

DANIEL: VICTORY THROUGH HUMILITY DAN 6:16-23, 25-27
4TH ADVENT SERVICE DEC. 21, '16

¹⁶ Then the king commanded, and Daniel was brought and cast into the den of lions. The king declared to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, deliver you!" ¹⁷ And a 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, that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel. ¹⁸ Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; no diversions were brought to him, and sleep fled from him.

¹⁹ Then, at break of day, the king arose and went in haste to the den of lions. ²⁰ As he came near to the den where Daniel was, he cried out in a tone of anguish. The king declared to Daniel, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?" ²¹ Then Daniel said to the king, "O king, live forever! ²² My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm." ²³ Then 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.

²⁵ Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: "Peace be multiplied to you. ²⁶ I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for he is the living God, enduring forever; his kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion shall be to the end.

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

The Christmas story tells about Magi, wise men, from the east who followed a star to that pointed them forward to Jesus so they came and worshiped him.

But where did they get the idea this star had anything to do with Israel and why did they care?

The O.T. mentions other magi, wise men, in ancient Babylon and one of them was Daniel.

He may have placed in that eastern library book of Genesis which contains prophecy of star rising over Israel's king.

Daniel himself was like a picture, forshadowing these Magi
because he also looked forward to worshiping Jesus
And he also forshadowed the star by pointing to Jesus,
and forshadowed Jesus himself by his work as prophet
and what he said being proved true by his humble submitting
to death but coming back again to live and reign.
It was Daniel who prophesied that those who
lead many to righteousness will shine like the stars.
This was true of Daniel himself, it is true of Jesus
and it can be true of us as well, because...

**BOLD WORDS SHARE THE LIGHT OF GOD'S WORD
HUMBLE LIVES ARE LIGHTS IN THE DARKNESS
GOD SHOWS HOW HE CAN SAVE**

BOLD WORDS SHARE THE LIGHT OF GOD'S WORD
Phil. 2: ¹⁴ Do all things without grumbling or questioning, ¹⁵ that you
may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the
midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as
lights in the world, ¹⁶ holding fast to the word of life,

In midweek Advent services, we have been considering
people from the shadows of O.T. who forshadowed Jesus'
role as our savior, priest and king.
Tonight we consider one who is like Jesus as a prophet.
We usually think of prophets as those who predict the future,
speaking before things happen, which Daniel & Jesus did
but other role of prophets is simply speaking before people
proclaiming the words of God, which Daniel & Jesus did
and which we also are called to do.
Jesus is the light of the world. He reveals and makes us
able to see the glory, truth, and love of God the Father.
Like the prophet John the Baptist, we are not the light
but we are to bear witness, to point to that light.
We do this when we not only hold fast to God's word of life
for ourselves but hold it out by speaking it boldly.
Jesus said no one lights a lamp to put it under a basket.
Daniel was one who held on to God's word,
despite living in a culture that pressured him to give it up.
In text king repeatedly refers to Daniel serving God.
How did he know this? Daniel made no attempt to hide it.
even when he was faced with threats

He also spoke God's word boldly and fearlessly
telling both King Nebuchadnezzar and his son
that they needed to humbly repent & turn to God.
This is one way Daniel pictured and pointed to Jesus who also
spoke plainly even when his own did not receive him.
Bold words were not always received well. This is when,

HUMBLE LIVES ARE LIGHTS IN THE DARKNESS

The king declared to Daniel, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?"²¹ Then Daniel said to the king, "O king, live forever!"²²
My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm."

The stars in the sky are always there, but we see them
when their light is in contrast to darkness around them.
Our light too may be seen most when we are in
dark, dangerous or despairing situations.
Jesus said, "Let your light shine before people, that they may
see your good works and glorify God.
Even those who don't want to listen may glorify God
when they see how we act.

One of the noteworthy things about Daniel is how
he was always humbly respectful of authority,
He was royalty who had been kidnapped and forced
to serve an enemy power, but he served well.
Even when he was called in to explain things to rulers
who were confused and afraid, he never gloated.
Notice how he even says to king who threw him to lions,
"O king, live forever!"
and could truthfully say, "I have done no harm."

President Roosevelt was known for saying,
"Speak softly but carry a big stick."
God's prophets are to speak boldly but lay down the sticks.
So both Daniel and his friends who were thrown into the fire
said by their words or actions,
I am going to obey God no matter what,
but you can go ahead and do what you will do.

They knew, as the Psalmist wrote:
The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear.
The Lord is the stronghold of my life.

God's prophets were uncompromising in what they said
but humbly submissive in how they lived.
This is one way they pointed to Jesus who humbled himself
as a lowly servant, from the time he was born
as a helpless baby and laid in a manger
to when he stood quietly as he was sentenced to death
by the authorities of his day.
But the main way Daniel serves as a picture of Jesus
is what happens after the death sentence is carried out
because this is when

GOD SHOWS HOW HE CAN SAVE

²⁶ I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion people are to tremble
and fear before the God of Daniel,
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²⁷ He delivers and rescues; he works signs and wonders in heaven and
on earth, he who has saved Daniel from the power of the lions.”

There was another prophet who spoke God's law and gospel
not to Israel, but to their enemies, Jonah.
But he also had to be humbled first by experience of being
swallowed by a whale and pleading for mercy himself.
When Jesus was pressed to prove what he was saying was true
he said he would give no sign except the sign of Jonah,
by which he meant his three days buried
in the belly of the earth and coming out alive.
Daniel's experience in the lion's pit is similar.
What happened meant certain death but he came out alive.
Now those who wanted to silence him had to admit
that what he said about his God was obviously true.
The king declares that his God is the eternal living God.
After this Daniel is promoted to head administrator.
Through humility he ended victorious over his opponents.
and next the king sends Israelites back to their homeland
to rebuild the temple and worship God.
This is like what happens to Jesus.
Precisely because he humbles himself to death on a cross
to take away the suffering we deserve for our sins,
He is raised to life again in glory and highly exalted,
is victorious over death & the Devil & reigns over all.

Because of this we get to go to our homeland of heaven
where we will worship God forever
This is why we do not need to cling to what we have in life
but can humble ourselves in repentance for our sins
and in service to God and to other people
and accept times of great trouble and even death,
confident that we will be delivered by God who rescues,
and will shine like stars forever and ever
because of the great glory of Jesus' grace and truth.

So we continue today and always to point to Jesus
and declare what he does for us.

BOLD WORDS SHARE THE LIGHT OF GOD'S WORD

We also are to speak for God in this world

HUMBLE LIVES ARE LIGHTS IN THE DARKNESS

Daniel, like Jesus, served humbly because this is how
GOD SHOWS HOW HE CAN SAVE,

even rescuing us and giving victory over sin and death
because of Jesus' death and victorious resurrection.