

Introduction

- One of the fascinations with the story of Daniel is to see his faith over the full extent of his life:
 - his faith as a young man, in his teens during the incidents of chapter 1 and possibly 2.
 - "resolving in his heart not to defile himself" (1:8)
 - a faith that was still shaping his living 70 or 80 years later!!
 - for the incident we have before us, of Daniel and the Lion's Den, occurred when Daniel was an old man - the commentators reckon he was into his eighties by now
- Work our way through and reflect on Daniel's example

The Trap is Set (1-9)

Daniel is Successful...

- He is appointed one of three governors over the kingdom - (1-2)
 - the kingdom may be Babylon (Chaldea), recently conquered by the Medo-Persian empire (5:30-31)
 - The identity of Darius the Mede is uncertain, possibly a man known as Gubara appointed by Cyrus of Persia to rule Chaldea
- Daniel "distinguished" himself above the others (3)
 - his success was due to his "excellent spirit", not cunning or political maneuvering
 - Proving one can be successful in business and politics without compromising character
 - Darius contemplates setting Daniel over the whole realm

Daniel is Envied...

- His success leads to envy by others - (4)
 - even the most godly men can have their enemies (e.g., David, Christ)
 - enemies by virtue of jealousy
- His noble character is attested to by his enemies - (4)
 - they could make no charge against him, finding no fault or error in him
 - because he was "faithful" (i.e., trustworthy, dependable)
- His enemies determine there is only one way to defeat him (5)
 - to find some conflict between the law of God and that of the land
 - which they then set out to do

Daniel is Targeted...

- The king is approached by Daniel's enemies - (6)
- They propose a royal statute, a firm decree - (7)
 - that no petition can be made of any god or man for thirty days, except the king
 - under punishment of being cast into the den of lions
- The king is encouraged to establish the decree - (8-9)
 - which according to the law of the Medes and Persians, cannot be altered
 - King Darius signs the decree

• *Daniel's faith in God brought him success up to this point. But now the exercise of his faith could cause him to lose it all! What would we have done in his place? As we continue to read, we see what Daniel did...*

The Trap is Sprung (10-17)

Daniel continues to Pray...

- Knowing full well that the decree had been signed - (10)
- Practicing a custom common among the Jews - (10)
 - praying three times a day - cf. [Psa 55:17](#)
 - praying toward Jerusalem - cf. [1 Ki 8:27-30](#)

- praying on his knees (a common posture for prayer) - cf. 1 Ki 8:54
- praying with thankfulness to God, even in times of trouble - cf. Philippians 4:6
- His own custom since "early days" - (10)
 - though great and powerful, fervent prayer was not beneath him
 - though aged, he had not grown weary of prayer

Daniel is Caught...

- His enemies catch Daniel praying - (11)
- His enemies report Daniel to the king - (12-13)
 - reminding Darius of the unalterable decree
 - accusing Daniel of disregarding the king and his decree
- The king is forced to abide by his own decree - (14-15)
 - displeased with himself, the king tries to deliver Daniel
 - Daniel's enemies pressure the king to abide by his decree

Daniel is Thrown into the Lions' Den...

- Yet the king is hopeful - (16)
 - that Daniel's God will deliver him
 - whom Daniel had served "continually"
 - *would he have had such hope if Daniel was sporadic in his service to God?*
- The den is closed with a stone and sealed - (17)
 - sealed with the signet ring of the king and his lords
 - ensuring that the purpose concerning Daniel would not be changed
- *It appears Daniel's enemies have won. He is in the lions' den and it is sealed. Yet could any "seal" by man ever keep God from accomplishing His plans (don't forget the "sealed" tomb! - cf. Mt 27:62-66)? And so we read how...*

The Trap is Spoiled (18-28)

Darius is Worried...

- His night is restless - (18)
 - he spends the night fasting, and without musicians
 - he can't sleep
- His concern for Daniel is evident - (19-20)
 - rising early in the morning, going in haste to the den
 - crying to Daniel with a lamenting voice
 - wondering if God has delivered Daniel

Daniel is Delivered...

- Daniel answers the king - (21-22)
 - with respect to the king ("O king, live forever!"), despite what the king had done to him; *an example of blessing those who persecute you*
 - with word of God's great deliverance: saved by an angel of God - (cf. 3:28)
 - with affirmation of his innocence: *innocent before God, and guilty of no wrong before the king*
- Darius removes Daniel from the den - (23)
 - the king being exceedingly glad
 - Daniel with no injury found on him
- *Daniel is delivered from the lions, because he believed in His God (i.e., saved by faith!)*

The conspirators are Executed...

- Cast into the same trap intended for Daniel, along with their families - (24)
- As often happens, those who set the trap get caught in it!
 - cf. Haman, hung on the gallows he built for Mordecai - Esther 7:10
 - as contemplated by David, warned by Solomon - Psalm 7:14-16 and Proverbs 1:10-19

God is Exalted...

- Darius makes a decree that the God of Daniel be feared - (25-27)
 - He is the living God, and steadfast forever
 - His kingdom is indestructible, and His dominion everlasting
- Another pagan king comes to realize Who is really in control!
 - as did Nebuchadnezzar - 4:34-35
 - as did Belshazzar, only too late - 5:26-28

Daniel prospers...

- In the reign of Darius, who ruled Chaldea - (28)
- In the reign of Cyrus of Persia (who also ruled over Darius) (cf. 1:21)

Conclusion

- What were the noble qualities of this aged saint? He was a man...
 - with an excellent spirit - (3)
 - without fault in his business dealings - (4)
 - faithful to those over him - (4)
 - committed to prayer throughout his life - (10)
 - willing to obey God rather than man - (10)
- *Putting it simply, he was a man who "believed in his God"!* - (23)
- "Daniel In The Lions' Den" is a story that has thrilled many children...
 - but its lessons are not just for children
 - Daniel is a role model for adults as well: for politicians; for everyone involved in administrative affairs; for all Christians, especially older ones
- *May we all learn from the example of Daniel, who exemplified what it means to seek first the will of God (cf. Mt 6:33), and to obey God rather than men (cf. Ac 5:29)!*