

DANIEL IN THE LION'S DEN

Daniel 6:1-28

Tonight we have the joy of continuing our study of the Book of Daniel.

Please turn your Bibles and your attention to Daniel chapter 6.

This is probably the most well-known and well-loved chapter in the book of Daniel...and one of the most well-known stories in the whole Bible.

Daniel in the Lion's Den.

One of the best stories for children! I love telling this story to our boys!

Tonight, we're going to get a front row seat to this well-known story, but it's so helpful to be reminded of things that we know to be true.

To have truths put into our minds. Thoughts that we otherwise would not think today.

And, of course, this story is yet another deposit in this magnificent theme of the book of Daniel:

The absolute sovereignty and trustworthiness of the true and living God.

[by the way, after tonight, we will be taking a break from the book of Daniel,

*at the next two AiM nights we will hear messages from **Chet Walker** and **Dom Alves***

This will be an good place to end this first half of the Book of Daniel

*When we return to Daniel in July, we will pick up in **Daniel 7**, where the eschatology begins to get fast and furious!]*

But, tonight, we are going to walk through this incredible narrative by moving through **Six Scenes**.

Six Scenes that Showcase the Absolute Sovereignty of God and the Exemplary Integrity of Daniel.

This story has some MUCH-needed implications for us, so let's dive in.

Scene #1 THE EVIL THE EVIL PLOT AGAINST DANIEL (6:1-9)

Daniel 6:1-2

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| <p>1 It seemed good to Darius that he set 120 satraps over the kingdom, that they would be in charge of the whole kingdom,</p> <p>2 and 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.</p> |
|---|

We just need to deal with one objection that often comes up here regarding the identity of Darius the Mede.

You'll remember from last time that Babylon had fallen to the Medo-Persians in a dramatic way – that haunting night of the handwriting on the wall.

And just look up at the last two verses of chapter 5 – 5:30-31:

- 30** *That same night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was killed.*
31 *So Darius the Mede received the kingdom at about the age of sixty-two.*

Darius the Mede **received** the kingdom.

The wording there is important.

That Darius the Mede *received* the kingdom implies that it was conferred upon him by another.

If you know world history and biblical history, you know that the Medo-Persian King that conquered Babylon was **Cyrus the Great**.

Cyrus the Great who was prophesied by name by Isaiah around 150 years before these events happened! (cf. Isaiah 44:27-28; 45:1;

Because of this, there has been much debate over the identity of this "Darius the Mede".

There are also no strong historical records of a ruler named “Darius the Mede”, which has led to a long string of objections from critics.

Daniel mentions Darius the Mede again in Chapter 9:1 – flip over there quickly – notice what he says there.

“In the first year of Darius son of Xerxes (a Mede by descent), who was made ruler over the Babylonian kingdom” (Dan. 9:1)

Again, the idea (most likely) is that Darius was *made* ruler over Babylon by another superior (i.e., Cyrus the Great). (Whitcomb).

There are several ways to solve the identity of Darius without concluding that he is a fiction who cancels the authenticity of Daniel.

Many scholars believe there is strong evidence that “Darius” was just a title (like Pharaoh or Caesar) and that this is actually Cyrus the Great.¹

That may be the case. There are historical documents that use the title “Darius” for at least five different Persian rulers.

But I think it’s most likely that Darius *is* a title but that it refers not to Cyrus the Great, but to a subordinate governor of Cyrus whom he appointed to rule.

And historical and archaeological documents would fit perfectly with that.

Two very important archaeological sources, *The Nabonidus Chronicle* and certain *Babylonian Contract Tablets* give some insight here.

After Cyrus the Great conquered Babylon those documents record that Cyrus immediately appointed one of his generals to rule in Babylon.

That general’s name was “Gubaru”.

In certain *Babylonian contract tablets*, Gubaru is mentioned as **governor** of Babylon.²

¹ Todd Dykstra, *Daniel Course Notes*, The Expositors Seminary, p. 116.

² Todd Dykstra, *Daniel Course Notes*, The Expositors Seminary, p. 116.

The Nabonidus Chronicle also mentions that **Gubaru** (notice this) appointed subgovernors in Babylon...

Which is exactly what Daniel records about Darius the Mede in these opening verses (Dan. 6:1-2).

So, all of that to say, I think it's clear that Darius the Mede is a separate ruler from Cyrus the Great whom Cyrus appointed to rule.

This view is further affirmed by **Daniel 6:28** – the final verse of our chapter tonight. Take a look at that.

