

XI. Daniel in Biblical Perspective  
The Lion Of Judah And The Lion's Den  
Daniel 6

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We are going to look at Daniel 6 for this study and we will walk our way through this text. I'm not going to spend much time in review except to merely say we are at a breaking point in the book of Daniel. In the first six chapters of the book of Daniel we have events out of the life of Daniel that are of wonderful importance in our life for two reasons. I was up in Kentucky this past week doing a Campus Outreach conference and I gave them my heroes and models for life. Then they asked me who my heroes were from the Bible. So I gave them my five from the Bible and two of them are Daniel and Joseph. My reasoning for this is because Daniel and Joseph are marvelous testimonies of what God's grace does in a man that enables them to be effective in a hostile culture. So this is my first reason. These two men are living in a pagan secular culture and how can they make an impact for the Lord and the Lord uses them? Daniel is a primary example of how in a hostile culture. This of course is extremely helpful for us as we live in an increasingly neo pagan secular culture. We are no longer post Christian but pretty much neo paganism now. So in this neo pagan culture how is it that we can live with firmness and conviction and yet dismissing arrogance and obnoxiousness? How is it that we can be winsome, standing firm for the faith and how is it that we can show the truth in love of the Gospel? Daniel becomes a marvelous example of that.

The second reason we are looking at the book of Daniel is because in these first six chapters Daniel becomes a testimony and in the life of Daniel there is the testimony of how the Gospel is assured in Jesus Christ. You will see this one more time in this study. You will see the Lion of Judah that shows up in the lion's Den. In the den of lions where and how does the Lion of Judah show up? We have seen in all of these chapters of how not only the effective Christian witness but it's much more than dare to be a Daniel. It is to see how the grace of the Lord Jesus creates a Daniel and how the power of the Gospel is manifested. In these events you see the testimony pointing to Jesus Christ and you see it all throughout the text of Scripture.

This study starts back in 605 BC but that's not when I actually started preaching on the book of Daniel but when the book of Daniel started and now we are literally 80 years beyond that. We are almost at the conclusion of the Babylonian captivity by the time you get to Daniel 6. I have looked at all the Sunday school books that cover the story of Daniel and the Lion's Den and we see this young strapping Daniel that walks into the Lion's Den and yet he is about 80 years old when this happens in the book of Daniel. So that's just one more testimony. Not by might, not by power but by My Spirit says the Lord (Zechariah 4:6). So Daniel is about 80 years old and he has actually not just survived but thrived, exercised influence and leadership through six kings and two kingdoms – the Babylonian kingdom and now the Medo-Persian kingdom. He is now influencing the overall king of the Medo-Persian kingdom and that is a man by the name of Cyrus. It's going to happen by his influence upon one whom Cyrus has appointed as the king of Babylon after the Medo-Persian conquering of that kingdom back in Daniel 5. That one's name is Darius.

I'd like to walk you through this text and just lay it out for you as it unfolds. There are five segments in the text and we will look at them one by one. The first segment takes place in Daniel 6:1-5 and we see the structure that Darius has put into place. Daniel 6:1-5 says, *1 It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom 120 satraps, to be throughout the whole kingdom; 2 and over them three presidents, of whom Daniel was one, to whom these satraps should give account, so that the king might suffer no loss. 3 Then this Daniel became distinguished above all the other presidents and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him. And the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. 4 Then the presidents 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. 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."*

We see the structure and now we see something that is happening in the context of this structure. Daniel has continually risen up to positions of leadership. He has continually been trusted by these pagan kings even to the point of influencing them such as Belshazzar and Nebuchadnezzar. He is now again rising up to a position of leadership and it is a very high position of leadership. In fact, it's absolutely amazing. It's amazing first of all because he is a Jew and that he would make his way to leadership. And he having been in positions of power and influence in the previous kingdom will now be trusted in this subsequent kingdom so there is something very significant about the way he carries himself.

