


The Lion's Den

 Daniel 6:1-28

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To review, in Daniel 5 we met Belshazzar, the last king of Babylon. The date was Oct 12, 539BC, he was the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar. Like so many Gentile rulers his problem was arrogance. His arrogance was so great that while Darius' armies had surrounded his city he was having a big party inside the city. When he was about drunk on wine he did a very arrogant thing and had the gold and silver vessels from the temple in Jerusalem brought to him so they could drink from them while 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, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. 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. When none of his wise men could read or interpret the writing he became even more alarmed. 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. When Daniel arrived he reminded the king that God had taught his grandfather the theology lesson that God is the one who rules in the heavens and gives the kingdom to whomever He wishes and that even though Belshazzar had been taught this lesson he didn't approve of it and so in an act of defiance he took the Lord's vessels and drank wine from them and praised the gods of created materials which neither see, nor hear, nor understand. The three words written on the wall to Belshazzar meant NUMBERED, WEIGHED, DIVIDED; the days of Belshazzar's kingdom had been NUMBERED, Belshazzar had been WEIGHED and found wanting and the kingdom was now being DIVIDED to the Medes and Persians. At that 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, in accordance with divine irony, was clothing Daniel in purple, putting a gold necklace around his neck and making him third in the kingdom. Yet in reality Daniel was the highest ranking official in all of Babylon on that night because Belshazzar was killed and his father Nabonidus was in exile. Interestingly, Daniel was taken over into the administration of the Medes and Persians. So he survived a kingdom shift and the kingdom shift is from the head of gold to the breast and arms of silver and this dictates how we interpret the entire statue as four successive Gentile kingdoms followed by a global kingdom of God that smashes and destroys all Gentile kingdoms.

Today we come to Daniel 6 and the event of Daniel in the Lions' Den. According to the chiasmic structure of Daniel 2-7 which chapter parallels Daniel 6, Daniel in the Lion's Den? Daniel 3, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the Fiery Furnace. Two events picture the Jewish people living within the fiery times of the Gentiles who rule with the power of a ferocious lion and how they can survive these times by faith in God. So these chapters have a critical message to share. The first message is Dan 2 and 7, the times of the Gentiles will involve four major Gentile kingdoms followed by the kingdom of God. The second message is Dan 3 and 6, the Jews will survive these four Gentile kingdoms by faith. The third message is Dan 4 and 5, the Gentile kings will tend toward arrogance against the Jews but by faith and blessing the Jews they can escape being cursed and enjoy God's blessing. So the picture emerges for Gentile kingdoms, like our own, that the way to enjoy God's blessing is to bless the Jews. Every other issue is ancillary to that issue. This is the way God rules the times of the Gentiles and it is an outworking of Gen 12:3, those who bless Israel will be blessed, those who curse Israel will be cursed.

Now, the date of Daniel in the Lions' Den is 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." The problem is that Darius the Mede is not mentioned in the Nabonidus Chronicle, the chief secular document explaining what happened the night Babylon was defeated.¹ Because of this glaring omission liberal and secular scholars have claimed that Daniel made a historical blunder. In response conservative scholars have gone to great extent defending 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 Lions' Den. I won't bore you with all the theories except to say that conservative scholars have responded with several valid explanations.² The most plausible explanation was held by famous scholars like William F Albright, the head of archaeology at the University of Chicago, and Robert Dick Wilson who knew over 25 languages, including every Semitic language, and later worked out extensively in the Ph.D. dissertation of John Whitcomb, a Princeton graduate. The explanation is that Darius the Mede was a man named Gubaru, a governor appointed over Babylon by Cyrus. This view 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 Ugbaru, governor of Gutium, led Cyrus' forces against Babylon, diverting the Euphrates River he entered through the dry river canals and took the city without a battle. Three weeks later this Ugbaru died. In his place Cyrus appointed Gubaru to govern Babylon. The trouble was that the Nabonidus Chronicle identified both of these men by the name Gobryas. However, it was shown that the two men were different by the fact that Ugbaru died within three weeks while Gubaru continued to govern the district of Babylon for another 14 years. So the man Darius the Mede, who is stated in Dan 9:1 to have been of Ahaseuran descent, was also known as Gubaru. If you think it strange that he had multiple names, it is not at all uncommon in the ancient world.

