Explore the Bible: February 13

Trust Exhibited • Daniel 6:10-24

By Wayne VanHorn

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The past two years have been difficult for people worldwide due to the COVID-19 virus and political intrigues at home and abroad. During difficult situations, Christians have suffered alongside others.

This week we explore the truth, "Believers can trust God in all circumstances." The scriptural basis for our truth is found in the familiar story of Daniel in the lions' den.

My first encounter with this story was in Sunday school as a young boy. The teacher displayed a picture of Daniel standing before several menacing lions. I could relate to the Daniel in the picture because he was a boy like me.

I discovered years later Daniel was an old man, not a young boy, when King Darius was deceived and had to seal him in the den with hungry lions. Though the story is oft-told, Daniel's experience provides vivid faith lessons for us today.

The trap springs (Dan. 6:10-14). Daniel 6:1-9 sets the stage. These verses tell of Daniel's excellence, his rise to power as one of three royal administrators, and of Darius' intent "to set him over the whole realm" (Dan. 6:1-3 CSB).

The other leaders of the realm, uneasy with a Jew in such a high position, set in motion a plan to discredit Daniel. Yet, Daniel was such a trustworthy servant of the king, "they could find no charge or corruption" (Dan. 6:4).

They decided to attack him at the point of his greatest strength, his unshakable faith in "his God" (Dan. 6:5).

King Darius was deceived into passing an edict for a 30-day period wherein no one could petition any god or man except the king himself under penalty of being cast to the lions (Dan. 6:6-9). Evan after learning the edict had been signed into law, Daniel entered his upstairs room, opened his windows toward Jerusalem, knelt, and prayed to "his God" (Dan. 6:10).

Having fallen into his enemies' trap, they caught Daniel in the act of praying and immediately informed the king, insisting his edict be enforced (Dan. 6:11-12).

When Darius learned the violator was "Daniel, one of the Judean exiles," he was "very displeased" (Dan. 6:13-14). He knew he had been tricked into signing the edict, which was irrevocable according to the law of the Medes and Persians (Dan. 6:8,12,15).

The door shuts. (Dan. 6:15-18). The king labored to avoid putting Daniel in the lions' den, but to no avail. As Daniel was thrown into the lions' den, Darius cried out, "May your God, whom you continually serve, rescue you!" (Dan. 6:16).

The den was sealed with a stone and with the signet ring of the king and his nobles. Daniel was prevented from escape by both physical and authoritative seals. Therefore, "nothing in regard to Daniel could be changed" (Dan. 6:17b).

The king, unnerved by his nobles' treachery, spent the night fasting. He could not sleep (Dan. 6:18). Darius knew Daniel was the victim of political sabotage at the hand of unscrupulous rivals. Yet, the king's hands were tied by the

irrevocability of Persian law.

The tables turn (Dan. 6:19-24). Darius' eagerness to check on Daniel "at the first light of dawn" demonstrated the king's hope God had delivered him. He addressed Daniel as "servant of the living God," referring to Daniel's habit to "continually serve" his God (6:19-20).

Daniel's reply, "May the king live forever," shows the high regard with which the prophet held the king (Dan. 6:21). He told the king his God had "shut the lions' mouths" and he was unharmed. Daniel surmised God had found him innocent. He also reassured Darius he had done no harm before him (Dan. 6:22).

Darius gave new orders to release Daniel from the lions' den because he was so overjoyed his top administrator was unharmed, "for he trusted in his God" (6:23).

The king's second set of orders brought Daniel's false accusers to the fate they had designed for Daniel (6:24).Because those men "maliciously accused" Daniel, they forfeited their lives, wives, and children. The lions crushed their bones before they reached the den's bottom.

This final verse is a classic example of divine retributive justice, wherein God applies the misfortune planned by malevolent people for godly folks like Daniel, to come back on their own heads (see Obadiah 15).

Daniel lived an exemplary life of faith. He thanked God in prayer three times daily (6:10) and served Him continually (6:16). Believers always benefit when they consistently trust God in all circumstances.

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