Here, Daniel clearly identifies two distinct rulers – notice:

*“...Daniel enjoyed success in the **kingdom of Darius and in the kingdom of Cyrus the Persian.**”* (Dan. 6:28)

So, it's clear that they are two distinct rulers, one superior to the other.

And then history points to the conclusion that this is most likely that General Gubaru, and that his title as ruler was “Darius the Mede”.

Why do I say all of that?

Because Daniel is one of the most attacked books, but again and again we find that God's Word is not inaccurate, but ***totally trustworthy!***

Whitcomb has pointed out:

*“The self-authenticating Word of God does not need such secular confirmation to be believed; **but** we appreciate God's providential provision of background information for biblical events.”* (Whitcomb, 85).³

Background evidence and information that yields an affirmation of what we know to be true—namely—that Daniel was an **eye-witness** of these events.

And by the way, IF (as the critics say) Daniel was writing at a much later time after these events, you know what you would NOT find?

³ Whitcomb, *Daniel*, 1985: 85.

You would most likely NOT find unknown details like “Darius the Mede” if someone was trying to forge a historical narrative – they wouldn’t do that.

Again, the best explanation for these details is that Daniel was an **eye-witness** reporting what happened because he was there!

So, let’s continue our story.

Darius has appointed Daniel as one of the three commissioners who oversees the satraps.

Let’s read vv. 3-9 – the evil plot that forms against Daniel.

Daniel 6:3-9

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|---|---|
| 3 | Then this Daniel began distinguishing himself among the commissioners and satraps because an extraordinary spirit was in him, and the king planned to set him over the entire kingdom. [Incredible providence of God for Daniel] |
| 4 | Then the commissioners and satraps began seeking to find a ground of accusation against Daniel in regard to <i>matters of</i> the kingdom; but they were not able to find any ground of accusation or <i>evidence of</i> corruption, inasmuch as he was faithful, and no negligence or corruption was <i>to be</i> found in him. |
| 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. ” |
| 6 | Then these commissioners and satraps came by agreement to the king and said thus to him: “King Darius, live forever! [Notice their flattery to trap the Darius with their plot] |
| 7 | “All the commissioners of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the high officials and the governors have counseled together that the king should establish a statute and enforce an injunction that anyone who seeks <i>to make</i> a petition to any god or man besides you, O king, for thirty days, shall be cast into the lions’ den. |
| 8 | “Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the written <i>document</i> so that it may not be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which may not be revoked. ” |
| 9 | Therefore King Darius signed the written <i>document</i> , that is, the injunction. |

The commissioners and satraps are envious of Daniel’s distinction and authority.

You can sense that they see the King’s plan coming – Darius’ plan to set Daniel over the entire kingdom!

This gives us yet another insight into the caliber of leader Daniel was.

In this chapter he is nearing 80 years old, but in many ways he is now in his **prime** of wisdom and maturity and skill.

They satraps under Daniel and even his fellow-commissioners are jealous of his skill and success.

But, very likely this goes beyond just envy, there seems to be a prejudice against him for being a Jew (*we'll see this come out in v. 13 in a pejorative way*).

This indicates that their prejudice against him was not merely along the lines of professional ambition and power, but it was deeply *theological!*

So they seek to take him down.

And make no mistake, they don't just want to remove him from power, they want him **dead**.

That's how deep their hatred toward Daniel was.

So, in their effort to get rid of him, they put his life under the microscope.

Their first strategy is simple – try to find some corruption in his work ethic that would disqualify and discredit him from his position.

Notice how this approach reveals something about these men and they way they worked – obviously underhanded corruption was their norm.

And so these men imagined Daniel to be just like them, so they figured they just needed to find the dirt on him.

But, what do they discover when they put Daniel under their microscope?

They find a man of **integrity**. *It's incredible!*

And here we can pull the car over for a moment and consider in these verses: *Two Marks of Living with Integrity before God*.

We've said this often when talking about **integrity**.

But, "*who you are before God is who you really are, and nothing more.*"

Descriptions of **Integrity**:

- **Dictionary: Integrity:** a firm adherence to a code of moral or ethical values; incorruptibility.

It also includes these related senses: *an unimpaired condition; soundness; the quality or state of being complete or undivided; wholeness.*

- You math people, in English, **integrity** comes from the word **integer** – which is a **whole number**.
- A whole number that is not *divided*. Not *fractional*. Not *fragmented*.
- That's the idea of a life of **integrity**. A life that is not divided between what others see and how you live in secret.
- A life that is not fragmented with areas of unconfessed sin.
- A life that is whole. Complete. Not double-minded. Not a hypocrite.

