

The Lion's Den Daniel 6:1-28 Counter Culture

When I was a kid – My Parents took me to Lion Country Safari - Irvine. – Grew up in Southern California - Car....

A)Next to the Verizon Amphitheatre – Irvine Meadows

B)Remember that place? Car – see all these amazing African animals up close - including Lions 1) Sometimes the lions would get up on your car.

C)Warning signs – Don't feed the animals – Don't get out of the car.

1)I always wondered if anyone disobeyed – Streaker at a sporting event – Dare you to see how far they get.

D)Good way to scare your kids - Don't behave – going to lion country!

E)That would be a horrible way to die!

Now that you have that visual in your mind – thank you Pastor Rob –

A)That is the Predicament that our Hero Daniel finds himself in. Daniel 6

B)Probably one of the most Famous stories in the Bible – Daniel in the Lions Den

C)As We come to Ch. 6 The Persian Darius is now in Power

It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty satraps, to be over the whole kingdom; So the Kingdom was divided into 120 provinces or districts – Satrap was a Governor of the Province

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. 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.

Now the first question we need to answer is Who was Darius?

A)Historical record is rather Vague about this King

B)Theories: It may be that Darius was simply another name for Cyrus, who ruled the Medo-Persian Empire during this period.

C)Seems unlikely since the last verse in this Chapter refers to both Darius and Cyrus – as two leaders living at that time. {Split personality – call me....

Others have suggested that Darius was actually Cambyses, son of Cyrus, who served under his father as a ruler of Babylon and later inherited the throne of the entire empire.

Still Others believe that Darius was an ancient official known as Gabaru in ancient documents,

A)Whom Cyrus appointed as ruler over Babylon.

I tend to lean that way –

B)After the initial invasion into Babylon by Cyrus – Gabaru led the Persian forces into the capital city.

C)Ancient documents show that this man Gubaru had the power to make appointments,

1)To assemble an army, to levy taxes, and to possess palaces.

D)Interesting – that Gabaru was born in 601 BC

1) And we know that the time of the fall of Babylon to the Persians was in 539BC – which would make Gabaru 62 yrs old

E)So some think that Gabaru is the one being mentioned here and that he was given the title Darius 1) which simply means – *the one who holds the Sceptor*

So Darius is the guy in Charge of Babylon at this time

And V.1 tells us he set 120 Satraps over the Kingdom

A) Of the 120 satraps he had appointed three who were in Charge of all the others.

B)Our Friend Daniel is one of the Three. – He is over 84 yrs old – been serving in Babylon 70 plus yrs

C) He is in the inner circle if you would of this powerful man – Darius

V. 3 Tells us that Darius gave thought to putting Daniel over the whole realm.

A) So Darius is thinking about making Daniel HIS **MAIN GUY**.

B) This is what causes the problem, for it seems that the others get wind of this – Jealous

1) We can't have this Jew ruling over us

C) Plan to take Daniel down!

Three things I want us to consider From this story

#1 Daniel's Testimony

#2 Daniel's Prayer life

#3 Daniel's Purpose

#4 Daniel's God.

#1 Daniel's Testimony:

V.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.*

A) He is 84 years old but he is not slowing down at all.

B) He is still known for his **excellent spirit**

1) And His **faithful work ethic**

C) I think Christians should be the best workers – maybe not the most talented – but the best –

1) **Most loyal – hardest working – Work for Jesus!**

I love that description of Daniel – he had an **excellent spirit in him – or extraordinary spirit.**

A) Daniel was a great guy to be around. Enjoyed life

B) The kind of guy who when he was around – brighten your day.

1) Probably one reason why all these leaders liked him

C) I have never understood – brooding – moody – complaining Christians - OXY MORON

1) Doesn't go together.

We should be the happiest people on the planet!

A) Reasons: We were on our way to hell – heaven

B) We deserved wrath – We got GRACE.

1) We were enemies – Now Sons and Daughters

C) YOU TOO HAVE AN EXCELLENT SPIRIT IN YOU! - Holy Spirit – crying Abba –

1) Reminder – Came from/ **Going** - what brought into

Bring it home: YOU LIVE IN NO. County SD

A) Not in Nebraska – Not in Sudan

B) Guys – listen – we have very little to complain about

1) At Least 3 meals a day – portion size in many countries – be a feast for a special occasion.

C) WE ARE BLESSED!!!! – I AM BLESSED!!
SO Daniel has this testimony: He has an excellent spirit – He is a faithful worker

A) He is working in a political job – AND HE IS BLAMELESS!

B) They can't find any fault in him!

