

***Pastor Jeremy M. Thomas***  
***Fredericksburg Bible Church***

*107 East Austin*

*Fredericksburg, Texas 78624*

*830-997-8834    [jthomas@fbgbible.org](mailto:jthomas@fbgbible.org)*

**C1232 – September 26, 2012 – Daniel 6:1-28**  
**The Lion's Den**

If you'll open your Bible to Daniel 6 you'll find the most well-known story in the book, Daniel in the Lion's Den. So I'll be hard pressed to cast any new light on this event. However it's my hope that you will enjoy hearing it once more as we work our way through. It finds it's parallel with the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the Fiery Furnace. In both chapters believers are faced with a crisis situation and respond in faith, committing civil disobedience and entrusting the results to God who supernaturally protects them. So the major purpose of these chapters is to teach Jews who live in Exile that the modus operandi of life during the reigns of oppressive Gentile kingdoms is faith and that God miraculously delivers only through faith.

So because this is a repetition of themes found earlier in Dan 3 we'll be reviewing several of those earlier themes tonight. To get started let's make a few pertinent observations. First, there has been a kingdom shift. Belshazzar was the last king of Babylon and like so many Gentile rulers his problem was arrogance. This man was so arrogant that when his city was surrounded by armies he decided to have a big party inside the city. And when he was about drunk on wine he did a very haughty thing and had the gold and silver vessels from the temple in Jerusalem brought to him so they could drink from them. And when they were drinking and praising the gods of gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood and stone suddenly a very mysterious set of fingers appeared and wrote on the wall, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. And at that point the king's face grew pale, his thoughts alarmed him, his hip joints went slack and his knees began knocking together, the man was scared out of his socks. And when none of his wise men could read or interpret the writing he became even more scared. About that time the queen mother, Nitocris, suggested Daniel be brought in, for in him was found wisdom and insight and

an extraordinary spirit in the days of his grandfather, King Nebuchadnezzar and that he was able to solve difficult problems so he could solve this. And when Daniel arrived he gave the king another theology lesson, one God had taught his grandfather but he failed to learn, namely, the lesson of humbly recognizing that God is the one who gave you your kingdom and God can just as easily take it away. Belshazzar had heard this theology but he didn't want this theology so he took the Lord's vessels and drank wine from them and praised the gods of the very materials from which they were made, which neither see, nor hear, nor understand just to spit in this God's face. So this God had written a message on the wall to Belshazzar which Daniel interpreted to mean the days of your kingdom have been numbered, you Belshazzar have been weighed and found wanting and the kingdom is now being divided and given over to the Medes and Persians. And at that very time the armies had already diverted the Euphrates River, made their way under the arched gateways into the city and were on their way to the banquet hall. Belshazzar's last act, ironically, was clothing Daniel in purple, putting a gold necklace around his neck and making him triumvir in the kingdom behind only his father, King Nabonidus and himself. Finally at the end of chapter 5 we are notified that Belshazzar was killed. And seeing that Nabonidus his father had already been defeated and routed to Borsippa, never to return, Daniel was the highest ranking official on the last night of Babylonian kingdom. And I take it that this is one of the greatest examples of God exalting the humble. Daniel had entered Babylon as a young captive Hebrew slave and he went out the highest ranking official in the entire kingdom. Now that's some turn of events and tonight we'll see another turn of events, equally astonishing, Daniel in the Lions' Den, a crisis situation.

