

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

This evening, we are going to be in Daniel 6 – a very familiar event for many of us.

However, the story of Daniel and the lions is much more than Daniel coming out of the lion's den unscathed.

It's about God deliverance and God's faithfulness.

Let's pray...

Last week, we left off with the end of the Babylonian empire.

After 70 years, God had arranged another empire to come in and overtake them.

And we saw last week as Daniel interpreted the writing on the wall for Belshazaar and told him the news that the actions of the Kingdom of Babylon had been weighed and now judgment was coming.

The Medes and the Persians were the ones that God used.

And I also pointed out last week that this was God's plan all along.

God even names Cyrus (the Persian King) by name in the book of Isaiah and even tells us how they conquered Babylon -150 years before it even happened.

So we have a new empire in control of the region. We have a new ruler over the area – in Darius the Mede –

Yet, God is still in control.

[Dan 6:1-28 NKJV] 1 It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty satraps, to be over the whole kingdom; 2 and over these, three governors, of whom Daniel [was] one, that the satraps might give account to them, so that the king would suffer no loss.

Now, it is important to note that when the Medes and the Persians conquered Babylon – they didn't make Babylon their capital.

Darius is the one that was appointed to rule over the former kingdom of Babylon.

And when he took over, he starts to rearrange the government that had been in place in Babylon.

He appoints these 120 satraps or princes to help him rule over the land and make sure that they were being obedient to the laws of the land.

And Daniel is assigned as one of the three governors that were going to oversee these 120 satraps.

He is in his 80's – yet God is still continuing to use him.

3 Then this Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps, because an excellent spirit [was] in him; and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm.

Darius certainly had heard about Daniel interpreting the writing on the wall for Belshazzar, as well as his wisdom through the long reign of King Nebuchadnezzar.

And Daniel could have easily coasted in his new position – but the scriptures tell us that he was able to distinguish himself because an excellent Spirit was in him – he was the best at what he did.

He excelled in whatever he was given.

I believe that as believers, we are called to be like Daniels in the workplace –

Where do you get that???

Turn with me to Colossians 3,

Let's see what Paul has to say -

[Col 3:22-23 NKJV] 22 Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. 23 And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men,

As believers, Paul tells us to be submissive toward our employer or supervisor – even if they are a jerk.

And we are not only supposed to meet the minimum expectations that they set – but we are supposed to give it our all. God wants every worker to see that ultimately, they work for Him. And that is what we see Daniel doing here.

4 So the governors and satraps sought to find [some] charge against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find no charge or fault, because he [was] faithful; nor was there any error or fault found in him.

These 120 satraps and the two other governors – they don't like Daniel.

They are jealous of him.

Maybe they are jealous at the attention that he is getting?

Maybe it is because he was a Jew –

Maybe it was because he was just old???

Whatever the reason, they viewed Daniel as a rival and therefore they started to look for something that they can accuse him of.

Maybe he took a bribe from someone.

Maybe someone saw him kicking his dog once.

Surely there must have been a skeleton in Daniel's closet – but the satraps and the other governors could not find anything to accuse him of.

This doesn't mean that Daniel was sinless – it simply means that he was a man of great integrity.

5 Then these men said, "We shall not find any charge against this Daniel unless we find [it] against him concerning the law of his God." 6 So these governors and satraps thronged before the king, and said thus to him: "King Darius, live forever! 7 "All the governors of the kingdom, the administrators and satraps, the counselors and advisors, have consulted together to establish a royal statute and to make a firm decree, that whoever petitions any god or man for thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions.

These guys knew that they were not going to be able to find anything on Daniel – so they go after the one thing that they did know about Daniel and that was his devotion to his God.

They knew that Daniel would continue to be faithful to his God in all circumstances.

He was not going to be one who compromised and we have seen this from the very beginning.

However, in the same way that they knew Daniel, they also knew Darius.

And the one thing they knew about King Darius was that he enjoyed being flattered.

And that is why they all come and immediately start to pour it on.

You are such a great king – you should make a law forcing the people to only worship you for 30 days – and if anyone breaks this rule, they should be thrown into the pit with the lions.

And noticed that they even put a bow on their argument by saying that everyone was on board – all the satraps and all the governors – but that is a lie because they never went to Daniel.

I asked you to make a note of the word den.

Because the word that is used here for den is the word for pit.

And through paintings and children books we picture the story of Daniel and the lions taking place in something that resembles a cave.

But really – it was just a deep hole in the ground.

8 "Now, O king, establish the decree and sign the writing, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter."

9 Therefore King Darius signed the written decree.

The reason that the decrees were not able to be changed during this time period is that the kings of Medes and Persians were thought to speak for the gods.

They were supposed to be infallible.

So changing the law would indicate they were not representatives from the gods.

So once a law was passed – it was permanent.

10 Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.

Notice that when Daniel was made aware that the decree had been signed, he was not fearful nor was he intimidated by it - even though he was aware of the consequences.

And noticed what he did – he prayed.

Just like he had before the decree had been signed.

Daniel was a man of prayer – this is one of the reasons that the Spirit of God was in him – because he was always in constant communication with Him.

