



A Systematic Expository Study of the Word of God

THE CONVICTION AND COURAGE OF A TRUE BELIEVER Daniel 6:10

Daniel's purpose earlier in life was not superficial; the strength of his firm purpose carried him through till the old age. Though he was a captive in Babylon he was courageous, not cowardly, in standing by his godly conviction. He did not think that when you are in Rome you must do as the Romans do. He was as righteous in Babylon as he had been in Jerusalem. To him it mattered not whether his actions brought him loss or gain, frown or favour, pain or pleasure, condemnation or commendation of the world. Cost what it might, righteousness was always the best policy. Each of us needs such a spirit of decision in times like these. Why would Daniel be so particular? Were there not other Jews in the land who kept their religion to themselves and quietly refrained from attracting attention to their conviction? The temptation to look at others is always strong but Daniel was not going to yield to any pressure to compromise. He was being considered for the highest position in the government. If he was very conscientious in keeping to his conviction, would he not miss the opportunity of that special promotion? No position in an earthly government was as important to Daniel as a place in the Kingdom of God. Some might have said 'it is the law of the land not to pray to God' but God's children are under a higher law and "***we ought to obey God rather than men***" (Acts 5:29). Daniel's heart was set and settled. His decision was not floating in his head but deep-rooted in his heart.

DANIEL'S UNCOMMON DEN

Daniel 6:10,7; Amos 3:4; Hebrews 11:33; Psalm 7:1,2; Psalms 10:2-9; 57:4-7; 35:17-20; Nahum 2:11,12; 2 Timothy 4:16-18; 1 Peter 5:8,9.

The presidents and the princes conspired against Daniel. They, by flattery and deception, perverted the king's mind to pass an unchangeable edict. The penalty for disobeying the king's decree was death in the lions' den. The situation would have put Daniel in great dilemma but his first allegiance was to the King of kings and his fearless and unqualified obedience was to the law and edict of His everlasting Kingdom. The great trial did not crush his spirit of praise. He still "***prayed and gave thanks before His God.***" The dread of the den of lions did not stop Daniel from worshipping God. The lions in the den, indeed, all the lions in all the dens on earth are under God's control. If he had compromised and sinned for fear of Darius' den of lions, he could still have encountered a fiercer doom than the terror from which he shrank. Lions could still crush and kill the compromiser (1 Kings 13:24; 2 Kings 17:25,26; Job 3:25). Compromising men have declined to bear a light burden and they have been constrained to bear a far heavier one. They have fled from a lion and a bear has met them; they sought to escape from a bear but a serpent killed them (Amos 5:19). To deny Christ because of danger is always risky, unsafe and dangerous. It is better to go forward than to draw back. The safest thing is to trust our souls into God's care and do His will. Even if there are lions in front, it is better to go ahead doing God's will than to draw back. "***Remember Lot's wife.***" It may be hard going forward, but it is worse going back. If a man lost his life to save his coat he would be a fool; if a man were to lose his soul in order to save his life, he would be a greater fool. So Daniel knew that the risk of being cast into a den of lions was nothing when compared to the risk of being cast into hell. He chose the smaller risk and continued living for God's glory. Ultimately, the great conflict was between "***the laws of his God***", "***the LORD that changeth not***" (Daniel 6:5; Malachi 3:6) and "***the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not***" (Daniel 6:8,12b,15). It was a conflict between the everlasting King and an earthly ruler. Daniel knew that God is greater and disobedience to His law carries eternal punishment. The penalty in the den was temporary and brief, the punishment in hell will be endless and eternal. It would have been foolish to fear the den and risk being cast into the eternal lake of fire. There was a choice to make and Daniel, strengthened by habitual prayer and faith in God, made the right choice.

DANIEL'S UNCOMPROMISING DECISION

Daniel 6:10; Ruth 1:11-18; Nehemiah 6:9-16; Esther 3:1-4; 4:10-16; Job 13:15,16; 27:3-6; Acts 5:27-29; Acts 20:19-24; Psalms 119:51,83, 109, 141,143,157.

Daniel's decision was the decision of a single-minded believer. He knew his duty towards God and he did not waver or confer with flesh and blood. He did not seek the advice of worldly-minded people. His faith was steadfast, his composure was calm and unruffled, his conduct remained consistent with his conviction. His conscience affirmed obedience to God above allegiance to any man on earth. God's Word, not the decree of

earthly kings, was his guide in life. He had decided for the truth and he was not going to sell the truth at any price. Oh for a heart like Daniel's to follow and obey Christ at all hazards. To be a real Christian and be steadfast till the end, a man must possess such decision of character. So many people fail and falter, they fall from the Christian race because of lack of a firm purpose. They start with great enthusiasm and glowing testimony, then they allow themselves to be diverted from their purpose. A man of unswerving decision learns to keep his mind on the Lord. Keeping our eyes on eternal things makes sin and compromise lose their attractions. A firm commitment to God and His will, whatever may arise, keeps us standing for the truth at all times. Such a firm decision keeps our hearts at rest and we leave the outcome in God's Hands. The great thing for us is to know the will of God and do it. Decisions make the man. Firm decisions make firm men with strong backbone. Break a man's ability to take decisions and you break and destroy the man. It was Babylon's determination to break the will and overthrow the faith of the three faithful worshippers of the true God. Babylon failed and the old-time faith was purified and preserved in the fire. It was Medo-Persia's determination to destroy or weaken the resolve of Daniel. Daniel's commitment to the law of God was stronger than their determination. Because of the faithfulness of believers who have lived before us and their willingness to be cast into the furnace or into the lions' den, "**the faith once delivered unto the saints**" still lives.

DANIEL'S UNCONDITIONAL DEVOTION

Daniel 6:10; 3:15-18; Job 1:8-12,19-22; 2:3-10; Psalm 27:1-4; Isaiah 50:5-10; Acts 4:19,20; 21:10-14; 2 Corinthians 12:7-10; Romans 8:35-39.

Daniel's devotion took him to the lions' den but also brought him in contact with an angel of God in the lions' den. His consistent devotional life was the result of his fearless disposition of heart. He was about 90 years old at this time and his purpose of heart as a young man was still vibrant in his old age. His heart was fixed. No decree of man could swerve him from his devotions to his God. Compromisers are never open and above-board. They conceal their real character. Daniel's commitment to God was well-known before the decree and that commitment continued during the period of the decree. Daniel and his devotion to God outlived all his persecutors and their decree. The decree could not conquer his spirit of devotion, neither could the lions crush the bones of his body. Daniel's conscience would not allow him to keep his conviction and devotion secret. He was too honest to live under false pretense. He was not ashamed to confess and serve his God openly. Faithful as Daniel was to the king, there was a point at which his earthly interests stopped. Once earthly relations and authorities demanded that he should disregard or dishonour God, he was instantly inflexible. No desire for worldly recognition and no fear of royal punishment could lessen his consecration or devotion to God. This has ever been the mark and moral strength of all true children of God in all the ages. The world may try to frighten us with edicts and decrees or entice us with promises and privileges but they will try in vain. Nothing will diminish our love for our God and our Saviour. Let us prayerfully trust and obey our God and the fear of man which brings a snare will have no hold on our hearts.

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