

CHAPTER 5

WOW, WHAT POWERFUL PRAYERS FROM PERSIA!

Have you noticed what powerful prayers Daniel prayed even in his old age? Remaining actively employed for more than 70 years as a high political official in the Babylonian and then Persian courts, Daniel prayed three times a day before an open window facing Jerusalem. When political rivals targeted his prayer life, he continued to boldly profess his faith in the living God! Read Daniel 6. Daniel 8:2 tells about Daniel's vision where he is in the place of Susa in the province of Elam.

A. MORE THAN DELIVERANCE FROM A LION'S DEN!

Daniel's success as a political advisor attracted the envy of his colleagues, who consequently wanted to get rid of him. Unable to find fault in his professional integrity or aptitude, they decided to use his faith against him. Consequently, they flattered King Darius the Mede into issuing a 30-day decree that anyone who prays to anyone except the King will be thrown into a den of lions.

This didn't deter Daniel. He continued to pray on his knees toward Jerusalem before open windows 3 times a day giving thanks to God just as he had done before.

"Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before." Daniel 6:10

Daniel's enemies' trick worked. Daniel was seen praying and sentenced to the lion's den because the laws of the Medes and Persians could not be broken. We know that God miraculously delivered Daniel. But take note of the final result of Daniel's obedience to God:

Darius issued this declaration after Daniel was freed:

"I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel. For he is the living God and he endures forever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end. He rescues and he saves; he performs signs and wonders in the heaven and on the earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions."

"I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must hear and reverence the God of Daniel. For he is the living God and he endures forever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end. He rescues and he saves; he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions." So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian." Daniel 6:26-28

Who heard this decree? The Persian Empire stretched from Egypt through the Middle East and Pakistan to parts of India and Central Asia. This territory includes the present day countries of

Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, Turkey, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and parts of Kazakhstan and India. Hundreds of people groups, speaking hundreds of languages read what Darius wrote. Because of Daniel's prayers, the 10-40 Window of that day knew that Daniel's living God rescues, performs signs and wonders, and has an everlasting dominion.

B. COULD SATAN HINDER DANIEL'S PRAYER FOR PERSIA?

In Daniel chapter 10, we read about an elderly Daniel in his third year of service to King Cyrus of Persia. We learn he had a great burden. He fasted and prayed for three weeks not knowing if his prayers were being heard. A reply came from heaven, "Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the King of Persia. Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come" (Daniel 10:12-14).

A heavenly spiritual battle took place between God's forces and Satan which delayed Daniel's answer from God for twenty-one days. Notice that the demon under Satan's power was called the prince of the Persian Kingdom. The same chapter describes another battle with the prince of Greece. Evidently, Satan puts different demonic powers over various countries or people groups to hold them in darkness so they won't come to know the truth.

Satan will use any means possible to hinder prayers, especially those concerning bringing knowledge of the gospel to unreached nations and peoples. Satan has always opposed God's work in Persia, but like the prayers of Daniel, the intercession of God's people today can help produce God's victory with Persians coming to Christ. Please take the challenge below!

C. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Dear Christian friends, in chapter 2 we read about Daniel as a teenager, praying for God's wisdom. This same Daniel in his eighties still fasted and prayed for God's work to be done among his own people, the Jews, and all the people of the Persian Empire.

Dare to be a like Daniel! Many of our prayers are for our family, friends, and our physical needs only. We neglect to pray for many other needs. Use the prayer guide which follows and pray for the needs of Iran just like Daniel did.

Iran Requests

1. Pray for the persecuted Persian believers to have endurance and to be able to show the love of Christ to those who oppress them.
2. Pray for the reopening of the United Bible Society in Tehran. What a blessing it would be to have the Scriptures readily available again in Iran.