One of the questions we need to ask ourselves this evening is, “How big of a deal is prayer to us?”

Because many times our excuse is that we simply don't have the time to pray.

But Daniel, he was a governor – he was a busy man – yet he still made time to pray three times a day.

A strong prayer life doesn't happen overnight.

It takes practice. Lots of practice. The scriptures tell us that Daniel had made a habit to this from the time he was young. He had been doing this every day for almost 70 years.

Prayer requires that we stay at it.

It requires that we don't let anything stop you from praying – not our busy schedule or circumstances.

I had you make a note that he prayed toward Jerusalem –

Turn with me to 2 Chronicles 6,

These are the words of Solomon at the dedication of the temple -

[2Ch 6:34-39 NKJV] 34 "When Your people go out to battle against their enemies, wherever You send them, and when they pray to You toward this city which You have chosen and the temple which I have built for Your name, 35 "then hear from heaven their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause. 36 "When they sin against You (for [there is] no one who does not sin), and You become angry with them and deliver them to the enemy, and they take them captive to a land far or near; 37 "[yet] when they come to themselves in the land where they were carried captive, and repent, and make supplication to You in the land of their captivity, saying, 'We have sinned, we have done wrong, and have committed wickedness'; 38 "and [when] they return to You with all their heart

and with all their soul in the land of their captivity, where they have been carried captive, and pray toward their land which You gave to their fathers, the city which You have chosen, and **toward the temple** which I have built for Your name:
39 "then hear from heaven Your dwelling place their prayer and their supplications, and maintain their cause, and forgive Your people who have sinned against You.

Solomon asked God to give special notice to the prayers of His people when they prayed towards Jerusalem and the temple.

That is why some Jews today – when they pray – they will face toward Jerusalem. Even though the temple is not there – it will one day be rebuilt.

11 Then these men assembled and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God.

The evil men catch Daniel in the act.

He is violating the law.

Now they have something that they can accuse Daniel of before the king.

Wait a minute – don't the scriptures tell us to obey the authorities of the land – yes.

Yes (Rom 13:1) says that God appointed those authorities so we should be subject to them. However, this is not the case when the laws that they enact contradict the word of God. (Acts 4:19)

In the book of Acts, Peter and John were told to stop preaching by those that ruled over them – yet they disobeyed because it went against the Word of God.

12 And they went before the king, and spoke concerning the king's decree:

"Have you not signed a decree that every man who petitions any god or man within thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?" The king answered and said, "The thing [is] true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter." 13 So they answered and said before the king, "That Daniel, who is one of the captives from Judah, does not **show due regard for you, O king, or for the decree that you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day."**

The charge against Daniel – he is disrespecting you king!

That is not true - Daniel intended no disrespect for the king, only a higher respect for God.

14 And the king, when he heard [these] words, was greatly displeased with himself, and set [his] heart on Daniel to deliver him; and he labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him.

Darius realized he had been duped into signing a law that would condemn Daniel.

It is because of his actions that Daniel stands accused.

He spent the rest of the day searching the law libraries to find a way out.

15 Then these men approached the king, and said to the king, "Know, O king, that [it is] the law of the Medes and Persians that no decree or statute which the king establishes may be changed."

Darius was powerless – he couldn't go against the decree that he had signed. And the men remind him of this just in case he was thinking of letting Daniel off the hook.

16 So the king gave the command, and they brought Daniel and cast [him] into the den of lions. [But] the king spoke, saying to Daniel, "Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you."

Darius tells Daniel that he had tried all that he could to deliver him, but failed. The only one that could save Daniel was going to be His God. "God is going to save you Daniel – I can't."

17 Then a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signets of his lords, that the purpose concerning Daniel might not be changed.

A stone covers up the only possible escape for Daniel. And the king sealed it – this served two purposes.

1. Nobody was going to come and rescue Daniel from the pit.
2. The satraps were not going to kill Daniel if the lions didn't kill him.

18 Now the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; and no musicians were brought before him. Also his sleep went from him.

The king had a miserable night in his palace.

He didn't eat.

He did not listen to music

He couldn't even sleep.

He was troubled over Daniel, because he was the one responsible for putting him in the pit with the lions.

In fact, I am pretty sure that Daniel had a better night in the pit than Darius had in his palace.

19 Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions.

Since Darius couldn't sleep and was worried about Daniel, he goes out to the lion's den at daybreak.

20 And when he came to the den, he cried out with a lamenting voice to Daniel. The king spoke, saying to Daniel, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?"

The term living God, in scriptures, is always used to contrast the Lord with the lifeless idols that many of the pagan nations worshipped.

Darius isn't simply asking if any of the gods had delivered Daniel from the mouth of the lions.

He is referring to Daniel's God – the one true God.

21 Then Daniel said to the king, "O king, live forever! 22 "My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you."

Daniel responds by first showing loyalty toward the king – wishing him a long life. O king live forever -

Remember that the case made against Daniel by the satraps was that he was disrespecting the king and not being loyal to him.

And he then tells the king that God found him to be righteous – meaning he was innocent of the charges that were brought against him in the eyes of God.

