

Daniel 6:1-28

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Preacher: Zac Skilling

[0 : 00] We're in CFC, we're going to be in Daniel chapter 6, starting verse 1 this morning.! And so we're going to begin in verse 1, picking up where we left off last week.

Daniel 6, 1 reads, It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom 120 satraps to be throughout the whole kingdom, and over them three presidents, of whom Daniel was one, to whom these satraps should give account, so that the king might suffer no loss.

Then this Daniel became distinguished above all other presidents and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him. And the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom.

Then the presidents and the satraps sought to find a ground for complaint against Daniel with regard to the kingdom, but they could find no ground for complaint or any fault, because he was faithful.

And no error or fault was found in him. Then these men said, We shall not find any ground for complaint against this Daniel, unless we find it in connection with the law of his God.

[1 : 35] Then these presidents and satraps came by agreement to the king and said to him, O King Darius, live forever. All the presidents of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the counselors and the governors, are agreed that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce an injunction, that whoever makes petition to any god or man for thirty days, except to you, O King, shall be cast into the den of lions.

Now, O King, establish the injunction and sign the document, so that it cannot be changed according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which cannot be revoked. Therefore, King Darius signed the document and injunction.

When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house, where he had windows in his upper chamber, open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously.

Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and plea before his God. Then they came near and said before the king concerning the injunction, O King, did you not sign an injunction that anyone who makes petition to any god or man within thirty days, except to you, O King, shall be cast into the den of lions?

The king answered and said, The thing stands fast according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be revoked. 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 the injunction you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day.

[3 : 17] Then the king, when he heard these words, was much distressed and set his mind to deliver Daniel. And he labored till the sun went down to rescue him. 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 ordinance that the king establishes can be changed.

Then the king commanded, and Daniel was brought and cast into the den of lions. The king declared to Daniel, May your God, whom you serve continually, deliver you.

And a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet and with the signet of his lord's, that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel. Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting.

No diversions were brought to him, and sleep fled from him. Then, at break of day, the king arose and went in haste to the den of lions. As he came near to the den where Daniel was, he cried out in a tone of anguish.

The king declared to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions? And then Daniel said to the king, O king, live

forever.

[4 : 30] My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him. And also before you, O king, I have done no harm.

Then the king was exceedingly glad and commanded that Daniel be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no kind of harm was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.

And the king commanded, and those men who had maliciously accused Daniel were brought and cast into the den of lions, their children and their wives. And before they reached the bottom of the den, the lions overpowered them and broke all their bones in pieces.

Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth, Peace be multiplied to you. I make a decree that in all my royal dominion, people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel.

For he is the living God, enduring forever. His kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion shall be to the end. He delivers and rescues. He works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth.

[5 : 40] He who has saved Daniel from the power of the lions. So this Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian. So, first point, God is still working to fulfill his covenants.

I made this point last time I preached, and I think it's worth making again, because we see that all throughout Daniel and really, truly all throughout the entire Bible. But at the beginning, we're introduced to Darius.

He's taken over the kingdom, as I mentioned. And many scholars have concluded that Darius in Daniel 6 is the same person as Cyrus. Darius can simply mean Lord.

It can be a title. Verse 28 makes it clear that Cyrus and Darius were ruling the Meadow Persian Empire at the same time. So it's for these reasons and others that I think this is the same person. And in verses 1 through 3, we see Daniel prospering significantly. He is climbing power, stature, respect, and authority for the second time.

[6 : 50] He already did it in Babylon. Now he's doing it in the Meadow Persian Empire. And because Darius sees Daniel's worth. Verse 3, this is because an excellent spirit was within Daniel.

And I think this is the Holy Spirit empowering, enabling Daniel to perform all the wise, sound, and miraculous things that we've seen him do throughout the book of Daniel. So what does this have to do with the covenants?

And for that, you kind of have to look at the historical context. So Cyrus is the king who allows the Hebrew people to return to Israel and build the temple. Ezra chapter 1 and chapter 6 show Cyrus paying for the rebuilt temple.

It shows Cyrus sending Jews back to Israel to inhabit the land and to remain there. And it also shows that the gold and silver that Nebuchadnezzar stole was to be returned to the temple.

Significantly, Cyrus returned many of the Jews and did all these things in his first year of ruling Babylon, roughly 539 to 537 BC. So this means he did this right around the time that the lion's den occurs.

[8 : 01] What we just read is happening amidst this work. And it is highly likely that Daniel was the voice and perhaps even the writer who produced the legislation that Cyrus signed into decree to allow Israel to do these things.

