforce an injunction that anyone who makes a petition to any god or man besides you, O king, for thirty days, shall be cast into the lions’ den. ⁸Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document so that it may not be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which may not be revoked.” ⁹Therefore King Darius signed the document, that is, the injunction. ¹⁰Now when Daniel knew that the document was signed, he entered his house (now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem); and he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously. ¹¹Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and supplication before his God. ¹²Then they approached and spoke before the king about the king’s injunction, “Did you not sign an injunction that any man who makes a petition to any god or man besides you, O king, for thirty days, is to be cast into the lions’ den?” The king replied, “The statement is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which may not be revoked.” ¹³Then they

answered and spoke before the king, “Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the injunction which you signed, but keeps making his petition three times a day.” ¹⁴Then, as soon as the king heard this statement, he was deeply distressed and set *his* mind on delivering Daniel; and even until sunset he kept exerting himself to rescue him. ¹⁵Then these men came by agreement to the king and said to the king, “Recognize, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no injunction or statute which the king establishes may be changed.”

v. 6 - “came by agreement” – interesting verb in the Aramaic,

- it means they came in a disorganized hurry
- it's kind of like a rabble – like the torch-bearing villagers
- gives an idea of the peril that Daniel is facing

The book of Daniel is written in Hebrew yet Daniel 2:4b – 7:28 is written in Aramaic – the *lingua franca* (main language spoken) of the Babylonian, Assyrian and Persian empires

- this section of Daniel is focusing on these world empires

We see the prayer life of Daniel

- daring
- defiant
- disciplined
- courageous in prayer

I don't want to be a spiritual jellyfish, drifting on the sea of emotionalism and doubt, praying a little here and a little there as the waves of emotion and circumstance rise and fall.

I commend you to read the beginning Daniel 9 – where Daniel gives his prayer as a stellar example of a Godly prayer.

v.10 - “Now when Daniel knew that the document was signed, he entered his house (now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem); and he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously.”

- 1) Daniel acts in full knowledge of the law and the consequences.
- 2) He does not pray in secret. He is making a public statement.
- 3) He does not pray once, early in the morning when no one might be looking, but three times a day and every day in full visibility.
- 4) When Daniel prays, he uses clear words directing his prayers to God.
 - It says, “**He gave thanks before *his* God.**” Not Darius. And not the gods of the Medes and Persians, but the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
- 6) He does not change the way he prays or do anything different to yield to the law Darius had made.
 - like Peter before the Council in **Acts 5:29 “ We must obey God rather than men.”**

v.14 - “as soon as the king heard this statement, he was deeply distressed and set *his* mind on delivering Daniel; and even until sunset he kept exerting himself to rescue him.”

- Daniel never says a word.
- Daniel never takes up his own cause.
- Daniel never defends himself.

I was praying and I'll just keep on praying.
This is intestinal fortitude!

Illustration – The story is told that Andrew Jackson's boyhood friends just couldn't understand how he became a famous general and then the President of the United States. They knew of other men who had greater talent but who never succeeded. One of Jackson's friends said, “Why, Jim Brown, who lived right down the pike from Jackson, was not only smarter but he could throw Andy three times out of four in a wrestling match. But look where Andy

is now.” Another friend responded, “How did there happen to be a fourth time? Didn't they usually say three times and out?” “Sure, they were supposed to, but not Andy. He would never admit he was beat -- he would never say 'threwed.' Jim Brown would get tired, and on the fourth try Andrew Jackson would throw him and be the winner.”

Application – it wasn't because he was smarter or stronger, it was because of his fortitude and his tenacity. That is what God commands of us. James 1:3 tells us to count it all joy in all trials. That is the kind of joy you can only have by God's mercy, by God's gift.

3rd Virtue of the Man of God, Daniel ...

III. Incessant Service 6:16-20

Point – Daniel is characterized by his continual ministry unto the Lord

Proof – **Dan 6:16-20** – “Then the king gave orders, and Daniel was brought in and cast into the lions' den. The king spoke and said to Daniel, “Your God whom you constantly serve will Himself deliver you.”¹⁷ A stone was brought and laid over the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signet rings of his nobles, so that nothing would be changed in regard to Daniel.¹⁸ Then the king went off to his palace and spent the night fasting, and no entertainment was brought before him; and his sleep fled from him.¹⁹ Then the king arose at dawn, at the break of day, and went in haste to the lions' den.²⁰ When he had come near the den to Daniel, he cried out with a troubled voice. The king spoke and said to Daniel, “Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you constantly serve, been able to deliver you from the lions?”

The main point here is God's miraculous rescue of Daniel. It is about God protecting His man in this purpose.

- These were lions that were purposely starved to be used as executioners.

