

Daniel 6

Daniel 6:20-22 And when he came to the den, he cried out with a lamenting voice to Daniel. The king spoke, saying to Daniel, "Daniel, the servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions? Then Daniel said to the king, "O king, live forever! My God sent His angel and shut the lion's mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was innocent before Him; and also O king, I have done no wrong before you."

With Daniel 6 we complete the narrative portion of the Book of Daniel. It is an appropriate time for us to note the continuing influence that Daniel has upon our culture. To this day, people remain intrigued by the Daniel diet. By eating vegetables and water he and his friends appeared to be significantly healthier than their peers. A second point of contact is the phrase, "The handwriting on the wall..." This expression is still used to declare the inevitability of a certain outcome. And, in chapter six, Daniel's habit of prayer is described as he prayed from his open window morning, noon and night toward Jerusalem. Daniel is a model of completeness. To what extent could your

life be improved if you ate like Daniel, spoke like Daniel and prayed like Daniel?

Another point of interest is the apparent energy and efficiency of Daniel at his advanced age. Daniel served the king with such efficiency that the king was going to promote him over all of his peers. It is hard to imagine that these competitors were over 80 as Daniel was. As they searched for a rationale for attacking Daniel they could not do so professionally and they also looked past the issue of his age. Ultimately they found a way to turn Daniel's exemplary character against himself. The best among us do not build walls of self limitation. Daniel never said that he was too old to serve.

Notice that the accusers of Daniel were actually plotting against what they knew to be the desire of the king. The king intended to promote Daniel and this was the action that they were determined to prevent. They plotted to manipulate the king into doing something he was certain to regret. They had their gotcha moment when the king realized that he was trapped and had to throw Daniel in the lion's den since the law of the Medes and the Persians could not be broken or changed. It would seem that even if Daniel had not survived the

night, things might not have gone well for the manipulators who plotted against him. The king's affection for Daniel seems to have been very sincere.

An irony in the story is found in the sleeplessness of the king contrasted with the apparent peace and rest experienced by Daniel. When the king's ego invited manipulation, he was coerced into violating his own conscience (this might be too generous). He was forced by one decision to take an action that he did not intend or want to take. He was so upset by the turn of events that led him to condemn his friend to death that he could not sleep. But Daniel answered the next morning with a bright and cheerful voice. Once it was clear that the angel had shut the mouths of the lions, Daniel had nothing to worry about. He had deliberately placed himself in jeopardy by continuing to pray in front of his open window. Nothing that followed was unexpected. Daniel anticipated the experience expressed by Paul, "And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.