Now, these events are going to occur probably around 538/537BC, the king now is Darius the Mede and he's trying to solidify his new kingdom. He's a new character so let's introduce him. We first meet him at the end of Dan 5 where it says "Darius the Mede received the kingdom at about the age of sixty-two." If you glance at Dan 9:1 you'll see he was the son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent. Now the difficulty is that secular scholars claim Daniel made a historical blunder here because Darius the Mede is nowhere mentioned in the Nabonidus Chronicle, the chief document explaining what happened the night Babylon was defeated. They miss no opportunity to criticize the historicity of Daniel because if Daniel is writing prophecy from the sixth century BC then history is determined to follow a certain course and

they don't like that because they're at enmity with God. So in the scholarly commentaries conservatives have gone to great extent to defend the historicity of Darius the Mede. In fact there is more written on the identity of Darius the Mede than the entire episode of Daniel in the Lion's Den. Now I won't bore you with all the theories<sup>i</sup> tonight except to state unequivocally that conservative scholars have responded with several alternative explanations.<sup>ii</sup> The explanation I think most plausible, is that Darius the Mede was Gubaru, a governor appointed over Babylon by Cyrus. This view, which has been worked out extensively by John Whitcomb and held by famous scholars like William F Albright and Robert Dick Wilson, reconciles the events recorded in the Nabonidus Chronicle with the biblical text by reconstructing the sequence of events as follows: on the night of Belshazzar's feast Ugaru, governor of Gutium, led Cyrus' forces against Babylon. By diverting the Euphrates River he entered through the dry river canals and took the city without a battle. Three weeks later this Ugaru died. In his place Cyrus appointed Gubaru to govern Babylon. This reconstruction rests on a distinction between Ugaru and Gubaru which are both identified by the name Gobryas in the Nabonidus Chronicle. However, Whitcomb was able to show that Ugaru died within three weeks while Gubaru continued to govern Babylon for 14 years. So it is most likely that Darius the Mede was also known as Gubaru seeing that it was common for ancient rulers to have multiple names.

One last observation is that Dan 7 and 8 have both been revealed prior to Daniel in the Lions' Den. Dan 7 is a prophecy of Four Beastly Kingdoms that parallel the four kingdoms of Dan 2 - Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. So the sequence of four Gentile kingdoms was well-known, these would be followed by a final kingdom that would never be destroyed. Also Dan 9, the great prophecy of the 70 sevens was given before Daniel in the Lion's Den, not long before, probably just a year or so before, but this is a divinely given calendar of 490 years for the nation Israel. And so that was already known.

With that clarified let's look at Dan 6:1, remembering that Daniel was an old man at this time, in his early 80's, he has just interpreted the handwriting on the wall and been crowned the third highest ruler in Babylon. Somehow he survived the Median invasion that night and is now going to be brought into the Medo-Persian government. This man survived a kingdom shift and that

demonstrates political skill or wisdom. And that is precisely why Daniel was placed by the Jews among the Writings instead of among the Prophets. While he does prophecy, he is seen primarily as a man who exercised political skill and anyone going into politics or contemplating it should take a close look at Daniel.

Verse 1, **It seemed good to Darius**, that's Gubaru, was given quite a bit of leeway by Cyrus to govern this newly acquired region, **it seemed good...to appoint 120 satraps over the kingdom, that they would be in charge of the whole kingdom, 2and over them three commissioners (of whom Daniel was one), that these satraps might be accountable to them, and that the king might not suffer loss.** Now the main idea is that **the king** is taking measures so he won't **suffer loss**. This was a dangerous time when many new assets could be lost so he's trying to consolidate the kingdom and get a security system in place. His strategy is to set up **three commissioners over 120 satraps**.

Now the word **satraps** means "kingdom protectors," so these men were trained in protecting the assets of the king and they were spread throughout the kingdom to do just that. Then the **three commissioners (of whom Daniel was one)**, would have to be the most trustworthy men. And I think we can assume that two of them were very close to Darius, he had probably known them for many years if not his entire life. Daniel is up there with these two men and we're not told how Daniel came to be in this prominent position. I suggest Darius recognized several advantages of making Daniel a right hand man. First of all, Daniel's name would have been found in the royal court records of Babylon indicating a long history administering the Babylonian kingdom. Daniel had a working knowledge of the kingdom, the people, the culture and the language which would make him an indispensable asset. Second, it's a fact of history that the Persians treated the former Babylonian officials with leniency. In any case, Darius saw this man as advantageous to the administration of his newly acquired kingdom and so he made him a top advisor.