- Daniel’s reputation is brought out – he is known as a man who constantly, incessantly serves His Lord
- That is captured from the lips of Darius, this Persian king
- This is what Darius knew to be true

Genesis 6:19-20 “**And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every *kind* into the ark, to keep *them* alive with you; they shall be male and female.²⁰ Of the birds after their kind, and of the animals after their kind, of every creeping thing of the ground after its kind, two of every *kind* will come to you to keep *them* alive.”**

Charles Spurgeon notes – “*by perseverance the snail reached the Ark.*”

Illustration - During World War II, England needed to increase its production of coal. Winston Churchill called together labor leaders to enlist their support. At the end of his presentation he asked them to picture in their minds a parade which he knew would be held in Picadilly Circus after the war.

First, he said, would come the sailors who had kept the vital sea lanes open. Then would come the soldiers who had come home from Dunkirk and then gone on to defeat Rommel in Africa. Then would come the pilots who had driven the Luftwaffe from the sky. Last of all, he said, would come a long line of sweat-stained, soot-streaked men in miner's caps. Someone would cry from the crowd, 'And where were you during the critical days of our struggle?' And from ten thousand throats would come the answer, 'We were deep in the earth with our faces to the coal.'

In God’s economy, not all persons are Daniels. Not all the jobs in a church are prominent and glamorous. But it is often the people with their “faces to the coal” who help the church accomplish its mission.

Application – The halls of heaven are full of people with faces ‘stained by coal.’ This is the kind of ministry we need to offer up to our Lord

4th Virtue of the Man of God, Daniel ...

IV. Indomitable Faith 6:21-23

Point – Faith → *noticia, assensus, fiducia*

noticia - notification, understanding, knowledge – intellect

assensus - assent, agreement – emotion

fiducia - trust – will

Proof – **Daniel 6:21-23** – “Then Daniel spoke to the king, “ O king, live forever! ²²My God sent His angel and shut the lions’ mouths and they have not harmed me, inasmuch as I was found innocent before Him; and also toward you, O king, I have committed no crime.” ²³Then the king was very pleased and gave orders for Daniel to be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den and no injury whatever was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.”

It was God’s sovereignty; God before time began decreed that he would rescue Daniel from the lion’s den. At the same time, he uses the reality, the living outworking demonstration of Daniel’s belief and trust in Him to affect that.

- God gets all the glory
- beautiful concurrence of God’s sovereignty and the human responsibility He gives us as His children, He gives us the ability through the might and the power of the indomitable Holy Spirit - to be obedient to Him
- it is because of Daniel’s indomitable faith that he was rescued

Application

It doesn’t always happen that way, does it?

- Isaiah believed God, but he got sawn in half.
- Paul believed God and had his head cut off.
- Peter believed in God and he got crucified upside down.

5th Virtue of the Man of God, Daniel ...

V. Incomparable Success

6:24-28

Point – Daniel’s Success

Proof – Daniel 6:24-28 – “The king then gave orders, and they brought those men who had maliciously accused Daniel, and they cast them, their children and their wives into the lions’ den; and they had not reached the bottom of the den before the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones. ²⁵Then Darius the king wrote to all the peoples, nations and *men of every language* who were living in all the land: “ May your peace abound! ²⁶I make a decree that in all the dominion of my kingdom men are to fear and tremble before the God of Daniel;

For He is the living God and enduring forever,
And His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed,
And His dominion *will be* forever.

²⁷”He delivers and rescues and performs signs and wonders
In heaven and on earth,
Who has *also* delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.”

²⁸”So this Daniel enjoyed success in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.”

v. 25 - “all the peoples, nations and *men of every language* who were living in all the land”

Application – Daniel had great spiritual success.

Illustration – There was a youth pastor in Tennessee in the late 1960s and early 1970s who went knocking on doors in the neighborhood to invite youth to his church. He knocked on the door of a young teenager who didn’t grow up in a Christian household. The young man starting going to the church, was saved, and eventually moved to Seattle. He founded a church with about 75 people and it grew into a megachurch. The pastor had one son, Jeff. Jeff followed in the footsteps of Christ and currently pastors a church in Federal Way, Washington. Jeff was the

associate pastor at the church that Margie and I first plugged into after we were married. He was also the small group leader of a home group for young marrieds that Margie and I attended. It was Jeff who approached me after about a year and said he wanted to divide the small group into two and he wanted me to lead the second group. I laughed and said “Are you kidding?” And now I am here and God has me preaching from this pulpit.

This is one example of how the thread of God’s mercy can weave through people’s lives through just one man.

CONCLUSION

Poem from George Liddell – this is the kind of man of God that we want to be to be used by God.

*Give me a man of God, one man
Whose faith is master of his mind,
And I will right all wrongs
And bless the name of all mankind.*

*Give me a man of God, one man,
Whose tongue is touched with heaven’s fire,
And I will flame the darkest hearts
With high resolve and clean desire.*

*Give me a man of God, one man,
One mighty prophet of the Lord,
And I will give you peace on earth
Brought with prayer and not a sword.*

*Give me a man of God, one man,
True to the vision that he sees,
And I will build your broken shrines
And bring the nations to their knees.*

May we learn from Daniel and be that man or woman of God.