So notice God is using Daniel in this position of authority, this position that he has with Cyrus, with Darius, to provide safe passage for God's people to the promised land.

And this is screaming of the Abrahamic covenant, which again, I talked about this last time, but three things comprise that covenant. The people are secure in their offspring and are continuing. They have land, and they are a universal blessing to the nations. So catch this. Even though God directly used Babylon and Meadow Persia to punish Israel for their wickedness in the exile, God never intended to turn his back on his covenants with them.

Turn with me real quickly to Isaiah 45. I'm going to read the whole chapter, so you're going to want to turn there. And we're going there because you're going to see that God has always intended to fulfill his covenants, even in the midst of proclaiming his judgment on Israel and Judah.

[9 : 18] Isaiah 45. Isaiah 45. Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped, to subdue nations, including Babylon, before him and to loose the belts of kings, including Nebuchadnezzar, to open doors before him that gates may not be closed, and recall, this is

interesting, but recall what Clay said last week about Herodotus, the Greek historian.

He recorded that the Persians took over Babylon quickly. They snuck in through some open gates near the water well and were able to emerge right up in the palace. So this verse is fascinating, that gates may not be closed.

In other words, God opened those gates. He made those gates left open so that Babylon would be taken overnight. And back in verse 2, I will go before you and level the exalted places.

This is God talking to Cyrus. I will break in pieces the doors of bronze and cut through the bars of iron. I will give you the treasures of darkness and the hordes and secret places that you may know that it is I, the Lord, the God of Israel, who call you by your name.

Verse 4. For the sake of my servant Jacob and Israel my chosen, I call you by your name. I name you though you do not know me. So again, recall Isaiah is recording this prophecy long before Cyrus exists.

[10:52] This is before the Babylonian captivity even. Picking back up in verse 5. I am the Lord and there is no other. Besides me there is no God. I equip you though you do not know me that people may know from the rising of the sun from the west that there is none besides me.

I am the Lord and there is no other. I form light and create darkness. I make well-being and create calamity. I am the Lord who does all these things. Shower, O heavens, from above and let the clouds rain down righteousness.

Let the earth open that salvation and righteousness may bear fruit. Let the earth cause them both to sprout. I, the Lord, have created it. And woe to him who strives with him who formed him a pot among earthen pots.

Does the clay say to him who forms it, what are you making? Or your work has no handles. Woe to him who says to a father, what are you begetting? Or to a woman, with what are you in labor?

Thus says the Lord, the Holy One of Israel and the one who formed him. Ask me of things to come. Will you command me concerning my children and the work of my hands? I made the earth and created man on it.

[12:04] It was my hands that stretched out the heavens and I commanded all their hosts. I have stirred him up in righteousness and I will make all his ways level. He, Cyrus, shall build my city and set my exiles free, not for price or reward, says the Lord of hosts.

Thus says the Lord, the wealth of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush and the Sabaeans, men of stature, shall come over to you and be yours. They shall follow you. They shall come over in chains and bow down to you.

They will plead with you saying, surely God is in you and there is no other. No God besides him.

Truly you are a God who hides himself, O God of Israel, the Savior. All of them are put to shame and confounded.

The makers of idols go in confusion together. But Israel is saved by the Lord with everlasting salvation. You shall not be put to shame or confounded to all eternity.

For thus says the Lord who created the heavens, He is God, who formed the earth and made it. He established it and He did not create it empty. He formed it to be inhabited. I am the Lord and there is no other.

[13:07] I did not speak in secret in a land of darkness. I did not say to the offspring of Jacob, seek me in vain. I, the Lord, speak the truth. I declare what is right.

Assemble yourselves and come. Draw near together, you survivors of the nations. They have no knowledge who carry about their wooden idols and keep on praying to a God that cannot save.

Declare and present your case. Let them take counsel together. Who told this long ago? Who declared it of old? Was it not I, the Lord? And there is no other God besides me, a righteous God and a Savior.

There is none besides me. Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth. For I am God and there is no other. By myself I have sworn, from my mouth has gone out in righteousness, a word that shall not return.

To me, every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance. Only in the Lord it shall be said of me, a righteousness and strength. To him shall come and be ashamed all who were incensed against him.

[14:10] And the Lord, all the offspring of Israel, shall be justified and shall glory. That's a lot. But notice as you read that, God calls out Cyrus long before Cyrus exists.

And God's declaring what he's going to do. He's going to use Cyrus to bring about his covenants. In Isaiah 45, we see him prophesy the temple being rebuilt in verse 13, which implies a return to the land.

In verse 22, we see God calling out for the salvation of people around the world. There's that universal blessing piece. And in verses 4, 17 and 25, we see God preserving his people who will be numbered as stars in heaven.

