

Daniel and the Presidents

The Medes and Persians had conquered Babylon and Darius who was king of the Medo-Persian kingdom put Daniel into a prominent position in his kingdom. Daniel 5:31, 6:1, 2 says, "And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old. It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom; And over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first: that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage."

In fact Darius respected Daniel so much that we are told in Daniel 6:3, "Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm." Daniel, a captive twice over being set over the entire kingdom. Only the king was to be higher than him. No wonder the other presidents and princes became jealous.

The presidents and princes decided that they couldn't allow Daniel to be in such a high position, so they decided that something had to be done to stop it. We are told in Daniel 6:4, "Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him." I don't believe they left one stone unturned and yet we are told that they could find no error or fault in him. O that men could say that about each one of us.

"Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God." Daniel 6:5 Those who know us should be able to say this about us today. It will be said about those who go through the time of trouble that is just before us.

So, the presidents and princes got together and came up with a scheme to do away with Daniel. We are told, "Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever. All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree." Dan. 6:6-9

"Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime." Daniel 6:10 Wait a minute! Did we hear that right? Come on Daniel. Where in the Bible does it command us to kneel three times a day before an open window and pray aloud!? I can't find it anywhere. Daniel, isn't that a bit presumptuous? Couldn't you have just moved back, say, three feet from the window so no one would see you and lower your voice enough so no one would hear you? Come on! God can read our thoughts. You don't have to pray so everyone within ear shot can hear! Get real!

Why did Daniel do this? Did he know something we don't? Let's look at what James 4:17 says: "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." Had Daniel been doing good? Yes. If he had stopped doing it what would it have been? Now wait a minute. Aren't we taking this a bit too far? Are we?

If I am doing something that is good, and there is nothing in God's word that shows it to be wrong in any way, and someone asks or demands me to stop, and I comply with his request. What am I doing?

1. I would be acknowledging that what I have been doing is wrong.

If I acknowledge that I am doing wrong when I'm not, I would be lying to myself as well to everyone else involved.

2. I would be allowing that individual to dictate to my conscience and take the place of God in my life.

If I allow someone else to take God's place, I am acknowledging that God is not the Lord and master of my life. In doing this, I would be denying my Lord. Matthew 10:33 says, "But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." If I deny Jesus, would I not be a lost man? I would also be living in idolatry, because I am putting someone else before God.

3. I would also be acknowledging that individuals have the right to control me and my conscience.

If I acknowledge that an individual has the right to control me and my conscience, I deny God's authority over me and my conscience, in preference to another individual.

"In matters of conscience the soul must be left untrammelled. No one is to control another's mind, to judge for another, or to prescribe his duty. God gives to every soul freedom to think, and to follow his own convictions. "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God." No one has a right to merge his own individuality in that of another. In all matters where principle is involved, "let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." Rom. 14:12, 5. In Christ's kingdom there is no lordly oppression, no compulsion of manner. The angels of heaven do not come to the earth to rule, and to exact homage, but as messengers of mercy, to co-operate with men in uplifting humanity." DA 550

"They will assume the right that is God's alone. They will think they can force the conscience, which God alone should control." DA 630

“The doctrine that God has committed to the church the right to control the conscience, is one of the most deeply rooted of papal errors.” GC 292 1888 edition

What is the natural thing to do when life is threatened? When we look at the animal kingdom and we see a life threatened, what is the animals response? The natural God given response, instinct, is to flee danger.

God has also put this same response into the human race. Whenever there is a life threatening circumstances or even something that we believe will cause us pain, a driving force within us causes us to flee the danger. Most of the time we flee without even giving it conscious thought.

It is the natural reaction to flee danger. But what about the times that people don't flee danger, like the situation that Daniel had to deal with and others down through history? If it is not natural for an individual to submit to a life threatening circumstance, what is it that causes them to do so. It is not a natural response but a supernatural response. An individual needs supernatural power in order to go into, or remain in dangers way, or they will flee.

Philippians 4:13 says, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” In the Review & Herald. 01-20-1903 we read, “Nothing is apparently more helpless, yet really more invincible, than the soul that feels its nothingness, and relies wholly on the merits of the Saviour. God would send every angel in heaven to the aid of such a one, rather than allow him to be overcome.” It also says in Christ Object Lessons page 333 “As the will of man co-operates with the will of God, it becomes omnipotent. Whatever is to be done at His command may be accomplished in His strength. All His biddings are enablings.” That's increadable! Did you get that? If we allow God to control our wills we become omnipotent, all-powerful! Daniel had spent enough time with God that he was convinced of this fact. So when his life was threatened he could calmly look death in the face and not flinch. Because he knew that God would never allow anything to happen to him that was not His will as long as he was not going against God's will. Whatever was God's will for his life was what Daniel wanted.

We are told in Signs of the Times, 1875 04-01:

“Daniel was true, noble, and generous. While he was anxious to be at peace with all men, he would not permit any power to turn him aside from the path of duty. He had an opportunity to testify in favor of the true God, and to present the reasons why he alone should receive worship, and the duty of rendering him praise and homage, and nobly did he improve it. Had he respected the king's decree in this instance, he would have dishonored God. He was surrounded by proud idolaters; but he was a faithful witness for the truth. His dauntless adherence to a right course of action, was as a bright light amid the moral darkness of that heathen court.

On account of his praying to God, Daniel was cast into the lion's den. Envious and wicked men thus far accomplished their purpose. But Daniel continued to pray, even among the lions. Did God forget his faithful servant, and suffer him to be destroyed? Oh, no; Jesus, the mighty Commander of the hosts of Heaven, sent his angels to close the mouths of those hungry lions, that they should not hurt the praying man of God; and all was peace in that terrible den. The king witnessed the miraculous preservation of Daniel, and brought him out with honors; while those who had plotted his destruction were utterly destroyed, with their wives and children, in the terrible manner in which they had planned to destroy Daniel.

Through the moral courage of this one man who chose, even in the face of death, to take a right course rather than a politic one, Satan was defeated, and God honored. For the deliverance of Daniel from the power of the lions was a striking evidence that the Being whom he worshiped was the true and living God. And the king wrote unto "all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth:" "I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel; for he is the living God, and steadfast forever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end."

Daniel was sorely tried; but he overcame because he was of a humble and prayerful spirit. Although he was surrounded with distrust and suspicion, and his enemies laid a snare for his life, yet he maintained a serene and cheerful trust in God, never once deviating from principle. Although Daniel was a man of like passions with ourselves, the pen of inspiration presents him as a faultless character. His life is given us as a bright example of what man may become, even in this life, if he will make God his strength, and wisely improve the privileges and opportunities within his reach.” Signs of the Times, 1875 04-01

Oh for a faith like Daniel's -- to know, without a doubt, that no one can touch you without God's OK. To be able to go anywhere, do anything, knowing that “all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” Romans 8:28. Knowing this, gives one true peace under all circumstances and complete freedom to do whatever one needs to do.

Oh to have God say of me what he said of Daniel. “And he (the angel) said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved.... Daniel 10:11 I believe that's the ultimate complement.

God Bless

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