23 Now the king was exceedingly glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no injury whatever was found on him, because he believed in his God.

A few weeks ago when we studied chapter three, we found that when Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego are removed from the fiery furnace – they didn't smell like barbeque. Their clothes and hair were not burnt.

The same thing happens to Daniel – even though he spent the night in the lion's den – he didn't have a scratch on him.

How is that possible?

Daniel was preserved through faith.

He wasn't preserved because he was falsely accused or because he was a man of integrity – he was preserved by the power of God, through faith.

Because he believed in His God.

24 And the king gave the command, and they brought those men who had accused Daniel, and they cast [them] into the den of lions--them, their children, and their wives; and the lions overpowered them, and broke all their bones in pieces before they ever came to the bottom of the den.

Now, there will be those that will say – Daniel wasn't torn to pieces because the lions were not hungry that particular day.

But we see that Darius orders Daniel's accusers to be thrown into the pit after Daniel is pulled out and the lions tear them apart.

This verified the miracle of God -

25 Then King Darius wrote: To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you. 26 I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom [men must] tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. For He [is] the living God, And steadfast forever; His kingdom [is the one] which shall not be destroyed, And His dominion [shall endure] to the end. 27 He delivers and rescues, And He works signs and wonders In heaven and on earth, Who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions. 28 So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

Just like Nebuchadnezzar – Darius issues a decree for the peoples regarding the God of Daniel.

He acknowledges Daniel's God is eternal, he acknowledges His Omnipotence as He delivers and rescues, he acknowledges that He is the Living God – but Darius never acknowledges Daniel's God as his own God.

Saving faith would have said Darius' God – and not just Daniel's God.

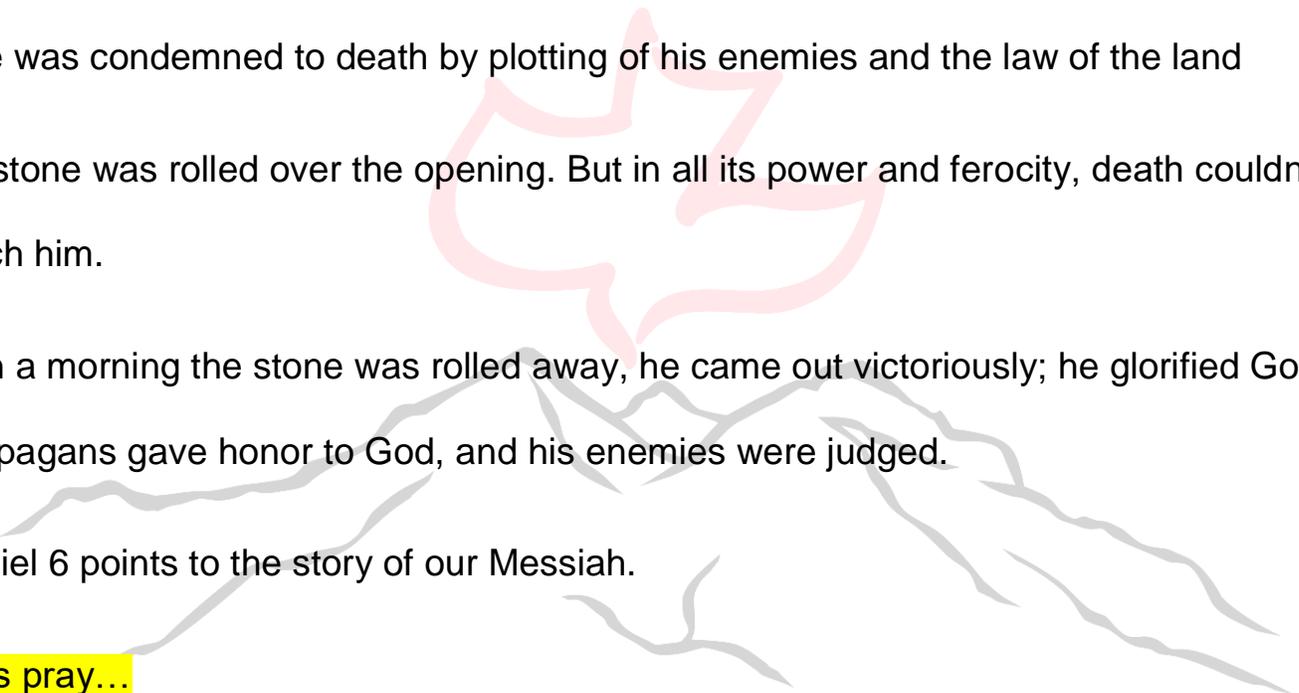
So, looking back at chapter six – what does this all point to –

Consider the following,

- A man without blame, faithful to God in all his ways, a man noted for prayer, was sent to his death because of the jealousy of those who wanted to prevent his exaltation.
- He was condemned to death by plotting of his enemies and the law of the land
- A stone was rolled over the opening. But in all its power and ferocity, death couldn't touch him.
- On a morning the stone was rolled away, he came out victoriously; he glorified God, the pagans gave honor to God, and his enemies were judged.

Daniel 6 points to the story of our Messiah.

Let's pray...



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