Now, all of this in Isaiah 45 is centered on the idea of salvation or deliverance, and that God is the deliverer, the savior. God will deliver his people.

And we are going to see this in Daniel 6, which you can now return to. But he has set the stage. He's, God's already declared what's to come. In Daniel's lifetime, he could have heard Isaiah 45 and known what's to come.

[15:20] But before we see deliverance in Daniel 6, we have to give our attention to something else in our main text. In all of God's redemptive history of working to save his people, there has always been opposition.

And that opposition pops its head in Daniel 6, which leads us to the next point, point number two. God's people will be persecuted for their righteousness.

God's people will be persecuted for their righteousness. In Matthew 5, verses 10 through 11, the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. So persecution is a promise to anyone who is truly following God.

And although persecution can mean a variety of things, not just death, it is promised. But nonetheless, there is also a promise of blessing or makarios, the Greek word meaning blessed, happy, or flourishing.

[16:31] And that is not material flourishing, but spiritual flourishing, because the righteous have life in Christ. The kingdom of heaven is theirs. So looking back at Daniel, we see that the satraps and presidents all conspire to destroy Daniel.

Looking at verse 4, it reads, Then the presidents and the satraps sought to find a ground of complaint against Daniel with regard to the kingdom. But they could find no ground for complaint or any fault because he was faithful.

So what do they do now? They maliciously devise a scheme to trick the king into a position that will cost Daniel his life. They are so determined to bring Daniel down that these 122 men find a way to get together to conspire to plan against Daniel three times.

Verses 6, 11, 15, each time. They came to agreement. They came to agreement. They came to agreement. They are relentless to kill Daniel and that is the measure of their resolve.

They hate him for righteousness sake. You see, the satraps and presidents knew that the king would be swept away by such a flattering document. They enticed him to evil by appealing to the idol of self, to his pride.

[17:51] But more importantly, they knew Daniel would never worship the king. And as a result of their scheme and Daniel's faithfulness, he would die in the lion's den.

That was their plan. Now I've got to tell you, none of this should surprise any of us, the least bit, especially if you've even just casually read the Bible without much study.

It is full of this kind of language. It's clear that the world hates Yahweh. And his worshipers. It is as old as Cain killing Abel because of his righteousness.

And that continues all throughout the Bible. Zachariah was stoned to death for righteousness sake. 2 Chronicles chapter 24. John the Baptist was beheaded by Herod for righteousness sake.

Matthew 14, 1 through 12. Stephen was stoned to death for righteousness sake. Acts 6 and 7. And James was cut down by the sword for righteousness sake.

[18:49] Acts chapter 12, verse 1. Now Antiochus, this one's a little tricky, but church history testifies that he was burned in a boiling cup. And we know from Revelation 2, 12 through 13 that he was martyred.

And of course, all the apostles were executed in various forms and at various times. But the reason was always the same. Righteousness sake. And there are plenty more examples, by the way, not just in the Bible, but throughout church history.

We have a whole book that covers only a fraction of the names called Fox's Book of the Martyrs. And again, they all died for righteousness sake. Jesus said in John 15, verses 18 through 19, if the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you.

If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own. That's a promise. If you're of the world, the world will love you. But because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore, the world hates you.

That's a promise too. But regardless of what the world may say or do, we are called to righteousness. Faith, obedience, worship, into and toward God alone.

[20 : 06] And we see that righteousness practice, the faithfulness of Daniel, as he prays three times to God in verse 10. Notice the beginning of verse 10, when Daniel knew that the document had been signed.

So clearly, Daniel wanted everyone to know, unmistakably, that he worshiped God alone. This is why he faces Jerusalem. This is why he prays three times, which was the custom at the time for Jews, so that it is crystal clear.

More significantly, he does this because this is who he is, a worshiper of God. The end of verse 10 tells us that his way of praying was done as he had done previously.

This was a way of life for Daniel. He was simply going out and living his life as a God follower that he has always lived, going back to Daniel 1. So like me, some of you may be reading all this and seeing the persecution of the saints and wondering, where is all the justice in this?

How is this right that so many innocents should suffer at the hands of wicked and lawless men, especially Daniel? Perhaps you find yourself thinking about the words of the martyrs recorded in Revelation 6, 9 through 10.

[21 : 24] John writes, When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne.

And they, those souls, the martyrs, they cried out with a loud voice, O sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will avenge and judge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?

It is not a question of if, it is the question of when. God will judge all of those who dwell on the earth.

And this leads me to the next point, point number three.