And in verse 3 Daniel immediately begins to stand out. **Then this Daniel began distinguishing himself among the commissioners and satraps because he possessed an extraordinary spirit**, now the reason given is from the standpoint of the king, from the king's view point, Daniel had an

**extraordinary spirit** which is the Aramaic way of saying his attitude was stellar, his work ethic was outstanding, there was no one else in his entire administration that was assuring the success of his kingdom as Daniel was and so **the king planned to appoint him over the entire kingdom.** It only stands to reason that if he's doing a stellar job over say a third of the satraps, 40 of them, why not put him over all 120 and the other two commissioners; make him second in the kingdom, second only to himself. But as you can imagine this is going to create political friction. The other rulers aren't going to like this because in politics the name of the game is moving up the ladder and they're not moving up the ladder, they're moving down the ladder, Daniel is moving up the ladder. And Daniel isn't even a Mede or a Persian, the guy is a Jew, and you can imagine the rage of these men; he didn't grow up in our parts, he didn't go to our schools, he was here when we got here and we conquered him and now he's an 80 year old guy moving up the ladder. I don't think so. We're going to retire him. That's the attitude behind the coming conspiracy.

Verse 4, **Then the commissioners and satraps began trying to find a ground of accusation against Daniel in regard to government affairs.** Now this is always the tactic, find some dirt. Try running for office sometime and see what dirt they pull up on you, they're going to dig everything up, no rock will be left unturned. Political pundits are convinced everybody's got dirt under their fingernails, so they're going to pry until they dig it out. And here they're digging, certainly this Jew blew it at some point in government affairs; **but the report is, they could find no ground of accusation or evidence of corruption, inasmuch as he was faithful, and no negligence or corruption was to be found in him.** Daniel was squeaky clean and I'm sure he knew from the get go he had to be squeaky clean if he was going to survive this administration. So he's been meticulous, he's been scrupulous with the books; there's no dirt, **no ground of accusation.** And you have to look at this and admire the wisdom and character of Daniel. The guy knew the political game, he knew about climbing the ladder, he knew the best policy was to recognize the authority and serve him with complete reliability and that what he's done, he's carried out the king's desires flawlessly, he crossed all his t's and dotted all his i's, so when the digging started they can't find a thing.

Verse 5, **Then these men said, “We will not find any ground of accusation against this Daniel unless we find it against him with regard to the law of his God.”** This is the political machines turning. They’ve got to get him on some other grounds than on how he’s carrying out **government affairs**. And you can tell from their plan that they’ve been watching Daniel. They’ve had their eye on him and apparently what they keyed in on was his religious habits. So they plan to set the law of the Medes and the Persians against **the law of Daniel’s God**.

In verse 6 they hatch a conspiracy, **Then these commissioners and satraps came by agreement to the king**. Now I keep calling it a conspiracy because the Hebrew word for **agreement** means “conspiracy,” they **came to the king to conspire and spoke to him as follows: “King Darius, live forever!”** That’s the standard greeting in all these kingdoms, **live forever**, may your dynasty never end. It’s a lot of hot air and baloney talk if you ask me, just standard procedure. And watch the address, **All the commissioners of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the high officials and the governors have consulted together**. Now that in itself would be a thing. How did you get all the rulers in the kingdom together? They’re in all parts of the kingdom? So it smacks of a lie on the face but what did Hitler say about lies? When you tell a lie tell it big, make it simple and say it over and over so people will believe it. And clearly it is a lie because surely Daniel wasn’t involved. So this is a big fat lie. They say we have consulted **together that the king should establish a statute and enforce an injunction that anyone who makes a petition to any god or man besides you, O king, for thirty days, shall be cast into the lions den** or pit; it was a pit carved down in the earth, maybe a modified cave. Now what they’re asking for is something to be put in law, the king would be the one who did this, so they make this flattering legal proposition, **establish a statute...enforce an injunction that anyone who makes a petition to any god or man besides you, O king, for thirty days, be cast into the lions den**. Now I take it they are playing on a weakness of human flesh, the weakness of vanity, that a person would be considered a god and be addressed in prayer. So they had the concept of a man-god or a god-man and this was a concept prevalent in Egypt, in Assyria and in Babylon, the rulers conceived of themselves as god-men. And so this proposition by his administrators would have flattered him; that for a period of **thirty days** he would be considered a god-man to whom all prayers in his kingdom would be

addressed, implying he was the sole benefactor of the well-being of the entire kingdom.

