

Daniel and the Lion's Den

Daniel 6

Well it's Father's Day, and what an appropriate text - Daniel and the Lion's Den.

CONTEXT: Remember the statue in Daniel 2 how the qualities of the metals lessened as history progressed? The main differences in each subsequent world power were the way in which power was distributed. The further you go, the more diluted it becomes.

With Babylon you had an **Absolute Monarchy** - That is why it said the Head of GOLD was (*Not Babylon*) but Nebuchadnezzar himself. The CLAY toes at the Bottom of the statue were a world-wide empire, but it was made up of a 10 nation federation, with one leader arising that we know as anti-christ.

So you see this progressive **dilution** of power throughout time. Why do you think that is? Well experience over the millennia has proven the sin nature of man cannot be trusted with absolute authority. Thus an ever developing and more complex system of checks and balances are put into place until government is muscle bound.

So the IDEAL is that of a Benevolent Monarch - one who is not effected by the curse of sin, who can love and lead his people in an effective way. But does such a man exist? Yes he does - he is that stone which came from Heaven striking the statue, then filling the whole earth.

But till HE comes, sinners is all we have to work with. So throughout time men have tried to create systems of government that would benefit the governed

The **Magna Carta in 1215** was drafted by the Archbishop of Canterbury and was an attempt to bring peace people between the Monarch and the Nobles of England. Again, it was the idea that ultimately, Kings and the Populace were under the rule of a higher law.

Our government has further evolved that concept with the balance of powers of our **Executive, Legislative, and Judicial** branches of Government. But is the a perfect Government? No, but we strive to be a more perfect union.

Now there was a similar evolution in the transition from Babylonian Government to Persian Government.

- Babylon was an Absolute Monarchy
- Persia was a Hybrid Monarchy

Persia had a very early form of a Senate made up of Nobles that advised and guided the King. The King made decrees only after consulting with the Nobles and once the

decree was made it was irrevocable - that is what is meant by the law of the Medes and Persians.

Daniel is in his late 80's to early 90's at this point in the book. When you see paintings of Daniel and the Lion's den how old does he look? Maybe 35. That's inaccurate. He was a very old man when this event occurred.

TEXT: Daniel 6:1-28 (ESV)

¹ It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom 120 satraps, to be throughout the whole kingdom; ² and over them three high officials, of whom Daniel was one, to whom these satraps should give account, so that the king might suffer no loss.

So there we see a major difference in the Persian approach. Babylon had a policy of taking the conquered nation into exile. Persia found it more beneficial to set up straps or Governors over the various parts of a Nation who were account to this TRIFECA of Prime Ministers, who in turn were accountable to the King of Persia.

Thus, the way of life could continue, the economic system could prosper and Persia could enjoy the tax revenue for years to come.

Daniel, as you remember had just been appoint third highest ruler in Babylon just before Babylon fell to Persia. Apparently, the Persian officials felt it wise to keep Daniel in that position.

It is common when a new point leader comes in that he wants to set new leaders in place. If the previous leaders had been effective, Babylon wouldn't have fallen in the first place. But Daniel, was new to the position. He was not responsible for the recent problems. When we look at his resume we see that he was serving when Babylon was at its absolute best.

³ Then this Daniel became distinguished above all the other high officials and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him. And the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom.

So Daniel, this Jewish man is elevated to the highest position in Babylon accountable only to Persia itself. How do you think that went over with the native Babylonians? Not well. You see this is the problem with the human condition - we weep well with those who weep, but we don't rejoice well with those who rejoice.

⁴ Then the high officials and the satraps sought to find a ground for complaint against Daniel with regard to the kingdom, but they could find no ground for complaint or any fault, because he was faithful, and no error or fault was found in him.

Does that sound familiar? A man who follows God become popular and the other leaders begin to conspire to bring charges against him? But no legitimate charge can be found?

⁵ Then these 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.”

Daniel was a good man. He had a brilliant resume. The King of Persia needed Daniel in charge. That’s a hard man to get rid of. So what they came up with was in many ways a stroke of **devious genius**.

⁶ Then these high officials and satraps came by agreement to the king and said to him, “O King Darius, live forever! ⁷ All the high officials of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the counselors and the governors **are agreed** that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce an injunction, that whoever makes petition to any god or man for thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions.