The text tells you what it is. First of all let's look at the structure. There are 120 satraps. A satrap would have been identified as a kingdom protector. The king would set up satraps and their job was to protect the kingdom and the king's position in the kingdom. I would think it be a little tough to hang on to 120 kingdom protectors who could very easily get bribed or influenced. So he puts up something more controllable and that is three presidents. He divides the 120 satraps under the three presidents. You will find this same structure referred to in the book of Esther. So here are these three presidents of which Daniel becomes one of these presidents who is reporting to Darius.

Now who is Darius? There has been quite a bit of discussion on this. This particular name, Darius, was used to question the integrity and inerrancy of the Scripture for many, many years until the Nabonidus cylinder was found. Then we began to find out from that and a couple of other extra Biblical historical documents that there was a Darius. And the question was who is this Darius? Is it Cyrus himself and this is just one of the titles for him? I don't think that's the case. Remember this is the Medo-Persian Empire. Cyrus is Persian. Cyrus had a general by the name of Ugbaru. Ugbaru was the man who was in command when Cyrus conquered back in Daniel 5, Babylon and when they conquered Babylon they did so by coming in through the canal unexpected and of course Belshazzar lost his life that very night. Ugbaru was a Median and our extra Biblical literature tells us that he actually was appointed king of Babylon at that time but he only lived for three weeks. We don't know how he died. Ugbaru was then replaced by Gubaru who took Ugbaru's place in the kingdom.

Gubaru was his name but his title was Darius. Darius isn't a name it's a title. So Gubaru was king over Babylon, reporting to Cyrus, who was the Emperor over all the Medo-Persian Empire that extended far beyond Babylon. Darius not only is report to

Cyrus but he now has three presidents that report to him. One of those presidents is Daniel. Then there are 120 satraps, kingdom protectors, who report to Darius through the three presidents. Of these three presidents Daniel begins to rise up as one most trusted. In fact, the Scriptures indicate to us that the plan of Darius is to make Daniel the president over the others presidents.

Why did he do this? There were two things in the text that were just said about him. Number one is that Daniel was competent. He was not incompetent. What he did he did well. Secondly, Daniel was faithful and honest. So his leadership was identified with the character of faithfulness and the characteristic of competence. He had a character trait of integrity and faithfulness and he had the characteristic of competence. He did his job well. He did his job so well that the king wants to elevate him. As he is doing his job well, the satraps and the other two presidents begin to see this and they begin to try to find a way to bring him down.

Notice what it says in Daniel 6:4; *Then the presidents 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 (one) he was faithful, and (two) no error or fault was found in him.* He had the character of faithfulness and competency. The next verse is a key passage. Daniel 6:5 says, *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."* The only way we will get at Daniel is out of his relationship with his God. So they then create a plan. The plan is in Daniel 6:6-9.

Daniel 6:6-9 says, **6** *Then these presidents and satraps came by agreement to the king and said to him, "O King Darius, live forever! 7 All the presidents 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. 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.*

So what was their plan? The plan is to bring Daniel down. We can't bring Daniel down because of his incompetence because he is competent. We can't bring him down because he's a liar or a cheat because he is faithful and has integrity. The only way to get to Daniel is out of his relationship with his God. There is one thing we know about Daniel and that is he is a praying man. So here's what we'll do. We'll go to the king to sign a law which will be the law of the Medes and the Persians. The king will sign the law and the law of the Medes and the Persians cannot be revoked. The law will be for thirty days no one can make a petition to anyone other than the king.

So they are playing on two things. One, is they know Daniel is a man of prayer and if you want to trap Daniel you have to get him in terms of his relationship that he has with God. Out of his relationship with God the one thing that stands out is that he is a man of prayer. So prayer is where we will do it. You can count on kings wanting to be at the top of the heap. So king don't you think it's absolutely natural and appropriate that nobody could request anything of anybody but you for thirty days? This isn't for life it's just for thirty days. They know that Daniel prays three times a day so they have 90 chances to get Daniel. If we can get him to sign on for thirty days then nobody can make

a request of anybody else. So they put the plan in place and the king, much to his chagrin later, signs into effect a law, the law of the Medes and Persians that cannot be revoked.