And this is the big one. Daniel 6 is a picture of God's deliverance for all true believers and judgment of all others. So I'll repeat that.

Daniel 6 is a picture of God's deliverance for all true believers. and judgment of all others. We see the king is in genuine turmoil when his men find Daniel guilty of violating the injunction.

[22 : 30] Verse 14, the king is distressed and desired to deliver Daniel. He labored all night to rescue Daniel, but to no avail. And why?

Because it was the law. And ironically, the king had no power to do anything about it. He was weak. He was manipulated. He could not save Daniel. The good thing about this king is that he was humble enough to recognize his own inability to save Daniel.

Verse 16, the king prays to Daniel's God, our God, and asks him to deliver Daniel. And the king fasted all night while Daniel was in the lion's den in verse 18.

And there's no response that speaks to a man's sense of inability and insufficiency as much as fasting. It is literally the crying out of God to help and deliver and do everything because I am helpless.

That's what fasting is saying. Verses 14 through 18, we see the law is going to condemn Daniel to death and the king can do nothing about it. Now, if this is a picture of God's deliverance and judgment, there has to be a figure or a type of Christ.

[23 : 41] So looking at verse 17, we get a glimpse of this. A stone, verse 17 writes, a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den. So Daniel is sealed in this hole in the ground.

The stone covers his only exit. He's alone with hungry lions surrounding him that could devour him in seconds. But verse 19, then at the break of day, the king arose and went in haste to the den of lions.

As he came near to the den where Daniel was, he cried out in a tongue of anguish. The king declared to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?

Then Daniel said to the king, O king, live forever. My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed me because I was found blameless before him.

And also, before you, O king, I have done no harm. So second half of verse 23, so Daniel was taken up out of the den and no kind of harm was found on him because he had trusted in his God. [24 : 51] And that should sound very familiar to us all. It should remind us of Jesus, of Christ. If you recall, Pilate, the governor, the Roman governor who was in charge during Christ's lifetime, Pilate desired to set Jesus free the way Cyrus desired to set Daniel free, yet both were powerless.

You see that in Matthew 27, verses 15-23. Daniel prays in the upper room while waiting for his captors. Likewise, Jesus prayed in the garden waiting for his captors.

Matthew 26, 36-46. Cyrus rolled a stone over to seal Daniel in what would become his tomb. And likewise, Joseph rolled the stone over Jesus' tomb and Pilate sealed it.

Matthew 26, verses 60-66. Daniel's deliverance from the lion's den becomes a legal issue. So in the Meadow Persians, I was about to say Babylonians, in their empire, if an execution didn't work overnight, they were set free.

They viewed that as divine judgment of sparing the individual. So because Daniel survived the night, it was law that he had to be spared. That's why they don't keep him down there. So in other words, his deliverance from the lion's den overcame the law.

[26 : 17] Likewise, Christ's resurrection was a legal matter that overcame the power of the law. Colossians 2, 11-15. I could go on, but I think you get the point.

Daniel is a type of Christ. Daniel is foreshadowing the work of Christ, namely, his death, resurrection, and ascension. Daniel ascends out of lion's den and then prospers as a ruler at the end of chapter 6, verse 28.

Just as Christ ascended to be seated at the right hand of the Father. Mark 16, verse 9. I mean, sweet Moses, the irony of the king's question, has your God been able to deliver you?

And the answer is yes, a thousand times yes. He was able to deliver him and prosper him abundantly. And that picture of deliverance is all throughout Daniel 6, and it was prophesied in Isaiah 45, as we saw.

But so is judgment prevalent in this chapter. The opposers, the satraps, and presidents were wicked in their schemes.

[27 : 25] They manipulated this entire ordeal, thinking it was by their hand that these things were to be. But look at verse 24. And the king commanded, and those men who had maliciously accused Daniel were brought and cast into the den of lions, they, their children, and their wives.

And before they reached the bottom of the den, the lions overpowered them and broke all their bones in pieces. This image is shocking, terrifying, and even hard to digest at first when you picture the families included.

On the one hand, you might be relieved to read this and think justice has been paid. They got what they deserve. There's a sense in which this is right.

On the other hand, you might be heartbroken for them, knowing that you deserve the same because you too have lied and manipulated and all other kinds of sins have been committed by you, by me.

And I want to suggest to you that on the one hand, you should feel 100% sorrow for these people, that you should be mourning their suffering since you know you deserve the same.

[28 : 34] But even so, you should also feel 100% thankful that God is just. We worship God for all that he is and all that he does, no exceptions.

And it is as simple as this, if you do not want there to be justice, then you do not want God because God is just. And recall that we come to God only because his justice was carried out on our sins which Christ bore on our behalf.

