

DANIEL PRAYED

(Daniel 6: 1-22)

The story of Daniel in the lion's den is much more than just a children's story. In fact, this thought obscures the meaning of the events God allowed to happen to show what will be in the future for the nation of Israel. Many events in the Old Testament have happened with a purpose to point out to the near or far future. The Word of God is unsearchable; only those who desire to have the understanding of it, to them will be given revelation of its prophetic meanings. Much is missed because of that. The book of Daniel is clearly an example of it. When we read this book is like opening the future right before our eyes. From the four Jewish youths the Bible mentions in this book, Daniel stands out, because God chose him to be his end time messenger. Daniel's experience in the lion's den, like that of his friends in the furnace, has a prophetic meaning directed to his nation. Daniel and his friends well represent the faithful ones in the time of the tribulation and their deliverance.

When King Darius of Persia, who was the successor of Belshazzar, took over the kingdom of Babylon he set over the kingdom 120 governors in charge of all the kingdom. He also chose three presidents over them. Daniel was chosen to be one of them. The Bible tells us that he was distinguished above all the presidents and the satraps because an excellent spirit was in him. The king then set him over the whole realm (Dan. 6:2-3). Daniel, like Joseph, was favored and placed in the right position to fulfill God's plan. But like Joseph, Daniel had to suffer in the hands of the Gentiles for the truth to be sufficed. Jealousy abounded in the hearts of all those who worked closely to him. Their desire was to find something to accuse Daniel in order to disgrace him. But Daniel was faithful to the only true God. They had to create a situation where Daniel would not bend to it. So they came up with an idea that seemed good in the eyes of the king: the establishment of a royal statute to whom all people must pray and make their request to. Upon the signing of this decree Daniel went into his house, with its windows opened toward Jerusalem, there he knelt as usual three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God (vs.5-10).

Now, they had reason to accuse Daniel before the king. Now they got what they were looking for, temporarily, that is. Against his will, king Darius had them throw Daniel in the lion's den for their supper. The king, however, went to his palace and passed the night fasting, neither were instruments of music or dancing girls brought before him; and his sleep fled from him (6:18). Meanwhile, God had sent His angel to close the mouth of the lions so not to harm Daniel. I am sure the moment Daniel set his heart to obey God, He in return planned to save Daniel from the lions. Heaven opened its door to command God's creation to surrender to its Creator. Nothing was going to stop God's plan of Daniel's salvation. In fact, no weapon that had been formed against Daniel was to prosper. As the Word of God says, and every tongue that rose against him in judgment, was condemned (Isaiah 54: 17). That was the case in the life of Daniel after the king found him innocent from the accusations against him. When king Darius came to the den and to Daniel, he cried out in a voice of anguish. The king said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is your God, whom you serve continually, able to deliver you from the lions? Then Daniel said to the king, O king, live forever! My God as sent His angel and has shut the lions' mouths so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent and blameless before Him; and also before you, O king I have done no wrong...The king commanded and those men who had accused Daniel were brought and cast into the den of lions, they, their children, and their wives; and before they ever reached the bottom of the den, the lions had overpowered them and had broken their bones in pieces. Then King Darius wrote to all peoples, nations, and languages that dwelt in all the earth: May peace be multiplied to you! I make a decree that in all my royal dominion men must tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for He is the living God, enduring and steadfast forever, and His kingdom shall not be destroyed and His dominion shall be even to the end; He is a Savior and Deliverer, and He works signs and wonders in the heaven and on the earth- He Who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions (Daniel 6:20-27).

This story and Daniel's friends' experience in the furnace are pictured of the end times' persecution and deliverance for the Jewish people, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, elevated himself above God when he made an image to be set on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. His purpose was to cause everyone to bow down and worship the golden image. Whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace (3:1-6). When Daniel's friends, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego did not bow down to it King

Nebuchadnezzar said to them, If you do not worship you shall be cast at once into the midst of a burning fiery furnace, and who is that god who and deliver you out of my hands? They answered the king saying, If our God Whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up (3:14-18). Persecutions, many times will come with the given choice to deny one's faith. But these young men set themselves up to be faithful to their God, no matter the price they had to pay with their own lives, that of be thrown into the furnace, which was heated seven times hotter than was usually. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, as a result of their faith, suffered no burn, not even a smell of fire was found in their clothes. Again, God provided an angel who stood in the furnace with them and delivered them from death of fire. King Nebuchadnezzar then made a decree that any people, nation, and language that speaks anything amiss against the God of these young men shall be cut in pieces and their houses be made a dunghill, for there is no other God who can deliver in this way! (Dan. 3: 10- 30). The testimony of these godly young people serves as an encouragement to all of us who love the Lord to be faithful to the end. We might be killed, as many have been, but never forsaken by our Lord and Savior, our Hope of glory, who will be waiting for us on the other side in eternity.

Daniel prayed; he prayed with opened window and God opened the window of heaven and answered his prayer with power and majesty for all to see and understand that He is God of all gods! Had Daniel denied His God, this story would have been incomplete and without a purpose. In Revelation 13th the Apostle John sees the antichrist coming up of the sea with ten horns and seven heads, and peoples from every nation adoring and worshipping him. Nebuchadnezzar is a type of the antichrist. Daniel and his friends, a type of the remnant Jews of the last days being persecuted by the antichrist. The Bible says in Zechariah 13:9 that the third part of the Jews will be brought through the fire and be refined as silver is refined; they will be tested as gold is tested; but when they call on the name of the Lord, He will hear and answer and save them.

Prayer with faith is a powerful tool given to the believer. It measures no distance, no impossibilities while entering the realm of heaven. God hears them; He keeps them to perform as we asked in His will. Revelation 5:8 -9 says: And when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders prostrated

themselves before the Lamb. Each was holding a harp, and they had golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God's people; and in Revelation 8:3 we read, And another angel came and stood over the altar. He had a golden censer, and he was given very much incense, that he might mingle it with the prayers of all the people of God upon the golden altar before the throne and the smoke of the incense arose in the presence of God, with the prayers of the people of God, from the hand of the angel. A prayer of faith will remove obstacles, because it will move the heart of God to perform in our favor. James said, and the prayer of faith will save him who is sick, and the Lord will restore him (5:15a). Let's not underestimate the power of prayer; believe that it is the key that will open heaven and connect us with the heavenly Father. Daniel and his friends believed in it and God blessed them. He will do for us today, too!