Now what's the sentence? Daniel 6:10-16 says, **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.* **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.* **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."*

Of course Daniel hears about the law. When Daniel hears that you can't make a petition to anyone but to the king for thirty days, what does Daniel do? He does what he always does, he prays and he prays three times a day which is what he always does. He prays facing the window facing Jerusalem like he always does. Daniel is not being obnoxious or arrogant. Daniel doesn't have the attitude of "I'll show you O king!" Daniel is just being Daniel in his relationship to God in prayer. So they see him. He is not hiding. They become aware of it. They let him know he's not only praying to his God during these thirty days but he's doing it every day and more than that, he's doing it three times a day, king.

It's interesting to note the king's first reaction. The king's first reaction is "O my goodness I've got to find a way to deliver Daniel." That's really interesting isn't it? You have 120 satraps, counselors, presidents and I don't know how many people wanting to bring Daniel down and you have the king over here who has been hoisted on his own pitard, as the sailor would say. The king cannot get free of it but he wants to try to find a way to deliver him. I think he's just kind of wanting the thing to go away but they're not going to let it go away. King, this is the law of the Medes and the Persians, you cannot revoke this. You have to carry out the sentence.

Isn't it interesting that when Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were faithful, in disobedience to the decree of king Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar was outraged and heated the fire seven times hotter to throw them into it, but somehow Daniel's witness was not only faithful like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, but his witness leading up to this was such that this king, even though it was against him as king and his order, did not want Daniel to suffer. He tried to find a way to deliver Daniel. Of course, they're not going to let him find a way to deliver him and that's why they made it a law of the Medes and the Persians. Now comes not only the sentence but the deliverance.

Daniel 6:16-24 says, **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!"* (Wouldn't you love for an unsaved friend to say this about

you? The observation by this king is not only do I want to deliver you but now that I can't deliver you 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. 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. Daniel was delivered by the God whom he served continually as He sent His angel.*

Here is the result. Daniel 6:25-28 says, *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.*

I want to give you five takeaways from this text that I think would be helpful now that we have walked our way through it. The first takeaway is that Daniel becomes for us a living example of the power of God's grace and what it means to be "in the world but not of the world". In Jeremiah 29 God sent word to the exiles who were in Babylon. They had a whole group of people who had a prophet and the prophet was telling the exiles "separate from the Babylonians, just be a sub-culture in the midst of their culture." Jeremiah, the Prophet of the Lord, writes, "The Lord says, 'No, don't listen to those false prophets. You are in that culture. Build houses. Get married. Have children and bring good to the city.'" The people of God as they live in the culture of this world that's in rebellion against God, do not withdraw into a sub-culture. We're going to buy a 100 acres and then we'll dress like we used to dress 150 years ago and that's going to be our witness.

We are to be in the world but not of the world. We are to be not a sub-culture that is separated from the culture, we are to be *in* the world but we are not to be of the world. The world is not to be in us. Therefore we are not to be overly assimilated and conformed to the culture nor are we in the name of separation to be divorced from the culture. We are to be in the world but not of the world. We are a counter culture in the culture and our presence brings the blessing of Gospel words and life. That's the way we are supposed to live and Daniel becomes a great example of that.

Daniel is in the world but he's not of the world. From Daniel 1 all the way to Daniel 6, Daniel knows. He says, "You want to give me a pagan name, I'll take a pagan name. You want to send me over here to the international school of Babylonia, I'll right I'll go to that school. I'll make good grades there. I'll know what all of your Chaldeans and wise people know. In fact I'll rise right up to be the chief eunuch among all of your Chaldeans and all of your wise men. I will be a blessing to the Babylonian Empire and yes the one that captured my people and brought them into exile, I will be God's blessing in their midst. But I will not be a pagan. I will serve my God continually. I'll serve Him right here. I'll be the best president you've got, Darius, but I won't be a pagan president. I'll be faithful to you." Here you see this marvelous embracing of standing in truth and living by love – 100% Truth, 100% love. Truth without love is cruelty. Love without truth is barbarity. It has to be truth and love married together, in the world but not of the world.