As believers, this is what we **MUST** value – to have our souls *whole* and happy before God (uncompromised, unfragmented)!

And Daniel is such an example for us. Exemplary integrity.

As we consider his life tonight, let's put our own souls under the microscope.

Let's consider a **1st mark of integrity** that rises to the surface when Daniel's life is placed under the microscope.

#1 No Grounds for **Legitimate Accusations** (v. 4) (*PURITY*)

The text clearly states the intent of these evil co-workers of Daniel – v. 4 – they were seeking to find a ground of accusation.

The first place they look is his **work ethic**.

And what does their investigation reveal?

Nothing. No grounds for accusation.

Why?

v. 4 answers—*“inasmuch as Daniel was **faithful**, and **no negligence or corruption** was to be found in him!”*

Beloved young adults – could that be said of our work ethic?

Notice this incredible lesson for us.

Daniel was not a workaholic, power-hungry, career-driven alpha who obsessed over his job and YET he was EXCELLENT at his job.

We’ll see in a moment that Daniel’s priorities were completely in order – his job did not compete with his God, and YET he was an **incredible** employee!

You see, you don’t have to make your job your world to be excellent.

But believers should be **EXCELLENT** workers.

The Bible is so clear in countless passages that believers should be set apart by our work ethic.

Why? Because we are to work as unto the Lord, Col. 3:23-24 says!

Daniel models that for us here.

Young adults, in this fallen world, workplaces are often places rife with competitiveness and cut-throat dynamics – that’s just reality.

Likely a time will come when your workplace seems to turn against you.

When dynamics with your boss or coworkers will tempt you to complain or be complacent in your work ethic – Daniel’s example needs to recalibrate you!

Beloved young adults, when you clock in to work or as you attend college, **you are representing Christ!**

You need to know that *because of that*, you will have a target on your back!

Do not let there be grounds for accusations of corruption, hypocrisy, or laziness!

Accusations will come—*that's not surprising*—but believers must live in such a way that those accusations have ***nothing legitimate to fasten to!***

And if there ARE lapses in your faithfulness and work ethic, **take responsibility for it!**

That's part of faithfulness too!

Be an employee who knows how to fall on the sword and say, *"please forgive me for doing or saying x, y, or z – that was wrong!"*

And learning to say, *"I know that you know I'm a believer, but what I did was not representing Christ well – please forgive me."*

And then striving anew to be an employee, a student, a son, a daughter with a godly work ethic—like Daniel—*faithful, no negligence or corruption.*

The fact that these men who were searching—digging—for some dirt on Daniel couldn't find anything ***is incredible.***

That means that there wasn't anything glaring.

But also, there wasn't anything at ALL! Not even hints or subtleties.

This means that Daniel was not given to the toxic understructure of *complaining, gossip, and laziness* that is so common in workplaces.

Daniel shows us that it is possible to rise above all of that and still be an **excellent** worker!

[Implications]

- *We need to live and work in such a way that accusations have nothing legitimate to fasten to on the grounds of hypocrisy, corruption, or laziness.*
- *Can I be accused of any sin that I'm not humbly and honestly dealing with in repentance and mortification and accountability?*
- *What is the condition of my purity when no one other than God sees?*
- *Am I honest in my labors at work? Focused?*
- *Am I given to the toxic understructure of gossip and complaining?*
- *Do I pursue excellence as a worker and student?*
- *Ask yourself, if all the facts were made known, would my integrity hold up?*

These evil men could not find anything in the work ethic of Daniel to shame him with.

So, they had to look elsewhere.

They investigated another area of Daniel's life that was **unchanging** – his spiritual disciplines.

This brings us to consider a 2nd mark of integrity in Daniel's example.

#2 No Compromise in **Spiritual Convictions** (vv. 5, 10, 16, 20) (*PRIORITIES*)

Look at verse 5 again:

“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 incredible!

We're going to see this emphasized multiple times throughout this chapter, but Daniel's life was marked by **CONTINUAL worship to God**.

Daniel's spiritual convictions have that **overriding** power in his life – and these evil men knew that!

These evil men **knew** that if Daniel was placed in a dilemma where he was forced to choose between God and King Darius, ***he would choose God!***

They knew his convictions would have an **overriding power** that would not be compromised by Daniel's fears, feelings, friends, or flesh.