3. Pray that the new believers will learn to listen to God by reading the Word and applying it.
4. Some believers do not have a fellowship to attend. Pray that they will get encouragement from radio broadcasts, Scripture portions, or other Christian literature.
5. Pray for a massive people movement among the 5,000,000 Luri tribal people of southwest Iran with many coming to trust in Christ.
6. Pray that some living outside of Iran who have come to Christ might desire to return to reach their own relatives, as well as reach out to others. This could include visits, or returning permanently to Iran. Pray that they might be bold in proclaiming their faith in Jesus Christ.
7. Pray that President Khatami and others in the Islamic Iranian government will lead the country with wisdom. The Bible tells us to pray for those in authority so that Christian believers may lead peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.
8. Pray that believers will stand firm in their walk with God at home, work, and school and be able to testify wisely about their faith in Jesus Christ.
9. Along the Caspian Sea live almost 3,000,000 Mazanderani people who have yet to hear the Gospel. Pray for someone to reach out to these people.
10. Pray that the Persian radio signals into Iran will meet no interference and that the programs will come in clearly. Pray that programs in the mother tongue of the Kurdish, Manzandarain etc people groups will be started, too.
11. Muslim background believers cannot attend the churches still remaining in Iran. This makes it difficult for new believers to grow. Pray for the Spirit of God to help them in their new-found faith.
12. Numerous churches and fellowships of Iranians meet outside of Iran throughout Europe, the U.S., Canada, Australia, and parts of Asia. Pray for the pastors and leaders as they reach out to dispersed Iranians.
13. Pray for the 65% of the population of Iran which is under 25 years of age. Minds need to be captured with the cause of Christ. New, creative ideas are needed.
14. Pray for more translating and publishing of Christian literature for Iranians.
15. Pray for those Persian-speaking people living in Afghanistan and Tajikistan, often in dire circumstances. The radio programs and literature could help them find the way.
16. Pray that Persian students, studying the Word in several Bible schools outside of Iran,

would be prepared to teach others.

17. Pray that the message of salvation shared by missionaries and others will fall on fertile soil among Iranians who live outside of Iran.
18. Among the large people groups of Iran are 1,000,000 Kurds, located in northwest Iran. Pray for many to hear and believe and then witness to their own people both in Iran as well as in Iraq and Turkey.
19. Pray for the doors of Iran to open so that Christian workers, including Persians, might again be able to go in and give out the message.
20. Pray that fear of discovery might not deter the home groups from meeting together in some cities.
21. Pray for consistency and character development for new believers who are being discipled.
22. Pray for the protection of pastors in Iran as they struggle to lead their flocks in spite of all the restrictions on the Christian faith from the government.
23. Pray that Assyrian and Armenian church members would truly know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior and give a good witness to the surrounding Persian population.
24. Pray that “freedom of worship” would be the rule in Iran. Islamic government officials say there is freedom for all to worship, but that is not true for the Muslim background believer.
25. Pray that God would raise up a mighty army of prayer warriors for the Persian-speaking world. Perhaps you should be one of them.
26. Pray for those who have heard the Word of God today in Iran and are pondering the claims of Christ. May they say “yes” to Him.
27. Pray that pastors and leaders in Iran would not continue to leave the country. It is hard to stay, but they are desperately needed.
28. Pray that the 50-60 unreached people groups in Iran will have an opportunity to hear the gospel in their mother tongue.
29. Pray for Iranian believers who are seeking believing mates. This can be difficult and frustrating. Pray for patience and the willingness to wait on the Lord.
30. Pray for radio listeners to understand the message and respond and for those who produce the programs to do so with clarity and simplicity. Pray for the finances to continue this broadcasting.

31. Pray for those godly pastors who still minister in Iran in spite of government repression, that they will preach the Word boldly, yet with wisdom from God.

I challenge you to pray for each of these requests for one month. If God leads you to continue praying, please feel free to tear this section out of the booklet or make a photocopy for your private prayers.

Check out <www.bethany.com.internet/profiles/c_code/iran> for prayer lists on the 46 different unreached people groups listed. Your prayers, like Daniel's, might open the way for those unreached people to know that God's dominion mentioned in Daniel 6 applies to them. Another web site with prayer requests for the Persian World is <www.peopleteams.org/psw/prayer>.

Another web site which gives current prayer requests for Persians is <www.farsinet.com/pwo>. God can use your prayers to reach Persians!