
Day 265 - September 22

The Exiled Nation (585-535 BCE)

Daniel in the Lions' Den

Readings: *Daniel 6:1-27; 1:21; 6:28*

Reflections:

- This account takes place during the reign of Darius the Mede. It opens with Daniel serving as one of three administrators overseeing the kingdom. Again, the description of Daniel fits well with comparisons to Joseph in Egypt. Darius planned to make Daniel the point administrator over the kingdom and then a conspiracy arises to subvert his leadership. They ultimately turn to his commitment to God to find a basis to call his leadership into question. The same God-honoring principles that led to Daniel's advancement created the jealousy and envy that resulted in strong opposition from those jealous of his success.
- The administrators and satraps convince Darius to make a decree that for 30 days people will only be allowed to pray to him. The worship of kings as deities was common. This is a good reminder that if people don't intentionally orient their lives to worship God, they will be susceptible to making themselves the god of their own world.
- Daniel continues his commitment to pray to God. Even the threat of death doesn't stop him from walking in an active, daily trust relationship with God. It makes for an interesting comparison that today many struggle to stay focused on God in a daily way and they are not being threatened with death but rather distracted with a thousand and one second best opportunities.
- Daniel is trapped by the conspirators and so the king is left having to agree to have him thrown into the Lion's den. "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you." For those that serve God, obedience to God will often lead us into situations where we actually must completely depend on him to rescue us from the consequences of our faithful obedience. This crisis are not inserted in our lives because God is determined to destroy us, but rather to reveal in fullness our trust in him and his power to do the impossible.
- Darius seals the den with his own signet ring so that "Daniel's situation might not change." Daniel's doom was sealed. Humanly speaking there was absolutely no hope whatsoever.
- Darius is literally so disturbed that he couldn't sleep. He knew that what he was doing was wrong but he was bound by his own words. This is a good example of foolish leadership. The

truth should always win out even if it means that as a leader you have to repent of your words or commitments.

- In the morning Darius runs to see if Daniel, “the servant of the living God” had been rescued. Daniel’s first words out of his mouth: “O king, live forever!” This is the guy who sent him to his death and sealed it with his own ring. Wow! Talk about looking beyond the offense and extending grace. Daniel’s innocence led to God’s loyal protection through the aid of an angel.
- When Daniel is lifted out it says, “No wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.” This is an example of faith resulting in a miraculous deliverance from God.
- The judgment against the conspirators is terrible! The king kills them and their wives and children. What a terrible conclusion to this story. We must remember that these stories of Israel possess a very sad and grievous aspect. Rather than Daniel being spared and people turning to God, this pagan king turns around and commits a terribly unjust act.
- The story ends with Darius sending out a command for the kingdom to show reverence for Daniel’s God. This decree reads like a song: “For he is the living God and he endures forever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end. He rescues and he saves...” This recorded story of Darius’ enthusiasm about Daniel’s God is apparently short-lived as Darius ultimately abandons Babylonia and joins with Cyrus and helps bring about the overthrow of his own country. We see from Daniel 1:21 that Daniel remained there until the first year of King Cyrus. Daniel still finds favor with the Persian leaders under Cyrus (Daniel 6:28) but what happens after that is a mystery. It seems he simply stays in Babylon until he reappears again in two or three years. This reminds us that great leaders are adaptive because their security and focus is on God. As the circumstances change they find their security in God and continue to complete the purposes God has for them.