Verse 8, **“Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document so that it may not be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which may not be revoked.”** They repeat once more part of the big lie and encourage the king to **sign** it, but the Hebrew means “draw it up,” they’re encouraging the king to draw up the law himself **so that it may not be changed**. Once the king drew it up, it was law and there was no one who could change it, not even the king, the king himself will be bound by the law. Verse 9 **Therefore King Darius drew up the document, that is, the injunction**. Now at this point it is law. And notice verse 10, **Now when Daniel knew that the document was signed**, meaning the memo came across his desk and he read the new law. It’s at this point that Daniel had a decision to make; is he going to obey the law of the Medes and the Persians or is he going to obey the law of his God? Is he going to go along with the status quo or commit civil disobedience?

Now I’ve mentioned to you before the principles of civil disobedience so let’s review. Civil disobedience occurs under the fourth divine institution in Scripture, human government. Human government was given by God after the Flood, and so after sin was in the world. And so the primary purpose of human government is to curb the effects of sin. And since Rom 13 says there is no authority but that which is designated by God then human government is a divinely authorized institution. On the other hand we find instances like this where the law of a human government is pitted against the law of God. So what do we do in these situations? Do we disobey human governments? Or do we always obey the government’s wishes?

There are two issues, both illustrated in Scripture, where I think you are justified in committing civil disobedience. The first issue has to do with the sacredness of innocent human life. If the government says you are going to be involved in genocide, euthanasia or abortion, the innocent taking of human life, then you have a responsibility to commit civil disobedience. This is illustrated by the two heads of the Hebrew school of midwives who were told to kill all the little baby boys as they were being born. And they said, sorry, we can’t do that for we fear the King of the universe more than the king of

Egypt. So issue one is the destruction of innocent human life. We should never be involved in that, it's murder, destruction of the image of God.

The second issue has to do with worship. If the government comes along and says here is how you must worship, who you must worship or when you must worship, then we have a responsibility to commit civil disobedience. We saw this when Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were commanded to bow down and worship the golden image Nebuchadnezzar set up and they said, sorry, we'd rather be cast in the fiery furnace and if our God decides to save us so be it, but if not we're not going to bow down to your phony idol. So issue two is when the government starts to dictate in the area of worship then you have an obligation to say no, I can't do that.

Now the third thing is that if you decide to commit civil disobedience over one of these two issues understand you should always respect the authority. You should not mouth off, you should not try to offend them; you should simply state your position respectfully because you are respecting the office under the fourth divine institution. The second thing is to be praying, praying for the authority so that this might be solved peacefully. There's no reason to start a war with the government, that's never gone well for anyone, it's only left a path of destruction in its wake.

And finally, be prepared to take the consequences of your choice. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego thought about the consequences and made their decision accordingly, they would rather be thrown in the fiery furnace and burned alive than to bow down to that phony idol. So always thoughtfully consider the consequences and be ready to accept them if you decide to commit civil disobedience.

