

FAITHFULNESS

CORE PASSAGE: DANIEL 6:13-24

CONTEXT

In the waning years of Nebuchadnezzar's rule, the Lord humbled him for seven years and then restored him to his throne, for which the king praised the Lord as "the King of the heavens" (Dan. 4:37). But the king's descendant failed to learn this lesson. On a night of revelry, Belshazzar defiled the gold vessels taken from the Lord's temple. He then observed mysterious fingers writing on the wall, which Daniel interpreted as God's coming judgment upon the king. That very night, Belshazzar was killed, and Babylon was conquered by Darius (Cyrus) of the Medo-Persian Empire. Daniel then served Darius as an administrator of the kingdom.

KEY CONCEPT

We honor God when we live in faith and trust God in all situations.

As you examine Daniel 6:13-24:

- Recognize that Daniel felt honoring God with his life was more important than preserving it.
- Consider that when we are falsely accused, we can rest in God's justice.



TIMELINE

Daniel and His Friends Serve
Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 1–4)

Babylon Is Conquered by Darius the Mede,
Who Is Cyrus of Persia (Daniel 5)

SESSION STUDY: Daniel Is Thrown
into the Lions' Den (Daniel 6)

Daniel Interprets the Writing on
the Wall for Belshazzar (Daniel 5)

Cyrus of Persia Issues Decree Allowing
the Jews to Return to Judah (Ezra 1)

Daily Readings

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 1: 2 Kings 25:27-30 | <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4: Daniel 6:1-18 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2: Jeremiah 52:31-34 | <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5: Daniel 6:19-28 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3: Daniel 5:1-31 | <input type="checkbox"/> Day 6: Psalm 91 |



Scan this QR code to access
this session's Scripture passages.

FAITHFULNESS INCLUDES LIVING OUT OUR FAITH WHEN PERSECUTED (DANIEL 6:13-18).

Circle the charge for which Daniel was being persecuted and the way the king described Daniel's actions.

13 Then they replied to the king, "Daniel, one of the Judean exiles, has ignored you, the king, and the edict you signed, for he prays three times a day." **14** As soon as the king heard this, he was very displeased; he set his mind on rescuing Daniel and made every effort until sundown to deliver him. **15** Then these men went together to the king and said to him, "You know, Your Majesty, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no edict or ordinance the king establishes can be changed." **16** So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions' den. The king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you continually serve, rescue you!" **17** A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den. The king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signet rings of his nobles, so that nothing in regard to Daniel could be changed. **18** Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting. No diversions were brought to him, and he could not sleep.

It's difficult to find a more faithful response to a political act than what Daniel displayed in Daniel 6. When he learned of the edict to pray to no one but the king for thirty days, he went to his house, faced Jerusalem, and got down on his knees to pray (vv. 1-10). Daniel's response was to do what he had always done—pray to God alone despite what the world around him demanded.

This edict was a scheme of the satraps and administrators who set themselves against Daniel. Pay attention to this fact, for it is remarkable. Daniel was so faithful to God that his enemies could find no other way to bring him down than to use his faithfulness against him (vv. 4-5). Therefore, they made a new law so they could catch Daniel in the act of civil disobedience by doing what he always did—praying (vv. 6-9).

LEADER NOTE: Daniel had served foreign kings with distinction and boldness. He warned Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4), and he confronted Belshazzar (Dan. 5). Then he served Darius. Daniel was by far the king's best administrator, and he had "an extraordinary spirit," so the king planned to put him in charge of everything (6:3). It may be difficult for us to imagine our faith could lead to success in this sinful world, but Daniel proved it can, as did Joseph (Gen. 41). Yet there is an important caveat: Our faith may lead us to rise in responsibility, but it may just as well lead us to the lions' den. True faith recognizes we are in God's hands to do as He wills—to serve as He would have us regardless of the circumstances and outcomes.

How are you challenged by Daniel's example of faithful prayer in this passage?

Notes

Once Daniel's haters had the evidence, they wasted no time bringing it to the king's attention. They had thought out the plan fully. They knew Darius would try to find a way to free Daniel because he was such a good servant. So they leaned on the law that any edict passed by the king was irrevocable, even by the king who passed it. The king's hands were tied by his own signature. Duped by his own administration, the king had Daniel thrown to the lions.