This was as type of nationalistic reprogramming. How would it be if for one month, not a year, not a lifetime, but for one month we could get everyone to worship the same god, and what if that god was you? We all agree that would help us to expedite the development of this new governmental system in Babylon.

Remember we have seen this already when Nebuchadnezzar erected the statue. We said there are two ways to guide the mob get them a **common god** or a **common enemy**.

And O King, we were thinking - wouldn’t it be nice if you were the god we all worshipped. Now being King is nice, as the great theologian Tom Petty says, “It’s good to be King, if just for a day”. But if being King is good, wouldn’t be being god be even better? Just for a month. A little worship here, a few human sacrifices there... it would be nice. We all agree - very good idea.

⁸ Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which cannot be revoked.” ⁹ Therefore King Darius signed the document and injunction.

Word to the wise, never sign too quickly. We are in a day of cancel culture. If someone said something on twitter three years ago that offends someone today, cancel them. If there is a statue that offends someone, take it down. Change the name, drop the chant. Why? Somebody is offended.

Here is the deal - I don’t think we should needless offend anyone. But before we take everything down, Somebody better ask what will be put up in its place? You better believe someone has thought that through already. You may agree with what goes down, but you may not like what goes up.

Learn a lesson from King Darius... slow down, ask questions. Don't ever react to the chaos of the moment. Respond to good data, good counsel, have a plan.

Darius, didn't think through how this would impact the most important leader in Babylon.

¹⁰ When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously.

A man is the sum total of his habits good or bad. The compounding effect of good habits, carried out over a lifetime are astronomical. It is what Eugene Peterson called, "Long obedience in the same direction".

Let me advise you consider a few areas where you need to develop good habits:

1. Healthy Physical Habits - your body is the temple of God, treat it as such.
2. Healthy Emotional Habits - keep your emotional tank full and stable.
3. Healthy Spiritual Habits - get in the Word and Pray daily.
4. Healthy Financial Habits - make as much as you can, give as much as you can, save as much as you can and invest as much as you can.
5. Healthy Family Habits - talk to your wife daily, take her out for a nice date weekly, have at least meal every day with your immediate family.

Those habits over a lifetime will shape you and give you a good life. Daniel had a habit of praying toward Jerusalem three times a day. He was an old man. He wasn't going to change it now.

¹¹ Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and plea before his God. ¹² Then they came near and said before the king, concerning the injunction, "O king! Did you not sign an injunction, that anyone who makes petition to any god or man within thirty days except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?" The king answered and said, "The thing stands fast, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be revoked." ¹³ Then they answered and said before the king, "Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or the injunction you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day."

¹⁴ Then the king, when he heard these words, was much distressed and set his mind to deliver Daniel. And he labored till the sun went down to rescue him.

Darius knew that he needed Daniel. Not only that - he respected him. A man may call himself a god, but deep inside he knows better. If he doesn't his wife surly does.

¹⁵ Then these men came by agreement to the king and said to the king, “Know, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no injunction or ordinance that the king establishes can be changed.” 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.

Does that sound familiar? A man cast into a cave, a stone rolled over the mouth, the official seal set upon the stone so no one could interfere?

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?”

Think of this - How would he govern Babylon without Daniel? Daniel had the respect of the people. The thought that he was gone devastate Darius.

²¹ Then Daniel said to the king, “O king, live forever!

It had to be the sweetest sound the king ever heard. The frail voice of Daniel untouched and unharmed by the pride of lions.

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.

This part doesn’t always make it into the kid’s story book bible.

²⁴ And the king commanded, and those men who had maliciously accused Daniel were brought and cast into the den of lions—they, their children, and their wives. And before they reached the bottom of the den, the lions overpowered them and broke all their bones in pieces.

Please take note that while the Angel of the Lord closed the mouth of the lion’s on Daniels behalf. The children of the wicked suffer for their parents wickedness. Friend, if you don’t think highly enough of yourself to repent, do you think highly of your kids?

If you can't get help for yourself, will you for your wife?

Honest question fathers - can you look into the eyes of your children and say that the habits of your life are designed to bring them good and not harm? If not, change.

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