Now we see Daniel faced with the same type of situation his three friends were faced with years before. He's received a memo, the contents of which relate to issue two, the government dictating in the arena of worship. And if you were this man you can imagine what thoughts must have gone through his mind. I don't know many people that want to die by being mauled to death by lions. It's not a pretty prospect. So what would he decide to do? He could decide to just drop his prayer life for thirty days and obey the new law in which case he wouldn't be trusting God to take care of him. Or he could keep on praying but do it in secret for thirty days and that way he would obey



the law. But apparently he reasoned that would not be trusting God. Or he might have been able to take a vacation for thirty days, that way he would be outside the realm of the law and he'd be fine praying. But I'm convinced this wouldn't accomplish one of the primary purposes of Daniel which was to be a witness for the God of Israel. Daniel was always witnessing to people and so he was openly evangelistic, he didn't hide in a box and have a private religious life so as not to offend people, he had a public religious life. In fact we would say he didn't arbitrarily separate religion from politics, it was his religion that provided the absolutes that made him a stellar politician. That was his witness. And so if he quit praying then what would that do to his witness? It would blow it. And this man wanted to win people to Jesus Christ. He didn't want to compromise his testimony. But his life he would compromise because he already knows his eternal destiny. So verse 10, fully conscious of the law, fully conscious of the penalty for violating the law **he entered his house (now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem); and he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously.** Now the emphasis is on his continual practice. Daniel presented a consistent testimony. Year after year, day after day Daniel prayed three times each day toward Jerusalem in the open air, window open toward Jerusalem. So he continued his testimony to the God of Israel for the testimony to these men, that they might come to believe in the same God Daniel believed in. Consistency is always key to a great witness.

Now you observe that his windows were open toward Jerusalem. This was a practice from the time of Solomon, the Jew looked to Jerusalem as the only place where God chose to put His name and so they prayed toward this place and God said when you pray to me and repent of your sins then I will hear your prayers and forgive and restore (2 Chron 6:36-39). So that's what Daniel is doing. That's one thing he's praying for. They were prayers Jeremiah revealed and you can get a feel for the prayer when you read the one in Dan 9.<sup>iii</sup> Another thing to observe is Daniel's prayer posture. It's interesting that physical posture in praying often reveals the attitude of the prayer. Daniel's posture is **kneeling** which signified reverence for God. And he starts **praying and giving thanks.** Now the word for **praying** here is the same one used in vv 7 and 12 for petition and that has to do with the nation Israel and their restoration to the land, but the word **giving thanks** is interesting because it means to "show favor." Daniel is asking God to show him favor in

his civil disobedience. He doesn't know how God is going to work this out, he's just praying that He will show him grace in this hour of trial so he can be a testimony.

So Daniel is praying and asking for favor in his upper chamber looking toward Jerusalem and the conspirators have stationed themselves where they can see and hear him. Verse 11, **Then these men came by conspiracy and found Daniel making petition and supplication before his God.** So now they've got him, they've been successful, Daniel made a petition to someone besides Darius and that's all they needed. Verse 12, **Then they approached and spoke before the king about the king's injunction, "Did you not sign an injunction that any man who makes a petition to any god or man besides you, O king, for thirty days, is to be cast into the lions' den?"** The king replied, **"The statement is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which may not be revoked."** Alright, let's make sure this is all on the record and we're all clear the law is in effect and nothing can change the law. Then they make the accusation, verse 13. **Then they answered and spoke before the king, "Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the injunction which you signed, but keeps making his petition three times a day."** Now those are heavy charges but the first thing I find interesting is they did not refer to **Daniel** as one of the commissioners but as **one of the measly exiles from Judah** and you may detect a little bit of anti-Semitism there. Gentiles particularly hate it when Jews make their way up the political ladder. And that's what's bleeding through. Then they charge this Daniel with paying **no attention to Darius**, which is nonsense, **or to the injunction which** the he drew up, **but he keeps** praying to his God three times a day.