Why would God allow such a thing to happen to a man who continually served Him (Dan. 6:16)? Shouldn't faithfulness prevent such suffering? The answer, according to Scripture, is no. In fact, Jesus Himself said that we would suffer for His sake (John 15:20). When we face persecution for the sake of Christ, it is the faith He grants that gives us the strength to endure. His resurrection power arises within us and reminds us that even if the lions devour us, all they can do is usher us into our Savior's hands.

LEADER NOTE: Daniel was put into a cave, essentially a tomb, and its entrance was covered with a stone and legally sealed so that Daniel's death sentence would be sealed (Dan. 6:16-17). Similarly, Jesus's body, after His crucifixion, was placed in a carved-out tomb, and a stone was placed against its entrance with a seal (Matt. 27:59-60,66). Daniel faced hungry lions but miraculously came out alive. Jesus, having already suffered death at the hands of human beings, went into the tomb as a corpse, but He too came out alive. In this, Daniel is a type of Christ, as both were faithful unto death, figurative and literal respectively, and both were raised up.

How do you think about the suffering you experience in life? How should you?

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Following God and being a believer in Jesus Christ can come with persecution in our world. Yet we continue to live in faith because He is with us and has saved us. We don't fear death because He has resurrection power, whereas those without Christ will suffer an eternal death.

THOSE WHO DO NOT LIVE IN FAITH WILL FACE PUNISHMENT AND DEATH (DANIEL 6:19-24).

Underline the reason Daniel was spared from death in the lions' den.

19 At the first light of dawn the king got up and hurried to the lions' den.

20 When he reached the den, he cried out in anguish to Daniel. "Daniel, servant of the living God," the king said, "has your God, whom you continually serve, been able to rescue you from the lions?" **21** Then Daniel spoke with the king: "May the king live forever. **22** My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths; and they haven't harmed me, for I was found innocent before him. And also before you, Your Majesty, I have not done harm." **23** The king was overjoyed and gave orders to take Daniel out of the den. When Daniel was brought up from the den, he was found to be unharmed, for he trusted in his God. **24** The king then gave the command, and those men who had maliciously accused Daniel were brought and thrown into the lions' den—they, their children, and their wives. They had not reached the bottom of the den before the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.

Daniel's wisdom in serving the king and his faithfulness in prayer landed him in the lions' den, yet only one action was noted for his survival there—"he trusted in his God" (v. 23). As the king ran to the tomb in anguish, he hoped Daniel was spared. Logic and reason told Darius that it could not be so. Everyone knew the elderly Daniel could not have fended off the lions himself. They were kept hungry for such an occasion. If Daniel were spared, even Darius knew only one person could have done it—the living God—and He did.

God's power is immense. He is omnipotent. There is nothing God cannot do, especially as simple to Him as shutting lions' mouths. But it was God's faithfulness to His holy name that compelled His strength. Through Daniel, God was proving the kind of God He is. He is not capricious. His edicts are everlasting and just, made in righteousness, not vanity. The living God alone is worthy of worship, and Daniel's experience in the lions' den proved it.

LEADER NOTE: God's justice led not only to the accusers' condemnation but also to Daniel's salvation. Daniel was not a perfect man—only Jesus is—but he was a good man who truly loved the Lord and was faithful in worshipping Him alone. Verse 23 states that Daniel was saved because he trusted in his God. It's not the strength of our faith that saves us but the strength of the One in whom we place our faith, and there is no one stronger than God.

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

GOD IS OMNIPOTENT: God is all-powerful: there is nothing God cannot do so long as it does not contradict His own nature or law. God has power and authority over the universe He created, from the largest solar system to the smallest particle. Affirming that God is all-powerful does not mean that God can sin since that would go against His perfect moral nature. As Christians, we rest in the belief that the God who has all power is good, and we gain great comfort by knowing that an all-powerful God is working for our good and joy.

In what circumstances can trusting God's power bring you comfort?