Oh, I want to live my life that way!

And remember, Daniel is around 80 years old here.

And his disciplines as an 80-year-old man show that he was consistently practicing spiritual disciplines since he was a young man.

The disciplines and resolve that we saw in the 14-year-old Daniel are galvanized in the habits of 80-year-old Daniel.

Our habits as young people MATTER.

Oh I don't want to become an old person whose habits are calcified patterns of self-serving and entertainment!

What these men found in 80-year-old Daniel was a rigorous habit of PRAYER (*notice his prayer life was NOT "invisible" – it was habitual.*)

So, they went to King Darius, flattered him into their trap, and a law was signed that would put Daniel in an immediate dilemma (vv. 6-7).

What was this new law? It was fundamentally *theological*.

Notice v. 7, for thirty days, no one is to **pray** to any god besides King Darius.

And they built in a punishment for any who would violate this law: ***violators were to be cast into the lions' den (v. 7).***

To ensure the success of their plan, they had King Darius sign it according to Medo-Persian law which—notice v. 8—***cannot be revoked!***

King Darius, blinded by his own pride, signed the injunction and it became the law of the land (v. 9).

And beloved young adults, this sort of thing may not be far off.

As believers we are called to submit to Governmental authorities (Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:13-14) – *because God has ordained them!*

Our default mode should be subjection, not rebellion.

But our subjection hits a wall when those authorities demand that we compromise our devotion to God.

Daniel will teach us how to respond as we move to our 2nd scene in this story.

SCENE #2 DANIEL'S CONSCIENTIOUS DEFIANCE (6:10-13)

Let's read vv. 10-13.

Daniel 6:10-13

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| 10 | Now when Daniel knew that the written <i>document</i> was signed, 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. [I love what one commentator said, " <i>for Daniel, when everything changes, nothing changes.</i> " ⁴] |
| 11 | Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel seeking <i>to make</i> a petition and making supplication before his God. |
| 12 | Then they came near and said before the king concerning the king's injunction, "Did you not sign an injunction that any man who seeks <i>to make</i> a petition to any god or man besides you, O king, for thirty days, is to be cast into the lions' den?" The king answered and said, "The word is certain, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which may not 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 to the injunction which you signed, but keeps seeking to make his petition three times a day. " |

I'm calling this *Daniel's Conscientious Defiance*.

⁴ This quote is not original to me, I penned it in the margins of my Bible in this section – but I cannot remember who said it.

It's clear that Daniel acts in **defiance** of this new decree.

But it is not defiance that is driven by some self-styled “bravado” that so often marks us.

It is **conscientious**.

What does that mean?

Conscientious is our English word that describes actions that are *governed by or conforming to the dictates of conscience* (Merriam-Webster).

Or as another dictionary colored it in: *feeling a moral responsibility to do your work carefully and to be fair to others* (Cambridge).

And here is the idea that I want to impress upon you here in Daniel's example.

That he was not acting out of a self-driven defiance as though he was the final authority, but out of a binding sense of duty to a higher law – God!

So, yes – he defies the new law – but he does so in a way that is *conscientious*.

You can almost hear the echoes of Shadrach, Mesach, and Abed-Nego's voices when they responded to Nebuchadnezzar saying,

“Oh King, we do not need to give you answer about why we will not bow down to your statue”

Daniel makes no attempt to hide his defiance – he did not alter his habit of daily prayer with windows open toward Jerusalem.

Daniel's habit was to do this three times a day—a strategic practice of prayer, not just a passive approach to it. [The importance of PRAYER]

But more than just being a habit, **his practice was shaped by God's Word**.

Praying three times a day was the pattern of David, *the man after God's own heart* (see Psalm 55:16-17).

Similarly, his habit of praying toward Jerusalem was shaped by God's Word.

In 1 Kings 8, when Solomon prayed over Israel and the Temple, he instructed God's people on how to pray in the day of exile.

Daniel is recognizing that he is living out that exile and therefore he fulfills Solomon's prayer, seeking God's favor and forgiveness.

(this is important to keep in mind when we get to chapter 9).