Now you can see from the king's response in verse 14 that he loved Daniel. This man had been ministered to by Daniel in such remarkable ways over the short time they worked together that it had a tremendous effect on the king. So he sets out to save Daniel. Verse 14, **Then, as soon as the king heard this statement, he was deeply distressed and set his mind on delivering Daniel; and even until sunset he kept exerting himself to rescue him.** In other words he spent the day trying to find a legal loophole, some way out of this for Daniel, but he couldn't find a thing. Then, verse 15, **these men came by conspiracy** again, apparently at the end of the day, so

after the king has spent the whole day trying to get Daniel off the hook they came back **and said to the king, “Recognize, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no injunction or statute which the king establishes may be changed.”** Now the king’s been had and it’s at this point that he had put all the pieces together and recognized these men plotted against Daniel and used him as an instrument. So he can’t be too happy here with them and in fact later on we’re going to find out he was furious about being used by them. But it’s true, once the law went into effect even the king couldn’t change it. So verse 16, **Then the king gave orders, and Daniel was brought in and cast into the lions’ den.**

Now these dens as I alluded to before were carved out of the rock or they were modified caves, and this one was quite large, it could house a good number of lions as we find out toward the end of the story. It was probably located in the royal garden park very near the king’s palace because he runs there from his bed later on. And typically these lion’s dens were partitioned into two compartments with a door in between that could be sealed with a stone, that way the keepers could toss some meat in one side, luring the lions to one compartment and then closing the stone door, descending to the other side and cleaning it in safety while the lions were eating on the other side. When they got done they would ascend back to safety and remove the stone from above allowing free access between the two compartments again. Above was open air with two walls around it, one on the outside with a door, then some space for standing, and then an inner wall, about 4 ½ feet tall so people could stand in the space and look down into the lion’s den. So **Daniel is cast in** and look what the king says, **The king spoke and said to Daniel, “your God whom you constantly serve will Himself deliver you.”** Now it’s quite remarkable that the king would admit this and it shows you Daniel had spoken to the king about his God. He may have even shared with the king about what His God had done for Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. We don’t know. But what we do know is that it is quite an admission on the part of the king that Daniel’s God can do something that he himself was powerless to do. So Darius admits that God is sovereign over all kings and kingdoms and is able to deliver according to His will.

Verse 17, **A stone was brought and laid over the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signet rings of the nobles, so that nothing would be changed in regard to Daniel.**

Now the significance of the seal was that it was illegal to break the seal unless everyone whose signet ring was stamped on the seal agreed. So the king is on one side of the stone, in one compartment, along with his nobles, and they probably took some soft clay on the seam between the stone and the wall and they all pressed their rings with their distinct symbols onto the clay. Then the clay would harden and nobody could break the seal. So the den is sealed now. Verse 18, **Then the king went off to his palace and spent the night fasting, and no entertainment was brought before him; and his sleep fled from him.** This is very unusual activity for a king. King's typically had a lavish dinner and entertainment every night. But He was so disturbed by the prospect of Daniel in the lions' den that he didn't eat, he didn't drink and he didn't take any entertainment, no music, no dancing girls or the typical luxuries of the king to take his mind off of the day's events. He just laid in his bed, completely disturbed, unable to sleep, only able to think about Daniel in the lion's den.

Verse 19, at first light **the king arose at dawn, at the break of the day,** the sun was just breaking over the horizon and he arose **and went in haste to the lions' den.** Now being 62 years old he ran as fast as he could into the royal garden park to the den all alone. You picture this man almost frantic for Daniel's life, a life he could not preserve but whom he admitted Daniel's God could preserve. Verse 20, **When he had come near the den to Daniel,** so he's not there yet but he started crying out **with a troubled voice** anyway. And **the king spoke and said to Daniel, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you constantly serve been able to deliver you from the lions?"** All he needed was a word, he couldn't see down in the den because it was first light, but if he could just get a word. Verse 21, **Then Daniel spoke to the king, "O king, live forever!"** Now that moment must have been the most fantastic moment for the king. His heart was in total anxiety until these words were uttered and then the marvel of Daniel's God and what indeed had transpired through the night coming into clear focus. A God who had the power over the king of the jungle, the most fierce animal on the planet, who merely shut the mouths of this terrifying beast. Who is this God? **O king, live forever.** Words of great respect and admiration for the king whom Daniel served. Verse 22, **My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths and they have not harmed me, inasmuch as I was found innocent before Him; and also toward you, O king, I have committed no crime.**" God had sent His angel, we are

not told whether this is a regular angel or the angel of YHWH, but just as Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were accompanied by one like a Son of Man probably Daniel was accompanied by the one and the same angel of YHWH who **shut the lions' mouths** rendering them powerless against him. And what was the basis of his deliverance? That he **was found innocent before** God, Daniel had done nothing to disobey God, he had rather committed civil disobedience in order to obey God. And further he adds, **and also toward you, O king, I have committed no crime**, meaning he had done nothing hurtful to the king. Surely the king already knew that Daniel would do no such thing but Daniel wanted to make sure.

