

6:18-20 – The King Mourns for Daniel

Dan.6:18-20 Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; no diversions were brought to him, and sleep fled from him. Then, at break of day, the king arose and went in haste to the den of lions. As he came near to the den where Daniel was, he cried out in a tone of anguish. The king declared to Daniel, “O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?”

The king was very upset over losing his friend and best administrator – it was his fault. Esth.6:1 The king probably wondered if he had overlooked anything that might have saved Daniel. He hoped for God; he knew the stories of how God delivered the Jews (fiery furnace, Red Sea). In contrast, Nebuchadnezzar showed no compassion for the 3 men he sent to the furnace. Daniel could have said “God, this is not fair! I deserve better treatment!” But he trusted.

Daniel obeyed God and was *comforted*, as his 3 friends had been in the fire with the 4th man. Many believe it was the same comforter in both cases - the Son of God. John 14:16 God also tested Abraham’s obedience, asking him to sacrifice his son Isaac. Gen.22:1-18 Abraham obeyed because he believed that God would resurrect Isaac. Gen.17:19, 21:12

Contrast: the king found *no comfort* in the *palace*. Daniel could rest in the *lions’ den*. The king couldn’t sleep. Daniel rested in the peace of God. Phil.4:4-9, Rom.8:28 At dawn Darius ran to the lions’ den, calling out for Daniel since it was too dark to see. Another remarkable comment: Darius asks if God is able to deliver from death. The fact that the king ran to the den shows that he believed it was at least possible.

6:21-23 – Daniel Delivered from the Lions

Dan.6:21-23 Then Daniel said to the king, “O king, live forever! My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm.” Then the king was exceedingly glad, and commanded that Daniel be taken out of the den. So, Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no kind of harm was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.

Most people in Daniel’s circumstances would have said “Get me out of here!” But Daniel calmly answered with the usual courteous greeting, “O King, live forever!” The king had heard it a thousand times before, but it never sounded better.

If you have ever thought a loved one was dead, then found alive, you know the emotion. The Hall of Fame for “The Most Welcome Words Ever Heard”:

Daniel is alive: Dan.6:21; Isaac is alive: Gen.22:10-12; Jesus is alive: John 20:14-16

Compare Darius coming at dawn, and the joyous reunion with Daniel, to Matt.28:1-9.

The lions' den is important to God because it *foreshadows the resurrection of His Son*.

In the law of double jeopardy, once a person pays the penalty, they cannot be tried again. When Daniel climbed out of the lions’ den, he could not be thrown back in for any reason. He had served his sentence and paid the penalty – he was forever free from that conviction. When believers accept Christ as our Savior, we are free from conviction for our sins. Rom.8:1 Christ has already paid the penalty, once for all, on the cross. Heb.7:27 Christ satisfied the law of sin and death, fulfilling His sentence of 3 days in the tomb.

Was Daniel afraid? Not when he saw 1 of the lions was from the tribe of Judah. Rev.5:5
An angel shut the mouths of the lions. Daniel was saved because he believed. Dan.6:23
This is how Daniel is remembered in the Hall of Faith. Hebrews 11:33b

Some people think they could never be like the heroes of the faith in Hebrews 11.
Daniel was spared *by God's power* because Daniel was *innocent*, and he *trusted God*.
It was *God* who saved Daniel. God does the same for all believers, through the blood of Christ.
Salvation is not what *we* do, but what *He did*. Great works are a testimony to Him, not us.

Daniel was no different than any believer. He had exceptional depth / maturity in his faith.
Noah built an ark, Moses returned to Egypt – all because they trusted God. Jer.32:17
God works in each believer, enabling strength and contentment. Phil.1:6, 2:13, 4:12-13

God's ability to work does not depend on our circumstances or wealth.
The Creator of the universe can use the gifts He gave you, to do His work. Eph.2:10
Daniel was *lifted* NASB/NIV out of the den, indicating that ropes were dropped over the wall.
Normally the lions would first have to be enticed to the other side, then the stone removed.

The king was astonished that Daniel survived, and relieved that his sin had not killed Daniel.
The king was also delighted to have his favorite counselor back, and to see justice done.
Just as the smell of smoke was kept off the 3 friends, Daniel emerged without a scratch.
This was another miracle with another set of impeccable witnesses, including the king.
God preserved Daniel through the ordeal - a picture of Israel during the Tribulation.

6:24 – Daniel's Enemies are Destroyed

Dan.6:24 And the king commanded, and those men who had maliciously accused Daniel were brought and cast into the den of lions—they, their children, and their wives. And before they reached the bottom of the den, the lions overpowered them and broke all their bones in pieces.

Nebuchadnezzar was used as an instrument of God to bring judgment. Daniel 1:1-2
Now God used Darius to bring God's judgment on the accusers. Psalm 105:15
The accusers had tried to use the king to eliminate Daniel. Now the king eliminated them.
The same swift justice was given a few years later in Persia to Haman. Esther 7:9-10

It was Persian law, in contrast to God's law Deut.24:16, that required the *families* to die.
There was concern that the wives & children would conspire to avenge the father's death.
This penalty may seem barbaric, but such justice was common in the ancient world.
The Assyrians 100 years before Daniel were notoriously cruel in their punishments.
Even within God's judgments we see families swallowed by earthquakes. Num.16:25-33

This verse should silence critics who say Daniel survived because the lions were not hungry.
Critics imagine the king ordered some fresh meat delivered to the lions, just before Daniel.
If the lions were full, why did they devour all the accusers before they reached the floor?

This capital punishment served notice to the kingdom, acting as a powerful deterrent.
God is always faithful to His covenant with Abraham; God keeps *all* His promises.
He blesses those who bless Abraham's seed, and curses those who curse them. Gen.12:3
God has unimaginable power, love & mercy. And He always has the last word.