



## Faith in the One True God Endures

Daniel 6

**RECAP****This week's focus: The faithful prosper while the faithless fall.**

Judah's best and brightest were deported to Babylon when Jerusalem was conquered by Nebuchadnezzar's armies. Daniel and his trio of friends were among their ranks. King Nebuchadnezzar introduced them to their new homeland by enrolling the four young men in his exclusive three-year "How to Live Like a Babylonian" Training Academy. Students were lavished with food and wine from the king's table and invited to enjoy the cosmopolitan pleasures of the world's most sophisticated city.

Daniel and his companions graciously resisted. They asked for vegetarian meals so they could stay faithful to Jewish dietary laws. The king's official worried that their meager diet might leave them pallid and weakened, but God blessed their choice with academic success and physical stamina. They flourished, and the ruler of the world's greatest empire took notice.

The king awoke one morning having been greatly troubled by a dream. God revealed both the events of the dream and their meaning to his servant, Daniel. His interpretation satisfied the king and saved his life and the lives of all the magicians and wise men in the kingdom. As a result, the king worshipped Daniel's God and promoted Daniel to ruler over Babylon while making his friends high officials in government.

This devotion was short lived. Nebuchadnezzar built a gold statue in his own honor, and all were commanded to bow down and worship at its feet. Daniel's three friends, Meshach, Shadrach, and Abednego, were faced with a grim choice: idolatry or death. They refused to bow. The king was enraged and ordered them to be thrown into a fiery furnace. They defied the king's last chance order and chose to remain faithful even in the face of death. The fire was stoked, the young men were bound and thrown into the inferno. An astonished king watched a fourth man join them as they walked unbound and unharmed through the fire. And once again the king praised their God.

Nebuchadnezzar was succeeded by Belshazzar. The LORD once again used Daniel to interpret a cryptic message written on the wall of the banquet hall. It read that Belshazzar would meet his maker. That same night the Persian army invaded Babylon. Belshazzar was killed, and Persia became the silver layer in the statue King Nebuchadnezzar had dreamed of years before.

The new king, Darius of Persia, gave Daniel a promotion. Daniel's rivals were jealous and deceived Darius into signing an irrevocable decree forbidding prayer to anyone except the king. The penalty was a single night stay in a cave of hungry lions. Daniel responded by doing as he had always done. He returned to his house, knelt, and prayed. Bound to duty, Darius was forced to throw his trusted servant to the lions. So, the king spent a restless night and rose in the morning to find that Daniel was safe and sound in the lions' den. And the great king of Persia worshipped Daniel's God.

Daniel, his friends, and the other exiles were kept in Babylon during the seventy years of captivity. He prospered while in captivity. He watched the rise and fall of kings and kingdoms and remained faithful. In the great story of God, Babylon had been a detour rather than a destination.



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## SHARE (5-10 min)

Icebreaker Question: What makes you “you”? What are a couple of characteristics about you that people know you for? (i.e., funny, caring, honest, etc...)

## STUDY (about 30 min) Read Daniel 6

1. Regarding this sermon, is there any truth that stands out as being particularly helpful, insightful, or difficult to grasp?
2. Daniel was well trusted by King Darius. From reading this passage (Chapter 6) and looking at the previous chapters, what do we know about Daniel’s character?
3. Why is our character (our actions or the way we live) so important to God? In other words, how does our behavior show *who* we believe in?
4. Notice Daniel’s turning to God was something that he did daily, “Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, **JUST AS HE HAD DONE BEFORE**” Daniel 6:10. Daniel didn’t just know a lot about God; Daniel knew God. What is the difference between knowing about God and knowing God? How does that impact the way we handle difficult trials and circumstances in our lives?
5. How would you handle a thorough, in-depth investigation into your public and private life? What would be revealed about you? Would there be enough evidence to convict you of being a believer or a non-believer?
6. Where do you think Daniel’s faith was tested the most? His bedroom or the lions’ den?
7. Agree or disagree: Faith and trust in Jesus is an all or nothing decision. Why or why not?
8. What are reasons for you to compromise what you believe in? How can you, beginning today, come to a place where you can stand for Jesus no matter the consequence?

## SUPPORT (15 min)

Pray for one another to stay strong in faith, courageous in character, and faithful in prayer.