

20:20 Vision Ministries -- Devotions by Roger Browning
Week 33 (August 9-15, 2015)

Using the book of Daniel, we will spend one more week studying the proper response of a Christian when the government makes demands that are contrary to the Word of God. (Reprinted from week 25, 2013 with updates and revisions)

Sunday, August 9 (read Daniel 6:1-5)

Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. (Daniel 6:3)

At this point in ancient history, the Medes and Persians rule the world, having defeated Babylon (see Daniel 5:22-31). Daniel not only survives the very attack he prophesied about, but he is also chosen to be one of the top three administrators in the new government of Darius. These three men report directly to the king, who does not want to suffer a loss (v. 1-2). Daniel is so trustworthy that Darius plans to place him over the entire kingdom (v. 3). This infuriates the other leaders because they hate the Jews and are jealous of Daniel's ability and his honesty (v. 4). They come to the conclusion that they will never be able to make an accusation against Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God (v. 5). Have you noticed that the media in America often try the same tactics? Reporters tend to belittle and mock men and women of strong faith who stand on Biblical principles. We can learn a lot from studying the history of the Old Testament.

Monday, August 10 (read Daniel 6:6-9)

So King Darius put the decree in writing. (Daniel 6:9)

Today's text is more current than most Americans know. I keep up with government rulings through the Family Research Council, the American Family Association, the Heritage Foundation and Judicial Watch. Most people do not know that there are forces which seek to court-martial anyone in the military (even a chaplain) who tries to lead another soldier to faith in Jesus Christ. We are already losing more soldiers to suicide than we are to combat because many feel that they have no hope for the future. Can you imagine what it will be like if military personnel are not allowed to mention the Name of Jesus? In the Biblical account, the trap set by the other administrators is identical to what I just described in America. Like the left-wing media, these power-hungry men claim to have the support of all government leaders (v. 6-7). The trap is set in motion and signed by the king (v. 8-9). What will the man of God do now? We will learn this in tomorrow's study.

Tuesday, August 11 (read Daniel 6:10-16)

Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God. (Daniel 6:10b)

What should **you** do when a government ruling violates the Word of God? You **must** follow His Word and suffer the consequences! Daniel opens his windows toward Jerusalem and still prays three times each day, always remembering to give thanks (v. 10). I have found much joy in kneeling and facing the east when I pray for the peace of Jerusalem daily (See Psalm 122:6-9). Kneeling with my arms extended toward God reminds me that I am coming into His presence based on the righteousness of Christ alone. Facing Jerusalem reminds me to remember my Jewish brothers and sisters. Darius is oblivious to the agenda of these leaders who tattle to him after spying on Daniel (v. 11). Having fallen into their trap, the king is forced to listen to their specific condemnation of his favorite administrator (v. 13). He is in a bind because the signed laws from the king cannot be repealed. Despite his best efforts, he has no alternative except to throw Daniel into the lions' den. His only hope is for Daniel's God to save him (v. 14-16).

Wednesday, August 12 (read Daniel 6:17-22)

At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lions' den. (Daniel 6:19)

Daniel's situation in v. 17 pictures Jesus, who was placed in a cave that was covered by a stone and sealed with the Roman Emperor's seal. Darius' fondness of Daniel causes the king to spend a sleepless night worrying about his administrator (v. 18). He gets up early and hurries to the lion's den to check on Daniel's plight (v. 19). He calls out in an anguished voice, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions" (v. 20)? The Lord's chosen man assures Darius that all is well because he has been declared innocent before God and the king (v. 22). What a testimony! **We** may be called to stand before the **government** someday, but we never have to worry about judgment from our God because, "God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21). Do you fully understand what that means for you? Do you know that Jesus paid the price for your redemption? Then rejoice! He is in control!

Thursday, August 13 (read Daniel 6:23-24)

And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God. (Daniel 6:23b)

Daniel is lifted out of the lion's den and, upon close inspection, found to be free of even a scratch from the vicious animals, because he trusted totally in his God (v. 23). The king orders that the false accusers and **their families** now be thrown in the den. These same lions instantly devour them (v. 24). My favorite promise in the Bible is found in Acts 16:31: "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—**you and your household**" (emphasis mine). Sadly, as you can see in today's text, the opposite of that is also true. I know of church members who have spent their whole lives criticizing the person God sent to present the Gospel. This often results in their children turning away from the faith because they have been led, by example, to disrespect the leader. God will protect His chosen vessel from their evil attacks. The critics, however, may pay a great price for their actions.

Friday, August 14 (read Daniel 6:25-28)

I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel. (Daniel 6:26a)

I love it when pagan kings finally acknowledge the Lord to be the only true God. Daniel had already brought King Nebuchadnezzar to faith (Daniel 2:47; 4:34-35). Now, his consistent witness also brings King Darius to his knees. The king writes a decree declaring the God of Daniel to be the living God who endures forever. He acknowledges that God's kingdom and His rule are eternal (v. 25-26). He is the God who rescues and saves, the One who performs miracles (v. 27). Daniel prospers because he is faithful to his God, even during the reign of pagan kings over his fellow Jews (v. 28). Jeremiah 29:11 says, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Can you trust Him enough to prosper in this world that is rejecting His rule? Can you live faithfully enough to influence evil people for the cause of Christ?

Saturday, August 15 (Daniel 6 review)

"For He is the living God and He endures forever; His kingdom will not be destroyed, His dominion will never end." (Daniel 6:26b)

I would like for you to read this entire chapter again. The time is fast approaching when we will be called to defend our faith before government officials. God's Word teaches, "But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you" (Matthew 10:19-20). Daniel teaches us that there are times when we must defy the government to remain true to our God. Be sure to obey all the laws of the land that **do not** violate the Word of God (see Romans 13:1-5; 1 Peter 3:13-17). Pick your battlefields carefully! You will know when it is time to take a stand because His Spirit is alive within you. "Stand Up For Jesus" and you will not be led astray by the teachings of man!