1 Kings 8:46-50

- 46 "When they [the people of Israel] sin against You (for there is no man who does not sin) and You are angry with them and give them over to an enemy, so that they take them away captive to the land of the enemy, far off or near;
- 47 and if they cause *these things* to return to their heart in the land where they have been taken captive, and return and make supplication to You in the land of those who have taken them captive, saying, 'We have sinned and have committed iniquity, we have acted wickedly';
- 48 and if they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their enemies who have taken them captive, **and pray to You toward their land which You have given to their fathers, the city which You have chosen, and the house which I have built for Your name;**
- 49 then listen in heaven Your dwelling place to their prayer and their supplication, and do justice for them,
- 50 and forgive Your people who have sinned against You and all their transgressions which they have transgressed against You, and give them over as *objects of compassion* before those who have taken them captive, that they may have compassion on them

That is what Daniel is doing.

Praying according to God's Word.

This was an act of faith and dependance upon the God who Hears!

Which is why he was conscience-bound to not let a DAY go by without communing with God and making supplication in prayer.

Think about how easy it might have been to rationalize a compromise here.

But this man's *devotion to and dependence on* God prepared him to pay the cost of the lions' den without a blinking.

The evil satraps and commissioners, clearly watching and waiting for Daniel to pray, wasted no time in playing the tattletale.

The rushed off to the king to turn in this violator.

They remind the king of his decree and they remind him of the punishment for violators.

You can sense their dark prejudice in full color as they reveal who the violator is:

“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 seeking *to make* his petition three times a day.”

This is when the king realized what he had done in his pride.

Let’s move through a 3rd scene.

SCENE #3 THE KING’S DISTRESS (6:14-15)

Daniel 6:14-15

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| 14 | Then, as soon as the king heard this word, he was greatly distressed within himself and set <i>his</i> mind on saving Daniel; and even until sunset he kept exerting himself to deliver 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 statute which the king establishes may be changed.” |

The king’s distress gives us insight into his relationship with Daniel.

Darius knew that Daniel was loyal and trustworthy.

And similar to Daniel’s relationship with Nebuchadnezzar (*and unlike his relationship with Belsahzzar*), we sense a deep trust and even friendship here.

King Darius is horrified and immediately jumps to action and spends the rest of the day trying to find some way to save Daniel.

But in the law of the Medo-Persians, no loophole was to be found. It was **final**.

It seems that part of the decree was that the execution had to take place before sundown, which is why he ‘exerted’ himself until sunset.⁵

But, as John Whitcomb points out, “*The mighty Darius the Mede was trapped in the snare of his own pride and folly – and he knew it.*”⁶

And so, Daniel’s fate seemed to be sealed.

Which brings us to our fourth scene in this incredible story.

SCENE #4 DANIEL IN THE LIONS’ DEN (6:16-18)

Daniel 6:16-18

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| 16 | Then the king said <i>the word</i> , and Daniel was brought in and cast into the lions’ den. The king answered and said to Daniel, “Your God whom you constantly serve will Himself save you.” |
| 17 | And a stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signet rings of his nobles so that nothing would be changed in regard to Daniel. |
| 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. |

The king surrenders his effort and gives the command to follow through with the promised death penalty.

But notice that Darius has not yet fully surrendered to despair.

He has one final hope.

He hopes that Daniel’s God may deliver him.

And notice what he affirms about Daniel: “**Your God whom you constantly serve will Himself save you!**”

Dairus knew Daniel was characterized by *constant devotion* to God.

And this was his only hope for Daniel now – that his God might save him.

⁵ Todd Dykstra, *Daniel Course Notes*, The Expositors Seminary, p. 124.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 86-87.

With those parting words, the 80-year-old man, is cast into the lions' den for the crime of **praying to the living God**.

The den is shut and the scene keeps readers in suspense.

Instead of immediately telling us that God delivered Daniel, the scene moves back to the palace where king Darius is in a tailspin of anguish.

Again, his esteem and endearment to Daniel is evident.

Darius refuses entertainment and food and cycles into a sleepless night of torment.

So, as the camera cuts from Daniel in the Lions' Den to the Palace, Dale Ralph Davis points out something insightful:

"Note what happens at verses 16 and following: The writer fixes all our attention on the king. The whole focus of vv. 16-20 is on the anguish of the king rather than the trauma of Daniel. The writer keeps us in suspense – along with Darius – about Daniel's fate until verse 21. It is a tad strange: Daniel is thrown to the lions and we only hear about the king and *his* agonizing night."⁷

And so, Sinclair Ferguson hits the nail on the when he says,

*"Darius' helplessness suggests that it is better to be a child of faith in a den of lions, than to be a king in a palace without faith."*⁸

So, what was happening in the Lions' Den? *I know you know the story!*

Dale Ralph Davis, again, captures it in a pithy way when he says this:

*Here "we run into the irony that not only did the king fast (18) but so did the lions (22)."*⁹

This brings us to our 5th scene tonight – the great climax of the story!