Verse 23, **Then the king was very pleased**, he was delighted, **and gave orders for Daniel to be taken up out of the den**. Not through the sealed door on the side for this would have broken the law, but up through the open air portion. God always leaves a way of escape and this one was easily found. **So Daniel was taken up out of the den and no injury whatever was found on him**. A thorough examination was done and just as Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego were found to be completely unharmed by the fire, so Daniel was found completely unharmed by the lions. And the reason stated, very simply **because he had trusted in his God**. Trust in God is always the way of deliverance, whether it be physical deliverance or spiritual deliverance. God only delivers by faith because whatsoever is not of faith is sin and God cannot bless sin. So then we are to learn that the only way to approach God to receive His bountiful pleasure is by faith, by trusting Him. Daniel had been a witness to salvation by faith.

Verse 24, **The king then gave orders, and they brought those men who had maliciously accused Daniel, and they cast them, their children and their wives into the lions' den; and they had not reached the bottom of the den before the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones**. That wives and children also shared the punishment with the men was the custom of the Persians. It was to have a preventative effect on criminal activity. In this case their maliciousness got the best of them. The Hebrew word **malicious** means "chewed into pieces," they had literally tried to chew Daniel into pieces but they were the ones got chewed into pieces. Obviously Daniel did not survive the lions' den because the lions were not hungry, for his accusers who were cast in that very hour were caught in mid-

air before they even reached the bottom and crushed in a horrifying death. Such is the end of the enemies of God.

Verse 25, **Then Darius the king wrote to all the peoples, nations and men of every language who were living in all the land: all his kingdom, “May your peace abound!”** And with those kinds of malicious characters out of the way peace could abound. Verse 26, **I make a decree that in all the dominion of my kingdom men are to fear and tremble before the God of Daniel; For He is the living God and enduring forever, And His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed, And His dominion will be forever.** He makes a pronouncement similar to Nebuchadnezzar’s pronouncement in Dan 2 recognizing the sovereignty of God over kings and kingdoms. Verse 27, **“He delivers and rescues and performs signs and wonders In heaven and on earth, Who has *also* delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.”** He’s recognizing something about God that is true but I think falls short of a faith response. Verse 28, **So this Daniel enjoyed success in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.** God exalts those who humble themselves before Him and so Daniel enjoyed success during these kings’ reigns.<sup>iv</sup>

In conclusion, Daniel was taken into the Medo-Persian kingdom as one of the top three men under Darius, also known as Gubaru. His work was stellar and as a result the king wanted to exalt him second only to himself. This caused the power lust of his other rulers to conspire against Daniel in order to destroy him. Since his political reputation was above reproach they tried to pit Daniel’s religious practices against a proposed law on pain of death. When the law crossed Daniel’s desk he decided to commit civil disobedience to be a witness to others and put his trust in God. As a consequence he was caught and cast into the lions’ den. But God sent His angel to seal shut the mouths of the lions and preserve Daniel alive. The king in haste drew him out the next morning and immediately cast all the malicious rulers along with their families in the den of hungry lions. Not one of them reached the floor before they were overpowered. Finally King Darius drew up a decree that all men in his kingdom fear and tremble before the God of Daniel, the God who rules forever and is over all and who delivers through faith.