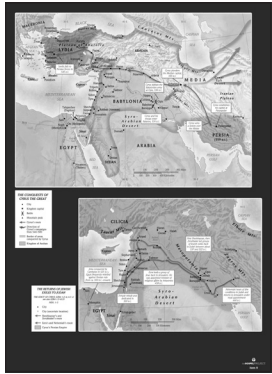
The administrators and satraps tried to paint Daniel as an unfaithful betrayer of the king because Daniel's highest allegiance was to his God. But Daniel and King Darius counted him acquitted of the charge since the living God rescued him from the lions. So Darius turned the tables on the accusers, who had manipulated the king for their own benefit and who would have deprived the king of his most effective administrator.

By the king's command, the accusers, along with their families, suffered the fate they had plotted out for their enemy. Yet ultimately, the judgment of God fell upon their houses for their faithlessness of attacking God's man, as seen in the fact that the lions that had passed over Daniel devoured them immediately.

LEADER NOTE: It may trouble us that the families of the accusers were executed as well. But the comment is made without approval or disapproval. It was Darius's decision to make, and he made it. Darius recognized God's power, but that doesn't mean he became a believer and follower that day. He was still the king of Persia with the king of Persia's appetites and sense of right and wrong.

What does this passage teach us about God's justice?

Notes



ARRIVAL

INTERACT: As the group arrives, ask if they have experienced a time when they were caught red-handed doing something they had been told not to do. Then ask if anyone has experienced a time when they were caught doing something good when they thought no one else was watching.

CONTEXT

TRANSITION: Did you know the word “integrity” comes from the Latin root word from which we get *integer*, as in the math term for a whole number? Jeff Long stated, “A person of integrity is a whole, complete, undivided person—not segmented or fractionalized. No double-dealing, no double standards, and no double meanings!”¹ That was Daniel, a man of integrity.

SUMMARIZE: Daniel made his way up in the ranks of the kingdom, or kingdoms, actually. He proved over and over that he was a man of integrity, strength, and wisdom. He even had the affection of the new king of the new kingdom, Darius the Mede, whom we also know as Cyrus the Persian. (You might consider posting **Pack Item 9: Persia and the Return Map** to show the expansion of the Persian Empire in conquering Babylon.) Darius planned to put Daniel in charge of the entire kingdom. But some who were jealous of Daniel took advantage of his faith and practice to bring him down. Knowing that Daniel was a praying man, they convinced the king to sign an edict that for thirty days, anyone who prayed to any god other than the king would be thrown into a den of lions. Despite the very real threat of death, Daniel continued to pray to God three times a day as he had always done. His enemies were thrilled and went running to the king.

RECAP

ENGAGE: From your personal preparation this week, what stood out to you about the motivations and actions of King Darius toward Daniel? Of Daniel toward the Lord and the king?

TRANSITION: This was not the first time Daniel faced the choice to obey God or the king. No doubt he knew what had happened to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego when they refused to bow to Nebuchadnezzar’s statue years before. This time, the enemies of God’s faithful people specifically targeted Daniel because of God’s blessing upon him and his faithfulness to the Lord.



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Key Concept: We honor God when we live in faith and trust God in all situations.

GROUP ACTIVITY

CHART: Direct your group to page 38 in their Personal Study Guide (PSG), where they will find a chart titled “Daniel’s Faithfulness.” Recreate this chart on a board in your room so you can record the group’s responses.

Daniel’s Faithfulness

Read Daniel 6:13-24. Record the differences in the ways Daniel and his accusers related to the Lord and to the king.

| FAITHFUL SERVANT | FAITHLESS ACCUSERS |
|------------------|--------------------|
| THE LORD | |
| THE KING | |

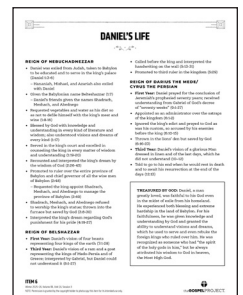
READ: Invite a volunteer to read aloud Daniel 6:13-18.

IDENTIFY: Call for the group to identify ways Daniel and his accusers interacted with the Lord and/or the king in this passage, making sure to include the appropriate verse references. Allow the group to draw on what they may have studied from the first part of Daniel 6 in their personal preparation. Record the group’s conclusions on the board.

