

APPLICATION

“When prayer is fashionable, it is time to pray in secret (Matt. 6:5-6), but when prayer is under pressure, to pray in secret is to give the appearance of fearing the king more than God” (Goldingay in Lucas 2002: 154).

“As Wink says, this ‘seemingly innocuous act’ was ‘more . . . revolutionary than outright rebellion would have been. Rebellion simply acknowledges the absoluteness and ultimacy of the emperor’s power, and attempts to seize it. Prayer denies that ultimacy altogether by acknowledging a higher power’” (Lucas 2002: 154).

“In telling these stories today, the church must exercise extreme caution lest the relationship with God is reduced to a triumphal, commercial transaction: if you do this, then God will do that! . . . When God intervenes it is to accomplish his purposes, not ours” (Lederach in Lucas 2002: 155).

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Would those who know you say that “We will never find any basis for charges against [your name] unless it has something to do with the law of his/her God.”

How would it affect you if a law was made forbidding praying three times a day?

SOURCES CITED

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DANIEL 6: DANIEL IN THE LIONS’ DEN

THE MESSAGE OF DANIEL 6

The Lord’s protection of a faithful exile leads a Gentile ruler to acknowledge the eternal kingdom of God.

OUTLINE OF DANIEL 6

- A. Exaltation of Daniel (6:1-3)
- B. Trap Laid by Conspirators (6:4-9)
- C. Daniel’s Faithfulness to the Lord (6:10-15)
- D. Daniel in the Lions’ Den (6:16-18)
- C'. The Lord’s Faithfulness to Daniel (6:19-23)
- B'. Conspirators Fall in their own Trap (6:24)
- A'. Exaltation of God (6:25-28)

DANIEL 6 IN CONTEXT

Chapter 6 most closely parallels chapter 3 in terms of emphases and themes. The God who can humble kings and kingdoms (chs. 4–5) is the same one who will protect his people through death. The second half of the book reveals in great detail exactly how the Lord will establish his everlasting kingdom and rescue his faithful from the hands of the enemy.

The dating of this story indicates that Daniel’s exceptional abilities were recognized by the kingdom that succeeded the Babylonians (6:1). Thus the Lord demonstrates his sovereignty not only over the first beast but also over the second.

PROPHETIC SIGNIFICANCE OF DANIEL 6

“Although historical and to be accepted in its literal portrayal of an event, it is also parabolic like chapter 3 and is a foreshadowing of the ultimate deliverance of the people of Israel from their persecutors in the time of the great tribulation at the end of the times of the Gentiles” (Walvoord 1971).

NOTES

v2 “The motivation for this arrangement (*so that the king might not suffer loss*; 2) speaks volumes about the temptations of political life and the fact that high office is no guarantee of high morals” (Ferguson 1994).

v5 “What a testimony Daniel had that even his enemies knew he would be faithful to God although it would cost him his life” (Walvoord 1971).

vv7-9 “The suggestion made to the king was calculated to boost his ego and give expression to his new authority” (Baldwin 1978: 142).

v10 “It is not, as with his three companions in ch. iii., a question of a positive sin which he will not commit, but of a positive duty which he will not omit” (Driver in Miller 1994: 182).

v10 “Daniel prayed three times a day, supposedly at morning, midday, and night (cf. Ps 55:17). The old statesman was a man of prayer and is an example of the importance of that discipline for modern believers” (Miller 1994: 182).

v10 “If the possibility occurred to him that he could change his prayer routine, or pray without appearing to do so, it was dismissed as out of the question. He steadily continued his lifelong habit of regular prayer, as his accusers expected he would. Had he taken evasive action no doubt some other plot would have been laid against him, and by saving his own skin he would have betrayed the God whom he had served for some seventy years. Nothing would have been gained and he would have lost the opportunity to prove the faithfulness of his God” (Baldwin 1978: 143).

v10 “While the critical issue in the narrative is the bare fact that Daniel prayed, in a marked spirit of reverence, it also provides several details of his praying, thus using him as an exemplar of a life of prayer (cf. 2:17–18; 9:3–19; 10:2–3, 12)” (Ferguson 1994).

v14 “There is irony in the fact that the king who sought to portray himself as the one through whom everyone’s petitions could be answered finds that he cannot bring about the one thing that he wants to happen. He is trapped by his courtiers and his own immutable decree” (Lucas 2002: 151).

v16 “Nevertheless, the fact that Darius believed it was even possible that Daniel could be saved indicates that the prophet must have been telling the king of the great miracles the God of Israel had performed” (Miller 1994: 185).

v16 “It is this prayer above all that makes this chapter different from all that has gone before, because an ‘outsider’, a king of the nations, is exercising faith, however dimly, in Daniel’s God, and it is in the interests of fostering that faith that evidence of God’s power can be expected” (Baldwin 1978: 144).

v19 “While Daniel claims that he has been spared because he was *blameless* (22), that is, innocent of the charge against him, the narrator claims it was *because he had trusted in his God* (23). Both are true” (Baldwin 1978: 145).

v23 “If we ask how this miracle could be (cf. Heb 11:33), a clue is found in the prophetic literature (Isa. 11:6; 65:25; Hos. 2:18) and in the intention at creation that man should have dominion over the beasts. ‘Part of the glory of the coming regeneration when the king comes back, will be that nature and the lower orders of creation will once again be subject to man redeemed and saved to sin no more.’ In the man of God the powers of the world to come have broken in, in anticipation of what will be when the king comes to reign” (Baldwin 1978: 145).

vv25-27 “Darius’ confession goes beyond that of Nebuchadnezzar at the end of ch. 3. Nebuchadnezzar forbade blasphemy against the God of the Jews; Darius enjoins respect for this God. Nebuchadnezzar confessed God’s power to deliver; Darius makes a far fuller confession, which has many echoes of those in ch. 4” (Lucas 2002: 153).