

DANIEL 6

AIM OF STUDY:

Be encouraged to stand firm in the faith even in the face of the evil schemes of those who hate God and his servants. Identify and reflect on some of the recurring themes in the first half of the book.

MAIN TEACHING POINT:

God's faithfulness in the delivering faithful Daniel from the plots of those who would seek to bring him down.

NOTE FOR LEADERS:

Please print enough copies of page 3 of this study as a handout to give to each member of your group.

INTRODUCTION (VERSES 1-3)

As we've seen in most of the previous chapters the narrator sets the scene for the events of the story which will follow. Daniel would have been an old man by now. We've been given some incredible snapshots of his long life of service to the different Babylonian kings under whom he served. Presumably his life was one of hard, unremarkable but loyal service to his pagan masters. We know nothing of his hopes and dreams and can only make educated guesses about his life struggles. We don't know if he was married or had any children.

We know nothing about his attitude to the king's plans for him outlined in verse 3. Perhaps we can seek to enter into Daniel's world but tentatively by completing the following statements hypothetically uttered by Daniel in private upon hearing about his imminent promotion. How might you complete the following:

- "At last! Now I'm going to"
- "Oh, no! That's"
- "Oh well! At least....."

POLITICAL INTRIGUE (VERSES 4-9)

We're not told about his attitude to his new job. What we do learn however is about what others think about it.

1. What is so remarkable about Daniel? How does he compare with Joseph in the role that he played in Egypt?
2. Why do you think that the presidents and the satraps sought to bring him down? What was their problem?
3. Where is God in all of this? Why the silence? How are we to think about political intrigue in a world where God is king?

DANIEL'S FAITHFULNESS (VERSES 10)

4. Why does Daniel pray towards Jerusalem? See 1 Kings 8:46-51 (particularly verse 48). What does the "...as he had done previously..." referring to Daniel in chapter 6:10 tell us?

THE TRAP CLOSES (VERSES 11-18)

5. How accurate was the accusation which the men brought against Daniel in 6:13? What is the effect created by the repetition of the words, "..... by agreement..." in 6:11 & 15? What do you find surprising about verse 14?
6. There seems to be both a sense of nervousness about and one of finality in the words of verse 17, "... that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel." In what way do you find this so typical of human political machinations. Explore and discuss the parallels between this event and the plot against Jesus.



DELIVERANCE (VERSES 19-28)

7. What does the outcome of the event tell us about God and his absolute sovereignty even over the evil plots of men?
8. What do you find remarkable about king Darius' reaction and his letter at the end of the chapter?
9. What do you find remarkable about king Darius' reaction and his letter at the end of the chapter?

As we come to the end of the narrative section of the Daniel in chapters 1-6, let's look back and see some of the common themes that emerge. See page 3 handout.

10. The truths expressed in these chapters about God and his ways are mostly spoken by pagan kings. What do you find remarkable about this?
11. What common themes can you find when you compare them? What encouragement do you find from reading these verses?

These are deep truths about God about his kingdom and about the world in which we live. In chapters 7-12 we are going to see the same truths expressed but in quite a different way as Daniel himself receives visions from God about things to come.

| Daniel 2:20-23 | Daniel 2:44-45, 47 | Daniel 3:28-29 | Daniel 4:1-3 | Daniel 4:34-35, 37 | Daniel 6:25-27 |
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| Nebuchadnezzar's Dream of the great statue and the smashing stone | | Nebuchadnezzar's statue in the plain of Shinar - the burning fiery furnace | Nebuchadnezzar humbled to become like a wild animal for 7 times | | King Darius and Daniel in the lion's den |
| <p>20 Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might.</p> <p>21 He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding;</p> <p>22 he reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him.</p> <p>23 To 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."</p> | <p>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."</p> | <p>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."</p> | <p>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.</p> | <p>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;</p> <p>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?"</p> | <p>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.</p> <p>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."</p> |
| | <p>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."</p> | | | <p>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.</p> | |