ANALYZE: Pass out copies of **Pack Item 6: Daniel’s Life** and briefly review Daniel’s example of faithfulness, wisdom, and humility. Suggest your group take a moment to ponder what the everyday lives of the people in the kingdom would have been like to have someone with Daniel’s integrity in charge of the administration. Ask: “The king was pleased with Daniel and prepared to put him in charge of the entire kingdom. Yet other administrators hated Daniel. Why do you think they hated him and sought to have him killed?”

READ: Invite another volunteer to read Daniel 6:19-24.

Notes



Notes

IDENTIFY: Call again for the group to identify the ways Daniel and his accusers acted toward the Lord and/or the king from this second passage. As necessary, highlight the following key phrases from the passage for response from the group: Daniel said “God sent His angel and shut the lions’ mouths” (v. 22); “I was found innocent before him” (v. 22); “before you, Your Majesty, I have not done harm” (v. 22). Ask: “With these thoughts about Daniel’s actions, what can we infer about his accusers, seeing that the lions devoured them immediately?”

DEBRIEF

How did Daniel’s life of integrity impact the people around him, both positively and negatively?

What are some ways we can show faithfulness to God in our spheres of influence?

SUMMARIZE

Daniel was faithful in every way. He was faithful at work, at home, and especially in his faith. He didn’t try to hide his faith; in fact, he prayed with the window wide open. As believers in Jesus, we don’t have to fear the persecution we may face because we know that God is with us. God doesn’t promise that He will save us from persecution, but we do know that He’s there with us every step of the way. And even when we are not faithful, He is.

HEAD, HEART, HANDS

Walk the group through the Head, Heart, Hands section in the PSG (p. 39). If running short on time, specifically highlight the **Heart** section in this week’s study, inviting volunteers to share their responses to the question in this section.



HEAD: Faith is often seen as less real than reason, as if reason were the basis for all that exists and faith were a fantasy some people live in. But the Christian faith is not a leap in the dark. It is not a vague hope. It is a trust placed in the living God. Faith is looking at the world and seeing behind it all the mighty hand of God at work. Reason alone isn’t enough. It can’t explain all that happens in this world. But faith in God can sustain us through it all.

How has your faith in God sustained you through difficult times?



HEART: Daniel’s outward faith was driven by his inward trust in God. He knew God loved him, and that allowed him to live fearlessly in the world. Knowing God loves us radically changes how we live. We can rest in His unchanging nature. We can rest in His grace, knowing that the salvation He accomplished for us in Christ is all we will ever need. We don’t have to fear whatever this world might throw at us because Christ has overcome it.

What fears keep you from bold, faithful obedience to God in the world?



HANDS: True faith is never without works but always leads to an outward expression of trust in God (see Jas. 2:26). Daniel's expression of faith led to a night spent in the lions' den, but that was okay with Daniel. He knew God loved him. If you know God loves you, it puts steel in your spine to stand against whatever schemes the devil and this world throw at you.

How will you express your faith in Jesus outwardly this week?

NEXT STEPS

Challenge the group to consider these actions as responses to this session.

- Take some time to list ways God has been faithful to you in the last year.
- There's an idea that Christians should be better members of the community because our standards are higher (Phil. 2:14-15; Col. 3:17). Daniel lived this way. Consider how you can show faithfulness to God in your work, your church, and your family for God's glory.
- In our part of the world, we may not face threats of death for our faith, though we could, but the Bible says that anyone who seeks to live a godly life will be persecuted (2 Tim. 3:12). Ask God to give you a bold faith and strength to face persecution, and pray for those who are being persecuted for Christ around the world.

Invite volunteers to share prayer needs for this week. Encourage them to record these in the space on page 39 in their PSG so they can pray for others throughout the week.

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

CLOSE: Pray through Psalm 91:1-8 with your group. Thank the Lord for being our refuge and fortress and for being a just God who rescues His people and punishes the wicked. Pray for faith and boldness to proclaim Jesus and His gospel, trusting the Lord to rescue in His wisdom and timing.