One last observation is that Dan 7, 8 and 9 all precede Dan 6. They are out of chronological order. So Dan 7, the prophecy of Four Beastly Kingdoms followed by the kingdom of the Son of Man was already known. Dan 8, the prophecy of Greece's conquest of Persia by Alexander the Great was already known. And Dan 9, the great

prophecy of the 70 sevens calendar for Israel and Jerusalem was already known before Daniel was thrown in the Lions' Den. So we will give the dates later but know now that they preceded Dan 6.

The events in Dan 6 occurred in 538/7BC and remember, Daniel was an old man at this time, in his early 80's; he had just interpreted the handwriting on the wall and been promoted. Darius, or Gubaru, recognized in this man an asset and so he brought him into his administration. This shows the wisdom of Daniel, which in the Hebrew is *chokmah* and refers to skill in living. Daniel had skill in political administration and that is why the Jews placed Daniel among the Writings instead of the Prophets. He does prophesy but he was seen primarily as a man with political skill and anyone going into politics or contemplating it should make a careful study of the life of Daniel. He is the prototype for how a believer can survive and thrive corrupt Gentile politics.

Verse 1, **It seemed good to Darius**, that's Gubaru, he took over after Ugbaru died, and he ruled the province of Babylon. Cyrus was the stronger ruler but he gave this man quite a bit of leeway in the newly acquired kingdom. **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.** The main idea is that **the king** is taking measures so he won't **suffer loss**. There was a kingdom shift and that is always a dangerous time when intrigue, theft and chaos can set in so he is taking steps to consolidate the kingdom and get a security system in place. His strategy is to set up **three commissioners** over **120 satraps**.

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)**, these 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 into this prominent position but I suggest that Darius recognized Daniel would be an important asset for at least three reasons. First, Daniel's name was found in the royal court records of Babylon indicating a long history administering the Babylonian kingdom. Because of this 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. Third, he was an old man and so not a threat to intrigue. So Darius saw Daniel as an indispensable asset to the administration of his newly acquired kingdom and so he made him a top advisor.

In verse 3 Daniel immediately began 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. 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.** Doesn't it stand to reason in a meritocracy that those who do the most stellar job get the most stellar positions?

So the king reasoned that Daniel was over a third of the 120 satraps, 40 of them, and two other men were over the other 80 and so why not just put him over all 120 and the other two commissioners. So make him second in the kingdom, second only to himself and put under him three other men. But as you can imagine this could create political friction. In politics the name of the game is moving up the ladder, gaining more power, and these other men are not moving up the ladder, they're moving down the ladder and Daniel is moving up the ladder. And keep in mind that Daniel isn't even a Mede or a Persian, he's a Jew and an old Jew at that. So you can imagine the thoughts of these other 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. We don't like that. So they plan to retire him, put him out of commission. 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. The media is convinced everybody's got dirt under their fingernails, so they're going to pry until they dig it out and print it on the front page. Here they're digging, certainly this Jew blew it at some point in governmental 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 Gentile political administrations. He had been meticulous, he had been scrupulous with the books; there was 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, dotted all his i's, so when the digging started they couldn'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 machinations turning. They've got to get him on some other grounds than 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 the 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** by conspiracy **and spoke to him as follows: "King Darius, live forever!"** Standard greeting in all these kingdoms, **live forever,** meaning may your dynasty never end. It's a lot of hot air and baloney talk if you ask me, but 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 obviously it is a lie because surely Daniel wasn't included. They lie saying, 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. 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 would be bound by the law. That was the way of the Medes and Persians, read the Book of Esther. 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?

We've mentioned 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 it was given after sin was in the world. So the primary purpose of human government is to curb the effects of sin. 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. This is illustrated by Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego when they 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. A 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 fourth thing is to be praying, praying for the authority so that this thing might be peacefully resolved. 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. 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 picture. It's not hard to imagine that he might decide to just drop his prayer life for thirty days and obey the new law. That's basically the whole issue in the Book of Hebrews; Jewish believers who are in a persecution situation and so they stopped living the Christian life for a while. Daniel might have thought about that. But that wouldn't be trusting God to take care of him. Another option is to keep on praying but do it in secret for thirty days and that way he would appear to obey the law. But he reasoned that wouldn't be trusting God either. Or he might have been able to take a vacation for thirty days, that way he would be outside the jurisdiction of the law and he could keep praying. But that 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 such a stellar politician. It was his witness. So if he quit praying or prayed in secret or went on vacation then what would that do to his witness? It would blow it. And He didn't want to compromise his testimony. But he would

compromise his life because he already knows the doctrine of resurrection (Job 19:26; Dan 12:2). That's the strength of the Christian position. 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.** 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 one true God.

