9

DANIEL & THE LION'S DEN

Daniel 6

Main Idea of the Text: As the Persian Empire establishes dominance over Babylon, the Lord protects Daniel from persecution, proving His dominion over the kingdoms of men.

I. THE TEXT

a. Context

i. Historical Setting

1. Likely within the first year of Darius/Cyrus reign over conquered Babylon.

2. Daniel 6:28 – can be interpreted: "So this Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius, *that is*, Cyrus the Persian."

3. Ezra 1:1-4 dates the edict of Cyrus to his first year of rule.

a. In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing: 2 "Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. 3 Whoever is among you of all his people, may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and rebuild the house of the LORD, the God of Israel—he is the God who is in Jerusalem. 4 And let each survivor, in whatever place he sojourns, be assisted by the men of his place with silver and gold, with goods and with beasts, besides freewill offerings for the house of God that is in Jerusalem." (Ezra 1:1-4)

ii. Literary Context

1. End of the court narratives in chapters 1-6.

2. Yet another pagan empire learns the dominion of Yahweh.

3. Strong connections with chapter 3 (Hamilton, 75)

- Both involve a death threat for those who will not comply with a pagan decree (Dan. 3:6; 6:7).
- Both show faithful Jews refusing to comply with the pagan decree, recognizing that it is better to die nobly than live ignobly (3:12, 16-18; 6:10).
- Both present the pagan king questioning God's ability to deliver his people (3:15; 6:20).
- Both mention God's angel helping God's servants (3:28; 6:22).
- Both show God's faithful being supernaturally preserved while the wicked who oppose them die (3:22, 27; 6:22, 24),
- Both accounts explicitly state that God's servants trusted in him (3:28; 6:23).
- Both present the pagan king responding to God delivering his servants by praising God and decreeing that he should be respected (3:28-29; 6:26-27).
- Both accounts resolve with a statement of how the faithful Jews were promoted or prospered (3:30; 6:28)

iii. Original Audience Situation

1. Daniel is now "current" to his own time.

2. This makes the shift from chapter 6 to chapter 7 pivotal in the book.

b. Outline

i. Daniel Prospers Under the New Persian Administration (Dan 6:1-3)

1. Darius organizes his empire into regions governed by high officials. Satrap means "Protector of the kingdom".

2. Daniel named one of three high officials.

3. Darius plans to put Daniel over the entire kingdom.

ii. Malicious Officials Plan to Undermine Daniel (6:4-9)

1. Why were they undermining Daniel? Jealousy?

2. Daniel was so faithful in his duty the only way they could trap him was in connection with his obedience to the Lord.

3. They thus establish a law that forbade praying to anyone but Darius. ANE religions often saw the monarch as the representative of the gods.

4. Laws could certainly be and were changed. But because the cost of not following through with written laws was high, it rarely happened.

iii. Daniel Obeys, is Accused by the High Officials, and Darius Tries to Rescue Him (Dan 6:10-15)

1. Praying toward Jerusalem links to Solomon's dedication of the temple in 1 Kings 8:27-53.

2. Daniel neither flaunts his civil disobedience nor does he compromise.

3. Darius is distressed at the accusation and labors to rescue him. In the end, the punishment for the crime stands.

iv. God Protects Daniel by Sending an Angel (Daniel 6:16-24)

1. Darius prays for Daniel in the name of Daniel's God. Complete opposite of his experience under Babylonian rulers. (Dan 6:16)

2. Daniel's name, which means "God is my judge" proves true.

3. According to the law of Moses, false accusers were to suffer the same punishment their would-be victims would have received. (Deuteronomy 19:16-21)

v. Darius Praises the Lord (Daniel 6:25-28)

1. Ironically, the law of the Medes & Persians which "cannot be revoked" is revoked. (Dan 6:26)

2. Darius praises the Lord, and once again we see God's dominion on display. (Dan 6:26-27)

c. Key Observations

i. Darius very unlike Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar.

ii. The kingdom which shall never be destroyed is the refrain of chapters 1-6.

d. Summary of the Passage

i. God prospers Daniel under the new Persian emperor, but the other Persian officials seek to undermine him. They use Daniel's obedience to the law of God as a means to force him into breaking the law of the emperor. Darius follows through on the stated punishment for breaking the law, but the Lord protects Daniel. Throughout, Darius shows himself to be much more open to the God of Israel and praises Him in the end.

II. THE TRUTH

a. Central Theological Theme(s)

i. The Lord's dominion is displayed to the new Persian emperor.

ii. Sovereignty

iii. Christian Liberty/the Civil Magistrate

b. Confession of Faith & Creeds

i. LCF (1689)

1. Chapter 21 – Of Christian Liberty & Liberty of Conscience
   a. 21.1 God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in any thing contrary to His Word, or not contained in it. So that to believe such doctrines, or obey such commands out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience; and the requiring of an implicit faith, an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience and reason also.

      Proof Texts: James 4:12; Romans 14:4; Acts 4:19, 29; 1 Corinthians 7:23; Matthew 15:9; Colossians 2:20, 22, 23; 1 Corinthians 3:5; 2 Corinthians 1:24

2. Chapter 24 – Of the Civil Magistrate

   a. 24.3 – Civil magistrates being set up by God for the ends aforesaid; subjection, in all lawful things commanded by them, ought to be yielded by us in the Lord, not only for wrath, but for conscience sake; and we ought to make supplications and prayers for kings and all that are in authority, that under them we may live a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty.

      Proof Texts: Romans 13:5–7; 1 Peter 2:17; 1 Timothy 2:1, 2

i. How the passage illustrates the confession

1. Darius issues a law that is contrary to the Word of God.

2. Daniel's conscience is free from any command which contradicts the commands of God.

3. Magistrates are to be honored and obeyed in all lawful things, but God alone is Lord of the conscience.

c. Development from the Text

    i. About God:

        1. Daniel 6, along with the rest of the book affirms God's dominion, power, and sovereignty over the rise and fall of human kingdoms.

        2. He is also the God who judges and will vindicate his people.

    ii. About Humanity/God's People:

        1. We are called to uncompromising faithfulness even when obedience to God places us in conflict with human authority.

d. Redemptive-Historical & Christological Connections

    i. Redemptive Historical

        1. "stopped the mouths of lions" (Hebrews 11:33)

    ii. Christological

        1. Daniel's deliverance from the lions den anticipates Christ's resurrection from the tomb that was sealed by a stone. Christ is the truly faithful servant who would die before breaking the commands of God.

e. Key Theological Truth

    i. The Lord is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and is able to protect His people in the midst of persecution. Because God alone is Lord of the conscience, His people must obey Him rather than human decrees that contradict His Word, trusting that He will vindicate His own name and care for those who trust in Him.

III. THE TRANSFORMATION

APPLICATION PROMPTS	YOUR APPLICATION
1. Heart & Personal Life • *What idol or fear does this expose?* • *Where do I need deeper repentance or trust?* • *How does this comfort or confront me?*	
2. Family & Home • *How does this shape marriage?* • *Parenting or relating to parents?* • *What would change at home?*	
3. Church Community • *How should this shape LWBC?* • *Our unity, witness, or worship?* • *What corporate response is needed?*	
4. Work & Daily Calling • *How does this affect my work?* • *Integrity, excellence, or rest?* • *Witness in the workplace?*	
5. Witness to Unbelievers • *How does this speak to non-Christians?* • *What hope or warning does it give?* • *How can I share this truth?*	
6. Mind, Affections & Will • *What must I believe more deeply?* • *What affections need stirring?* • *What specific obedience is called for?*	