The second takeaway seen in the text is Daniel cannot be understood apart from his relationship to God. I think the best thing that can be said about any believer is when someone says "you just can't understand that guy unless you understand the relationship he has with God." That's what they said about Daniel. They said, "Do you want to get at Daniel? The only way to do that is to get at his relationship with his God and His Word. That's the only way to get at Daniel. Unless we can get illegal Daniel's obedience to God's Word, we can't get to him. He's competent. He's honest. He's faithful. He has character. His conduct is beyond reproach. He serves His God faithfully, consistently, with purpose, with intentionality and he does his job well, no matter where he is or whoever he is working for. Do you understand boss?" 'Absolutely.' I'll do my job well for the unsaved boss.

If you have a Christian boss you need to do your job well for them. Wherever I am I want to be faithful to the Lord but you can't understand that man or woman of God unless you understand everything they do is out of their commitment to Him. They live with a Christ centered world and life view that is framed with the Word of God and empowered by the Spirit of God. You cannot understand them unless you understand their faithfulness. By the way, I want to tell you how their faithfulness to God shows up whom they serve continually day by day. It shows up in truth and love. We have a lot of Christians who claim to be faithful to God on the truth side but not on the love side. Then we have some on the love side who compromise truth. We have to say no to both of those kinds. We can't in the name of truth be unloving and we can't in the name of love compromise truth. It has to be 100% truth and 100% love and that comes not by fixing on truth or fixing on love but fixing on God. We need to stay focused upon Him. You can't understand the believer unless you understand the warmth, the depth, the trust, the loyalty and the love that they have for the One who has first loved them.

The third takeaway is that Daniel reminds us that God's people will be persecuted in this world. Let me put it in New Testament terms. Knowing and serving Christ does not insulate us from persecution. It actually positions us for it. 2 Timothy 3:12 says, "*Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.*" I am about to start back in the study of the book of Matthew on the Sermon on the Mount. In Matthew 5 we will hear "Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil falsely against you." You can depend on cooked up charges. I don't care who stands in what pulpit or what book is written or who is on what television

program who tells you that if you'll believe good enough you'll never suffer. No it has been granted unto us not only to believe in Him but to suffer for His sake (Philippians 1:29).

Being faithful to Jesus Christ does not insulate us from persecution. We are just like Daniel in that it actually positions us. Daniel served His Lord continually. He was faithful, he was competent. He did his job well. What did that get him? It got him 120 people plus out for his neck. Here is what Jesus said in John 16:33, "*I have said these things to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.*" In Christ there is solid truth. You have peace. In the world where you are in it but not of it, when we position ourselves in this world to serve Christ, we will have tribulation. Take courage, if you believe in Me enough and are courageous enough, I'll get rid of all the tribulation. No, He doesn't say that. He says, "Take courage I have overcome that world." There is where your courage is. He says, "I'm your Deliverer in the tribulation, through the tribulation and out of the tribulation but many times because I love you I'll actually not only allow the world to send tribulation but I'll send it through them because of what I'm doing to refine you and what I'm doing to position you."

Do you by any means think that Daniel would have ever had the positions of influence he had without what he went through for the cause of Christ and the way he went through it? Those moments not only refined him but they positioned him, not simply for the persecution but to go through the persecution and the tribulation for the impact. I do want you to see this.

The fourth takeaway is in Christ there will always be two responses and you can just count on this. Because you are salt and light you will get two responses from the world. You're going to get persecution one and secondly you'll get admiration in response many times to the conversion of others.

Did the wise men have it in for Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego? Absolutely. Did they ever get converted? We don't know about it but Nebuchadnezzar did. In this text there are satraps, counselors, presidents, governors and they've got it in for Daniel and I never read that they repented and said, "O Daniel we have been such unbelievable oaths and ogres. Please forgive us." They were probably trying to cook up something else after this one. But there was another response and that was Darius trying to find a way to deliver him. Darius had a sleepless night and he rushed up to the den of the lions as morning broke and he said, "Daniel are you still alive? Did the God whom you serve continually deliver you?" Darius wouldn't accept any diversions, couldn't sleep and all he wanted to know was if Daniel was still living. Then Darius declares a decree that exalts God and not Daniel, although he mentions Daniel his decree exalts the God who delivered Daniel because that who Daniel was pointing to.