1) These guys take out the magnifying glass looking for dirt - **They can't find anything**

C) That is a miracle in itself – Politician?

1) 70 yrs in this profession – known for deals under the table - Known for compromise

D) **People abusing Power** – If there was ever a profession that would weaken your resolve

1) I am sure that Daniel had plenty of opportunities to do something unethical to get ahead

E) Plenty of opportunities to promote himself or his agenda.

1) But as these guys search the records – NOTHING

They say: We need to find some conflict between Darius and Daniel

A) Some conflict between Daniel and the laws of the Medes and the Persians

B) So they say: **We have to look at his religion!**

1) How **wonderful to be that predictable** –

C) There is a standard of holiness that Daniel lives by – that they know is unbending

1) He is not going to compromise no way –

D) They say to one another – It is the only thing we can use against him

E) HOW CAN WE TRAP HIM ? - THEY DEVISE A PLAN.

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. 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.

V.6 They appeal to the Pride of Darius

A) All the Governors ? Really NOT DANIEL

B) They appeal to his pride: There is nothing in the world more easy to manipulate than pride.

C) **Darius liked this idea:** No one can ask a request of anyone but him for 30 days – **God for a month!**

1) SIGNS INTO LAW

In the law of the Medes and Persians once the King signed something it couldn't be changed even by him.

A) Nebuchadnezzar was an Absolute Monarch – Changed his mind daily – Medo Persia was different

B) King's law could not be altered – Although God was about to alter it!

C) My Point - Daniel's testimony is so solid the only way they can get to him is to trick the King

#2 Daniel's Prayer life: V.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. “

D) Daniel was a man who lived with his windows open toward heaven.

A few things to note about Daniel's Prayer life
1st His custom – I like that Phrase as was his custom since his early days.

A) Here we see that Prayer was a big part of Daniel's life – from the time he was a young man

B) Prayed – He communicated with God
Jesus declared Luke 18 that “*men ought always to pray and not lose heart.*”

B) James 5:16 Declares that the “the effective fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”

C) **Prayer is a mark of our dependency upon God!**

1) **Prayer SIGNALS – THAT** we want him to lead by Jesus – so we are always talking to him.

D) The Christian should be like a pilot talking to the air traffic controller.

1) Speaking in Thousand Oaks – Havasu

E) The Pilot – talking to the air traffic controller –
1) He realizes – He sees things – I don't see!

The Problem many of us have – is we don't think we need God's leading.

A) We think we have our lives under control {**Lord bless...** – We only need God when things get stormy!

B) We compartmentalize our lives because We fear – If I really did allow God to steer my life
1) **I am not sure I would like where I end up.**

C) But The more we understand – That God sees life from a different perspective. **The more we will pray!**

2nd Consistent: 3 times a day:

The Psalmist declared in Psalm 55:17 “**Evening and morning and at noon, I will pray and cry aloud**” -

A) **Coffee breaks – prayer breaks – Refocus and get that eternal perspective.**

B) Getting Vertical so important!

C) We live in this world – so Horizontal!

- 1) Radio – TV
- 2) Relationships

D) **The Church- A Beautiful Mess**

1) Church life is messy – problems – sinners

Horizontal living – Depressing

A) Get Vertical – Pray – focus on the Lord

B) Worship – See Him for who He is!

1) He is the lifter of our head

3rd Daniel prayed with thanksgiving

A) He is over 84 yrs old – “another King...stupid law” – I would be complaining – Daniel giving thanks –

B) Now Daniel could have thought – what do I have to be thankful for – they are going to kill me in a week

C) I am going to be Cat food for some giant Cats

Daniel found something to be thankful for

- ❖ Thankful for his relationship with God
- ❖ Thankful that this world was not his home
- ❖ Thankful that I am a stranger here
- ❖ Thankful that to be absent from this body
.....

“One of the great robbers of joy in the Christian life and experiencing the fullness of the Christian life is a loss of thankfulness.”

Think about this, 3 times a day Daniel is thanking God for things in his life.

A) Could that be part of the reason for his excellent spirit.

B) Imagine what your outlook would be like – if you paused 3 times a day to give thanks

1) I have started a list – as often as I can each day

C) To realize that no matter what the trial is or what is threatening my life –

1) I have so much to be thankful for: Saved, Family, You

You might be thinking: Now Pastor Rob – you don’t know my situation. - Life is rough.

A) Let me remind you: Christian? - Heaven not Hell

B) God calls you his Friend

1) Blessed with every spiritual blessing.....