⁷ Davis 2013: 89.

⁸ Quote taken from Dykstra class lecture, attributed to Sinclair Ferguson.

⁹ Davis 2013: 90.

SCENE #5 THE MIRACULOUS DELIVERANCE (6:19-24)

Daniel 6:19-24

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| 19 | Then the king arose at dawn, at the break of day, and hurriedly went to the lions' den. |
| 20 | When he had come near the den to Daniel, he cried out with a troubled voice. The king answered and said to Daniel, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you constantly serve, been able to save you from the lions?" |
| 21 | Then Daniel spoke to the king, "O king, live forever! |
| 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 done no harm." |
| 23 | Then the king was greatly pleased and said for Daniel to be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no harm whatsoever was found on him because he had believed in his God. |
| 24 | The king then said <i>the word</i> , and they brought those men who had brought charges against 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. |

At dawn, the king runs to the lion's den (*likely the Medo Persian law would've allowed for a 1 day period of time to carry out the penalty*)

Darius cries out hoping to hear Daniel's voice, and he again emphasizes Daniel's **constant service of God** – *I love that!*

(this is what we should strive to be known for!)

And Then....

Daniel's voice breaks the silence, "*O king, live forever! **My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths.***"

An incredible, undeniable, supernatural **MIRACLE!**

I believe very likely this is a reference to God's Angel is what theologians call a Preincarnate Christophany – an appearance of the Son of God.

Just like the fourth man in the fiery furnace.

And what did this Angel of the Lord do?

He miraculously shut the mouths of the lions.

God is absolutely **sovereign** over His creation.

God miraculously delivered Daniel and **vindicated his unwavering belief!**

Notice the reason given in v. 23 for God's deliverance of Daniel ~ *"because he had believed in his God"*

Incredible!

This is the what the author of Hebrews marvels at in Hebrews 11:33 when he highlights those *"who...by faith... shut the mouths of lions!"*

THIS IS A MIRACLE!

King Darius, overjoyed, has Daniel pulled out of the den.

Then, in a sweeping turning of the tables, king Darius enacts retribution on the sinister men.

And in a cruel custom of the Medo Persian world casts not only them, but also their families into the lions' den.

And just to prove how **MIRACULOUS** God's deliverance of Daniel was, the text tells us that the lions devour them before they even reached the bottom.

This proves graphically **HOW** miraculous God's deliverance of Daniel was – he emerged without any harm.

Just as his friends emerged from the fiery furnace without even the smell of smoke, Daniel emerges from lions' den without a scratch.

This brings us to our final scene tonight.

SCENE #6 THE NEW DECREE (6:25-28)

Let's read vv. 25-28.

Daniel 6:25-28

- 25** Then Darius the king wrote to all the peoples, nations, and *men of every tongue* who were inhabiting all the land: “May your peace abound!
- 26** “I make a decree that in all the dominion of my kingdom, men are to fear and be in dread 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 unto the end.*
- 27** “He saves and delivers and does signs and wonders
In heaven and on earth,
Who has *also* saved Daniel from the power of the lions.”
- 28** So this Daniel enjoyed success in the kingdom of Darius and in the kingdom of Cyrus the Persian.

As this breathtaking narrative draws to a close, Darius issues a new decree, that all men in the kingdom are to fear God.

Dykstra notes,

“The one who [wanted to be] revered for 30 days as a god made the proclamation that all those in his kingdom must worship and serve Daniel’s God.”¹⁰

In his new decree, Darius gives *seven reasons all men must humble themselves before the true and living God:*

1. God is the **living God** (*unlike false gods*)
2. God endures **forever** (*unlike false gods and this life*)
3. God’s kingdom will not be **destroyed** (*unlike earthly kingdoms*)
4. God’s dominion will be unto the **end** (*unlike earthly dominions*)
5. God **saves** and **delivers!** (*unlike human kings and unlike false gods*)
6. God does **signs** and **wonders.** (*unlike false gods, He reveals Himself!*)
7. God will **vindicate** those who trust Him in life and in death.

Let Daniel’s example bind your conscience to this precious and powerful conviction: ***whatever my God ordains is RIGHT!***

[PRAY]

¹⁰ Todd Dykstra, *Daniel Course Notes*, The Expositors Seminary, p. 128.