

Because He Believed

Daniel 6:1-23

- We'll be discussing one of the most well-known Old Testament narratives today
 - The details of the story are not well-known
 - It is the resolution, the theme of deliverance that people know
 - And it doesn't even have to be people who have spent a lot of time around Christianity
 - The wider culture often knows that Daniel was delivered from the Lion's den
 - This account is found in Daniel 6:1-23
 - And our theme today will be "Because He Believed"
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- Do you understand the context of Daniel's deliverance in Daniel 6?
 - What is the setup?
 - Why does he wind up in a den of lions?
 - And why isn't he eaten?
 - The chapter tells us, but we have to take some time thinking through it
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- We begin with Darius
 - And we don't know a lot about him
 - Other than he was set over the kingdom of the Medes and Persians
 - And he had this Daniel, a Hebrew in exile, at his disposal
 - To set over a significant portion of the kingdom
 - Maybe even the whole realm
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- Daniel is one of God's people
 - Living in the foreign land of Babylon
 - Now under the authority of the Medes and Persians
 - But continuing in faithfulness to God
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- We see this as we pick up the reading...

Daniel 6:1-3

- 1 It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom;
- 2 And over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first: that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage.
- 3 Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm.

- Daniel is living, as one of God's people, with excellence
 - This means his spirit is extraordinary
 - There is something about him that stands out
 - He is different
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- In fact, Darius recognizes that he can trust him

- Because he gives him the responsibility of overseeing and reporting back on these 120 princes
- So that there would be nothing fraudulent taking place
- And the finances, among other things, would be kept in order
- In these duties, apparently Daniel excelled
- Because the king thought to set him over the whole realm
- Godliness and integrity are often recognized in this way
- Even by those who know not God and do not fear Him
- This was certainly the case with Daniel, as his "excellent spirit" was acknowledged and rewarded
- But this management with integrity was hated by others
- That's what we recognize as we read on...

Daniel 6:4-5

4 Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him.

5 Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God.

- Faithfulness is often rewarded, but it is also often disdained
- Particularly by those who would seek to fraudulently gain something for themselves
- And that seems to be the case here
- These presidents and princes didn't like that things were running so well
- And so they sought to trap Daniel in something
- But they found nothing
- No error and no fault was found in him
- Now, this certainly doesn't mean he was perfect
- It means he was operating with integrity
- He was serving God and Darius faithfully
- God empowers men that trust Him to do this
- So, if nothing legitimate could be found
- Then they would find something illegitimate
- Perhaps something related to Daniel's service to God
- And they hatched a plan...

Daniel 6:6-9

6 Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever.

7 All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall

ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions.

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

9 Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree.

- Did you catch the decree?
- For thirty days, no man can petition any God or man, save for Darius
- Everyone seems to be on board with this
- The presidents, governors, princes, counsellors, and captains
- And if someone does petition an authority other than Darius, they will be thrown into the den of lions

- If Darius goes along with this, the law cannot be changed
- The Medes and Persians apparently have some prohibition on changing your mind

- Therefore, seeing (it appears), that everyone is on board
- Darius signs this decree

- How will this trap Daniel
- Remember, this is the intention of the decree
- Let's find out...

Daniel 6:10

10 Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.

- Daniel has not changed his behavior
- This is something, according to the text, he was doing before
- He was in the habit of praying toward Jerusalem, Israel's capital, three times a day
- He prayed in reliance upon God, but prayed toward Jerusalem (presumably) longing for home

- The presidents and princes trying to find something against him would have known this
- And they set him up
- His faithfulness would be his downfall - they thought
- But would it?

- Let's find out...

Daniel 6:11-14

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

12 Then they came near, and spake before the king concerning the king's decree; Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask a petition of any God or man within thirty days, save of thee, 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 altereth not.

13 Then answered they and said before the king, That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day.

14 Then the king, when he heard these words, was sore displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him.

- The part about Daniel's prayer being against the law was true
- Because the law of the Medes and Persians was not to change
- But the part about him not regarding the king was false
- He had respect for the king, but feared God above all kings

- The king knows what he has to do
- But labors until sundown to deliver Daniel in some lawful way

- It was not to be
- For the Lord was to show Himself strong on Daniel's behalf...

Daniel 6:15-17

15 Then these men assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, That no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed.

16 Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee.

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

- Daniel's faith has made an impression on the king
- And while those who plotted against Daniel would have their way
- Darius believed that the God Daniel served consistently would deliver him

- This is not a statement to overlook
- Those who observe our faithfulness - or lack thereof - are given an impression of God
- Darius had the correct impression
- The communicable attributes of the God of Israel were on display through Daniel
- And He was shown to be trustworthy and all-powerful

- But things don't look good when the stone is rolled over the opening
- And it causes the king to lose sleep...

Daniel 6:18-20

18 Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of musick brought before him: and his sleep went from him.

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

20 And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?

- God would not have been any less powerful or trustworthy if He had not delivered Daniel
- The One True God does as it pleases Him
- He works out His own purposes

- And the king came, it appears, with the right attitude
- He spoke with “a lamentable voice”
- This was a voice grieving or pained
- And the while situation was lamentable, grievous
- But there was hope
- As Darius had spoken himself
- Daniel’s God could deliver him

- And the king bases his inquiry on God’s ability to deliver
- Daniel served the living God continually
- And the king wanted to know, has this living God saved you?

- Then we hear a voice...

Daniel 6:21-23

21 Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever.

22 My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.

23 Then was the king exceeding 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 manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God.

- Daniel was punished in this way having done nothing wrong
- He was accused, but not guilty
- He was given a death sentence, but not dead
- This is because God is faithful, seeing and knowing all
- And lions open their mouths only with his permission
- He granted no permission this night
- So, no manner of hurt was found upon Daniel
- It says clearly here, because he believed God

- I wonder if we are faithful like Daniel?
- People are watching
- They may want to do us harm
- Or they may be influenced toward believing Him too
- That is not up to us
- We must believe and remain faithful

Christopher Harper, Take Note 2023