Holy Spirit in Your heart –

2) Are you relatively Healthy? Job? Food? Car? – **Paul and Silas in Prison: Singing at Midnight!**

A) Prison – rats – cold damp – plus they had been beaten. – **THEY WENT VERTICAL**

B) Last Wed – Get Vertical – First Things First -
1) I come to those things – wiped out – or worried
Worship – Whole perspective Changes

Philippians 4:6,7

⁶ Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

Result

⁷ and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Daniel Prayed – His Custom – Consistent - Thankful

Why Pray with windows open? V.10

2 Chronicles 6:36-39

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. ⁴⁰ Now, my God, I pray, let

Your eyes be open and *let* Your ears *be* attentive to the prayer *made* in this place.

Daniel's Faithfulness in Prayer is what gets him in trouble {NOW they have their evidence Rd V. 11-15

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

Note this: "That Daniel, who is one of the captives from Judah – Daniel has been in Babylon over 70 yrs

A) He is still an outsider – He is not one of them.
He is one of the Captives!

B) He is respected and favored by the Kings – but he is not in!

C) Testimony – that it is possible to be in the World – flourish – **but not be of it!**

¹⁴ And the king, when he heard *these* words, was greatly displeased with himself, (How could he be so stupid and arrogant not to see through this)

and set *his* heart on Daniel to deliver him; and he labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him. 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."

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."

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. – NOTE that

#3 Daniel's Purpose

A) In the minds of His enemies – their Purpose was to destroy Daniel! To do away with this guy

B) But this is what they didn't realize – that God had a purpose for Daniel too – **His purpose supersedes....**

1) Joseph told his brothers – sold into slavery – You meant it for evil – **God allowed it for GOOD!**

C) **Why does God give us these stories ?**

1) Give Children's ministry workers ...something cool to talk about?

D) But in each case God is seeking to stir up faith in our hearts

1) God is the same yesterday today and forever!
God had a purpose for Daniel's life – that included all of these trials–

A) Taken from family at 14 to a foreign land
Family killed Etc

B) **PURPOSE** was to use Daniel in the Big Picture of life

1) Ultimate Purpose – God would be glorified

C) God has a purpose for your life too! –

1) Probably not to influence world History – but definitely influence your sphere of influence.

You exist for more than – 9-5 – relax on weekends

A) God has a purpose for the trials

B) God allows Cancer

1) Disease – Trouble: Doesn't cause, but allows

C) **Author or the Hero**

Purpose: Your life blesses others – Purpose Your sanctification – Purpose God is glorified!!!

A) Your life – becomes his stage

Storms of Correction – Jonah

Storms of Instruction – Disciples

Storms of Glorification – Daniel

B) Daniel is thrown into the Lions Den – And God is going to be glorified in his Deliverance.

Daniel is Favored, Framed, Faithful, Fed

So Daniel is Cast into the Lions Den.

#4 Daniel's God

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

A) Darius wrestles all night – can't sleep – comes to the Den

B) Removes stone: Was your God Able.... You?

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."

So Daniel answers with a resounding – YES MY GOD WAS ABLE!!! – Angel – how cool conversation

V.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.

Skeptics – the Lions had just been fed so they were not hungry.

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—they, 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.

NOT HUNGRY? – RIGHT

C) Persian custom – kill the whole family – Lesson – don't cross the king

1) No potential for sons to rise up with REVENGE

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.

Darius – Praises God

A) Daniel's countrymen are blessed and protected because of Daniel's stand

²⁸ So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

A) Daniel's testimony is Growing - What about yours What about mine?

B) It was Effortless for God to seal the mouth of the lion!

C) What lion are you facing – Your God is able!

1) He is able to deliver you – protect you - or sustain you through it!

Now It is interesting that in many of the Psalms David describes the enemy as a lion.

A) We live in a lions Den – called this world

B) Lions are getting Hungrier

C) Behind the lions in our lives is the Devil

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." 1 Peter 5:8

Tactics: Temptation and Accusation

A) Accuser – Look what

B) We stand in Christ – Free from Accusation.

1) Declared Righteous

**C) We stand in Christ victorious against
Temptation**

1) He rose – **Greater is he in you the world**

D) Our Adversary: Been Defanged – Declawed

1) He seeks to Discourage – Confuse - Intimidate
GET IN YOUR HEAD

Paul's words in Romans 8

³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who *can be* against us? {How do we know He is for us? **THE CROSS!!!!**}

³² He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? {Cross reminds us – For me}

³³ Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? *It is* God who justifies. ³⁴ Who *is* he who condemns? {Satan – He is the accuser of the brethren}

It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. {Always interceding for you.}

³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *Shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

³⁷ Yet in all these things we are **more than conquerors** through Him who loved us. {**MORE THAN.....**}

³⁸ For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able **to separate us from** the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.