So what can we learn from this chapter? There are many things but chief among them all is that God delivers through faith, not by works. All salvation

is by faith whether it is from physical dangers like Daniel and his three friends faced, or spiritual danger like every human being faces. Salvation is always by grace through faith. Are you meeting your crisis situations by faith? Second, the principles of civil disobedience. Civil disobedience is suggested when it is an issue of the sacredness of human life or worship. In such cases we must respect the offices of those in authority and pray for them. Having considered the consequences we must be ready to accept them if we decide to commit civil disobedience. Are you prepared to commit civil disobedience if the circumstances demand it? Third, the chapter reveals Daniel's intense desire to evangelize others. He had a living faith and people knew. And when it came down to his life vs their salvation, he would always put his life on the line for their salvation. He didn't do it just to spite the government. He did it as an opportunity to evangelize others. Fourth, this chapter reveals once more that God is sovereign over all. He is the living God who is sovereign over all nations and nations are to recognize that He is sovereign and He does whatever he wishes. He delivers and rescues and does signs and wonders as Darius observed, even delivering Daniel from the power of the lions. Fifth, this chapter teaches Jews how to live during the times of the Gentiles and us by extension. Daniel demonstrated that Jews can have success even during a time of national discipline under Gentile powers if they will trust the Lord. The *modus operandi* is always faith and we live by the same principle. Sixth, this chapter gives hope to Israel that God will preserve the godly remnant. If God preserved faithful Daniel through the lions' den then God will preserve the faithful remnant of Israel through the den of the Gentiles bringing them at long last out of the den and into the kingdom. And if God keeps His promises to Israel then we can be assured that He will keep His promises to us, the Church.

---

<sup>i</sup> The Nabonidus Chronicle does give an account of what happened the night Babylon was destroyed and what events followed, making no mention of Darius the Mede. In response to this the secular scholars say Daniel's historical blunder was confusing the conqueror of Babylon with a later Darius, son of Hystaspes.

<sup>ii</sup> One explanation is that Darius the Mede was also known as Cyrus the Persian based on a possible rendering of Dan 6:28, but this is unlikely in light of the difference in descent, one a Mede and the other a Persian. A second explanation is that Darius the Mede was Cambyses, a son of Cyrus, who served under his father in ruling Babylon. This may be possible but it is not in my opinion the best view.

<sup>iii</sup> I think we have a good idea from Dan 9 and the prophecy of the 70 sevens the content of his petition since Dan 9 occurred just a year or so before this event. Daniel is constructing his petition on the basis of Scripture. This man was in Babylon along with many other Exiles, but there were Jews

that had fled to Egypt and Jeremiah was one of them, he was taken against his will but he went nonetheless. And he was a prophet, he's one of the major prophets and his writings made their way to Babylon showing you there was correspondence between Egypt and Babylon. And in fact, some of Jeremiah's book is addressed directly to the Exiles in Babylon, God had given Jeremiah a word concerning them and that word is found in Jeremiah 29. So you can imagine Daniel would be very interested in Jeremiah 29. And in that chapter God says you're going to be in Babylon for 70 years and then I'll restore you to this place, For I know the plans that I have for you...plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. And they were to call upon Him and pray to Him and then God would restore their fortunes. And so you can see if Daniel stops praying to Him then they won't be restored. In other words God conditions some of His plan on human prayer. So they will be in Babylon for seventy years, but their release from Babylon is conditional on human prayer. There's no contradiction at all. Daniel's not fatalistic, he doesn't kick back and say, well, God said through Jeremiah seventy years and here we are in year sixty-nine so I'm just going to stop praying, God's going to do it anyway. No, that's fatalism and the Bible is not fatalistic. Daniel isn't fatalistic. Daniel says, yes, God's sovereignty says in year seventy we're going to go home but the human condition for going home is prayer. So I'm not going to stop praying, I'd rather be thrown in a den of lions than stop praying. And there you have it, civil disobedience.

<sup>iv</sup> These two kings were contemporary, Darius was submissive to Cyrus. Daniel lived until at least 536BC (cf 10:1), we don't know how much longer he lived but as long as he lived he was successful.

[Back To The Top](#)

Copyright (c) Fredericksburg Bible Church 2012