



THIS IS YOUR SPACE TO MAKE YOURS

REFLECTION POINTS 14 JUNE 2020

READING - DANIEL 6

“ It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty satraps, stationed throughout the whole kingdom, 2and over them three presidents, including Daniel; to these the satraps gave account, so that the king might suffer no loss. 3Soon Daniel distinguished himself above all the other presidents and satraps because an excellent spirit was in him, and the king planned to appoint him over the whole kingdom. 4So the presidents and the satraps tried to find grounds for complaint against Daniel in connection with the kingdom. But they could find no grounds for complaint or any corruption, because he was faithful, and no negligence or corruption could be found in him. 5The men said, ‘We shall not find any ground for complaint against this Daniel unless we find it in connection with the law of his God.’ 6 So the presidents and satraps conspired and came to the king and said to him, ‘O King Darius, live for ever! 7All the presidents of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the counsellors and the governors, are agreed that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce an interdict, that whoever prays to anyone, divine or human, for thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be thrown into a den of lions. 8Now, O king, establish the interdict and sign the document, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which cannot be revoked.’ 9Therefore King Darius signed the document and interdict. 10 Although Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he continued to go to his house, which had windows in its upper room open towards Jerusalem, and to get down on his knees three times a day to

pray to his God and praise him, just as he had done previously. 11The conspirators came and found Daniel praying and seeking mercy before his God. 12Then they approached the king and said concerning the interdict, ‘O king! Did you not sign an interdict, that anyone who prays to anyone, divine or human, within thirty days except to you, O king, shall be thrown into a den of lions?’ The king answered, ‘The thing stands fast, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be revoked.’ 13Then they responded to the king, ‘Daniel, one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the interdict you have signed, but he is saying his prayers three times a day.’ 14 When the king heard the charge, he was very much distressed. He was determined to save Daniel, and until the sun went down he made every effort to rescue him. 15Then the conspirators came to the king and said to him, ‘Know, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no interdict or ordinance that the king establishes can be changed.’ 16 Then the king gave the command, and Daniel was brought and thrown into the den of lions. The king said to Daniel, ‘May your God, whom you faithfully serve, deliver you!’ 17A stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet and with the signet of his lords, so that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel. 18Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; no food was brought to him, and sleep fled from him. 19 Then, at break of day, the king got up and hurried to the den of lions. 20When he came near the den where Daniel was, he cried out anxiously to Daniel, ‘O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God whom you faithfully serve been able to deliver you from the lions?’ 21Daniel then said to the king, ‘O king, live for ever! 22My God sent his angel and shut the lions’

mouths so that they would not hurt me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no wrong.' 23Then the king was exceedingly glad and commanded that Daniel be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no kind of harm was found on him, because he had trusted in his God. 24The king gave a command, and those who had accused Daniel were brought and thrown into the den of lions—they, their children, and their wives. Before they reached the bottom of the den the lions overpowered them and broke all their bones in pieces.

25 Then King Darius wrote to all peoples and nations of every language throughout the whole world: 'May you have abundant prosperity! 26I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion people should tremble and fear before the God of Daniel:

For he is the living God,
enduring for ever.

His kingdom shall never be destroyed,
and his dominion has no end.

27 He delivers and rescues,
he works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth;
for he has saved Daniel
from the power of the lions.'

28So this Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

REFLECTION POINTS

We are reading the whole chapter to see the story in its horrific entirety but remember it was written at a specific time in history.

Daniel is a scribe, a Jew in exile working at court, trying to survive, good at his job. Chapters 1 to 6 of Daniel are written in the 3rd person and are sometimes called 'Court tales'.

They tell the story of Daniel's career at court.

He is working under a pagan empire interpreting dreams, and receiving dreams.

God communicates through dreams and visions in this book.

This chapter raises all sorts of difficult questions for us, least of all the murder of those who had framed Daniel plus their entire families. What purpose does this serve? Where is the possibility for what we call redemption in this?

Why did God intervene in Daniel's case but not in other cases of people who have not done anything wrong?

Oscar Romero was a good man, a man of God, a man who spoke to the truth to corrupt power and authority – why did God not intervene in his case?

What does intervention by God actually mean for us?

What do we pray for? For God to put things right or for us to be equipped to make a difference?

How do we understand the lion's den? Can you identify a time when you have faced a lion's den?

PROPHETS OF A FUTURE NOT OUR OWN

It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view.

The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent

enterprise that is God's work. Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of

saying that the Kingdom always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that could be said.

No prayer fully expresses our faith.

No confession brings perfection.

No pastoral visit bring wholeness.

No program accomplishes the Church's mission.

No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about.

We plant the seeds that one day will grow.

We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.

We lay foundations that will need further development.

We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.

This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.

It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an

opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master

builder and the worker.

We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.

We are prophets of a future not our own.

Amen