References

1. Jeff Iorg, *The Character of Leadership: Nine Qualities That Define Great Leaders* (Nashville: B&H Books, 2007), 24.

Notes

THE DOCTRINE OF THE KINGDOM

By Greg Kilgore



You may have heard it said jokingly that “Americans have no king but Elvis.” The United States often prides itself in not having a king since the Revolutionary War. In many Western nations, there are presidents or prime ministers, but these leaders are not all-powerful sovereigns. Many people today do not really understand the idea of an all-powerful king. Most of the titles surrounding kings in the West come simply from honorary titles, such as homecoming kings.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE KING AND HIS KINGDOM

Why is the kingdom of God important for Christians? God’s rule and reign is one of the major themes of the entire Bible. The kingdom is centered on Christ, and many prophecies in the Old Testament predict the coming King who will rule and reign perfectly over His people. Zechariah 9 presented the King as coming to Jerusalem to bring salvation to His people. Daniel 7 promised a coming kingdom that will be eternal and comprehensive—everything will be subject to the coming King’s authority and dominion.

Additionally, the importance of the kingdom is seen in how many times Jesus speaks of the kingdom in His ministry. The kingdom is mentioned 126 times in the Gospels; thus, it is one of the dominant themes of Christ’s teaching ministry.

GOD’S GENERAL SOVEREIGNTY

What does it mean that Christians are part of the kingdom of God? Even if we have never lived under the rule of a king in our own country, we can understand the rule of Christ as King. The kingdom of God is made up of God’s general rule over all and

Christ’s particular kingship over His people who trust in Him as their Lord and Savior. Most statements of faith describe God’s kingdom and His rule. The Baptist Faith and Message, for example, identifies these categories this way: “The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King.”¹

As we consider this statement, the question “Why is God king?” might arise. Ultimately, it is due to Him creating the universe (Gen. 1–2). Psalm 103:19 states, “The LORD has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all.” God alone has the power to create and rule His universe. Thus, the first part of God’s kingdom is His general rule and reign over the universe.

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of Christ's teaching ministry.

CHRIST'S PARTICULAR KINGSHIP

The second element of the kingdom includes Christ's kingship over those who acknowledge Him as King: "Particularly the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, child-like commitment to Jesus Christ."² This means that the second element of the kingdom entails the saving rule and reign of Christ in our hearts and lives.

People do not enter this kingdom by any earthly means. Entrance into the kingdom of Christ does not come on the basis of earthly merit, power, or nationality. How, then, do we enter this saving kingdom of Christ? When Jesus was talking with Nicodemus, He said, "Truly I tell you, unless someone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). We enter this kingdom through the spiritual birth that takes place at conversion. We enter Christ's kingdom by being born again. We enter this kingdom by knowing and loving the King. The entrance into the kingdom of Christ is cross- and resurrection-shaped. Through trusting in Jesus Christ's perfect life, death, and resurrection, we enter this saving rule of Christ in His particular kingdom.

Every single person is under the rule of God as king because they are part of His universe. However, we enter the particular kingdom that is marked by salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

OUR ROLE IN THE KINGDOM

For those who have trusted in Christ, we have a role to play in this kingdom. Even though God's rule is established, Christ's saving kingdom has not yet fully arrived here and now. When we read the New Testament, we see the emphasis on the return of Christ to establish His reign fully and finally in the new heavens and new earth. As believers, we live between the times, that is, between the beginning of the end and the "full consummation" of Christ's eternal reign.

The kingdom was inaugurated with Jesus's first advent. Through God's Word and Spirit, we are called to life under His lordship, where we are freely accepted and forgiven. This also means that we are committed to Jesus's kingdom priorities in the age to come and seek to work them out in our own lives and in the present age as well.

Until Christ returns, every local church is meant to be a gospel outpost of the kingdom of God, and every Christian is meant to be an ambassador of Jesus's kingdom in this world (2 Cor. 5:20).

References

1. "XI. The Kingdom," *The Baptist Faith and Message* (Nashville: Southern Baptist Convention, 2025) <https://bfm.sbc.net/bfm2000/#xi>.
2. *The Baptist Faith and Message*, XI.

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