Inevitably there are two responses to Christ in us. There is the response of persecution by the impenitent and by those in rebellion against the Lord. Then there is the response of admiration many times to conversion by coming to the living God, not coming to us, but through us coming to Christ as Lord and Savior.

Fifthly and finally, is Daniel's deliverance. What does it reveal? I'm indebted to my brother, Tim Keller, for emphasizing this and one of the commentaries I read. There's a dangerous trap that we fall into here. The trap is be faithful and courageous like Daniel and God will shut the mouths of the lions. That's not what this text is teaching

us. God may do that. God sometimes does that and even Darius knows that's not the answer to this. Daniel was delivered but where he focused upon was not upon his deliverance because Daniel had been faithful. Darius focused upon the power of God to come and deliver Daniel. So don't leave here saying, "I want to be like Daniel. I'm going to be brave and courageous and the pastor said I need to be loving while I'm being brave and courageous. I'm not going to be an obnoxious militant and I'm not going to be a weepy ambassador of Christ. I'm going to be strong and courageous and therefore wherever I go God's going to shut the lion's mouth." No, sometimes the lions are going to eat you.

I have often wondered why in the world at Briarwood did we choose lions as our mascots. I'm sure there's a reason. I know it's because of the Lion of Judah and that's where I want to bring you here. There's a den of lions but there's a Lion of Judah. Do you know why Daniel was delivered? It was because God sent His angel and I believe that's a Christophany. That's a pre-incarnate ministry of Christ. This is unmistakable in the book of Daniel. How did Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego get out of that fiery furnace? There was One like the Son of God, His angel, came and delivered them out of the fiery furnace. How did Daniel get out of the lion's den? The Lion of Judah came. You can't miss this.

The language of the fiery furnace becomes the language that Jesus uses to teach us what doctrine in the New Testament? It is the doctrine of hell. God sent His Son into the fiery furnace. He on that cross, descended into our hell. That's why Nebuchadnezzar said, "What kind of God delivers this way?" He had heard about gods who tell you to buck up and come up but a God who comes down and suffers for us? This is a God that I don't understand but I want to know who loves us. This text just comes right along side of it. It's not accident that Daniel records that when he went into that den of the lions it was shut by the signet seal of the state. There was a Jesus, the Son of God, the Lion of Judah, who Lamb like laid down His life, went to a grave and it was sealed but couldn't hold Him.

When the Bible talks about Satan, the power of sin and what it attempts to do, He says he goes about like a roaring lion. Satan is the lion of fright and fear. He is the lion to paralyze us but there is One who is already come and has defeated Satan and closed the mouth of the roaring lion. That is the Lion of Judah. So Darius I'm with you. It's not I'll be fearless and God will deliver me. It's I fear only the Lord who is my Deliverer. The Lord has already done this for you. The book of Daniel is pointing forward to when Jesus Christ will come into this world and He will destroy Satan, bind the strong man, defeat sin, death, hell and the grave so that we do not fear for our Lord has delivered us. We belong to Him. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the time we could spend together. Thank You for Your Word and the privilege to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ together as a congregation. Lord, there are so many things we are learning out of this book. Help us to learn our lessons well. Help us to know the joy of serving our God continuously in the world but not of the world, with truth and with love, knowing there will be persecution, but also knowing there will be the drawing of others to Christ as we do live here yet not conformed to the world but transformed by the power of the Gospel. Thank You Father



for how we see that in the life of Daniel and also most of all, thank You Daniel becoming this marvelous testimony, dynamic picture at this moment in history where Jesus Christ comes into the den of lions to deliver His servant for us to now know that He has come and He has delivered us and we are free in Christ. Therefore we fear only the Lord whom we love and has first loved us, who has come and suffered for us. Father, thank You that as we serve Your Son even now that this Lion of Judah is coming again and we will be delivered into a new heavens and a new earth. Come quickly Lord Jesus, I pray in Jesus' Name, Amen.