And remember the words of the martyrs in Revelation 6.10, they were martyred for being a witness to the word. In other words, these were evangelists, these were missionaries, these were people who sought to see the world saved.

And yet these people say, O sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth? God will judge and condemn every person who does not repent and place their faith in Jesus Christ and then obey him.

And that judgment will come quickly and swiftly like a thief in the night. Do not delay. And this leads me to our final point this morning, point number four.

[29 : 48] Our response to God's deliverance and judgment is worship. Our response to God's deliverance and judgment is worship. Looking at verse 25, in response to seeing God deliver Daniel

from the lion's den, this Darius Cyrus guy wrote to all the peoples, nations, and languages that dwell on the earth.

There's that universal blessing language again. And he said, peace be multiplied to you. I make a decree that in all my royal dominion people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. For he is the living God enduring forever. His kingdom shall never be destroyed and his dominion shall be to the end. He delivers and rescues. He works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth. He who has saved Daniel from the power of the lions. This language is all worship, praise, and adoration. And we see this kind of worship in the final days of God's final deliverance and judgment as well.

Revelation 19.1 reads, and the context of this is right after that final judgment and that final deliverance. And Revelation 19.1 reads, After this, I heard what seemed to be a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven crying out, Hallelujah, salvation and glory and power belong to our God. [31 : 08] For his judgments are true and just. For he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality and has avenged on her the blood of his servants. Once more they cried out, Hallelujah, the smoke, meaning the tormenting fires, the smoke from her goes up forever and ever.

And this is one of the reasons, by the way, that I think Cyrus was regenerate because he sounds an awfully lot like the saints in Revelation 19 when he praises God in Daniel 6.

When people see God's deliverance and judgment, they cannot help but worship him and that is the pattern throughout all of scripture. And that is why every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord because he will make it so because he is Lord.

And I think it's important to note, though, the deliverance. It's easy to get caught up in judgment. It's easy to question it. It's easy to wonder about God's love, his character.

Sometimes we don't always see how the scales balance out, but the comfort in Revelation 19 is that that is a prophecy of us praising God and saying that he is just. That's a prophecy of us saying the scales are balanced and now we see that you are just, you are holy, you are love.

[32 : 34] And we see that in Daniel being risen from the lion stone, being spared. So I want to close with some application. The first one being fill yourself with knowledge of God's covenants, his promises.

If you are faithful to God, then you will face persecution. And if you want to stand strong as Daniel did, or better yet, as Christ did perfectly, then you must have something to place your hope in. And that is God and his promises. The other application is rid yourself of anxiety. I mentioned this one last time, but I thought it was even more fitting for this text as well, and I couldn't help but include it.

Notice how Daniel is prospering in the beginning of chapter 6. He's on the rise, he's about to be set over the whole kingdom, then all that stuff happens which makes it look like he's going downhill quickly, looks like he's going to die.

But by the end of it all, he is saved, and in verse 28, we see that he prospered once again. As Christians, we have the unique benefit of knowing where everything began and where it all is going.

[33 : 42] There's absolutely no need to fret over the details of the here and now. These moments are fleeting, and we know that heaven awaits us where God will comfort us as we worship him for all eternity.

So anxiety is needless, and it is a sin, and the antidote to that is to place our trust fully in Christ.

Third application is to prepare yourself for persecution from a hostile culture.

In other words, count the cost. Jesus tells us that if we are to follow him, we must first deny ourselves, take up his cross, and then follow him after 1624. We have to be willing to die for Christ, and we should expect persecution because Christ promises we, the blessed, will be persecuted.

And if you've never been persecuted, perhaps it's because you are not practicing righteousness. And to be clear, we are not going into the world and trying to get killed for being annoying. We are trying to be faithful, which the world hates.

So we want to practice righteousness. And the final application is this, we obey God, not man. I think it is significant that at no point in Daniel 6 do we see Daniel speak lowly of the king.

[35 : 00] He never called him weak or a puppet, though there were clearly grounds to do so. Rather, Daniel expressed respect for this God-given position. He said in verse 21, O king, live forever.

And we too should respect our authorities, whether they be government officials, parents, employers, coaches, or what have you. However, at the end of the day, when you get a command from man that conflicts with a command from the Lord of the universe, the one you should obey is obvious.

The chain of command is clear. Yes, render to Caesar that which is Caesar's, but never squander or forget to render to God that which is God's. We are citizens of the kingdom of heaven before anything else.

We're not Americans, Mexicans, Germans, or what have you. We are followers of Christ. Let's follow him now through prayer. Let's go.