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 they viewed the prayer as traveling to Jerusalem to the Temple and up from there to heaven. Prayer had a geometric dimension to it during the OT. God said when you pray to this place then I will hear (2 Chron 6:36-39). So that's what Daniel is doing. In fact, his prayers are probably similar to the one recorded in Dan 9.³ Also observe Daniel's 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.** 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 they've caught him red handed, Daniel made a petition to someone besides King Darius and that's all the grime 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."** Here they're making sure this is all on the record and everyone is clear on the law and no one can change the law. Once that was clear they make the accusation in 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."** 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.** That's the anti-Semitism that constantly pervades Gentile kingdoms. It's those Jews again and they particularly hate it when those Jews advance up the political ladder. It's anti-Semitism that is behind all this. And who is the one behind anti-Semitism? Satan. So that gives you an idea who is a heavy influence in political circles, Satan. They also charge this Daniel with paying **no**

attention to Darius, which is nonsense, **or to the injunction which** he drew up, because 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."** So the king has 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. He isn't too happy with them and in fact later on we're going to find out he was furious at 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."** Do you find it remarkable that the king would admit? 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 in the fiery furnace years ago. 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. 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 a king to take his mind off the day's events. He just laid in his bed, completely disturbed, unable to sleep, only able to think about Daniel in the lions' 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.** 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 a fantastic relief 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 came into clear focus; the one true God had power over the most ferocious animal on earth. He could do what the king was powerless to do, shield Daniel from harm in a lion's den. When Daniel utters, **O king, live forever;** words of great respect and admiration for the king he 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 in the fiery furnace so Daniel was accompanied by the one and the same angel of YHWH who **shut the lions' mouths.** And what is cited as the basis of Daniel's deliverance? That he **was found innocent before** God, Daniel had done nothing to disobey God, he had 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.

Verse 23, **Then the king was very pleased**, he was delighted, **and gave orders for Daniel to be taken up out of the den. 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 respond to God is faith. God saved Daniel through 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 metaphorically tried to chew Daniel into pieces but they were the ones who got literally chewed into pieces. The moment his accusers were cast in, even before they reached the floor they were overcome and crushed in a horrifying death. This is a picture of the end of all of God's enemies, and don't you forget it. You can sometimes get the thought that these evil people will never get theirs, but Scripture gives examples here and there, Jezebel being eaten by dogs, Herod Agrippa being eaten by worms, Judas Iscariot's body hanging in the sun all day and then falling and crushing to the ground 100 feet below with his bowels gushing out. These are glimpses, fatal glimpses that God will indeed judge.

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!" 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.** Again, God exalts those who humble themselves before Him and so Daniel enjoyed success during these king's reigns.⁴

What can we learn from this chapter? First, this chapter teaches Jews how to survive the times of the Gentiles. Jews can survive by faith and enter into the coming kingdom. The *modus operandi* is always faith and Daniel teaches this with the Lion's Den and his three friends teach this with the Fiery Furnace. The two chapters are teaching the same thing, that Jews can survive the fiery and ferocious times of the Gentiles by faith and be raised in the kingdom to come. Second, the principles of civil disobedience. Civil disobedience is Scriptural when it is an issue of the sacredness of human life and worship. We respect the offices of those in authority and we pray for them and we accept the consequences as a testimony to God. Third, Daniel's intense desire to evangelize others. He had a living testimony and people knew. When it came down to his life or their salvation, he would always sacrifice his life for their salvation. He committed civil disobedience to maintain his testimony. Fourth, God is sovereign over all kings and their kingdoms. He is the one who does what He wishes in the heavens and He

blesse those rulers who bless Israel and he brings the rest to nothing. Fifth, the chapter gives hope to Israel that God will preserve the faithful remnant. Just as God preserved faithful Daniel in the lions' den so God will preserve the faithful remnant of Israel through the entire times of the Gentiles and bring them into the kingdom.

¹ 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.

² 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.

³ 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 conditioned 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.

⁴ 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.