

# **Signed – Sealed – Delivered**

Daniel 6:1–28 (ESV)

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I really tried hard to think of a movie, or a book, or something to open this with an illustration that's really gripping. And all that kept coming to mind is this unbelievable epic of a story that we have in the first six chapters of Daniel. It's incredible. It's 70 years of faithfulness that we get to see in big illustrative episodes in three different kingdoms. We see in chapter 1 Daniel's got an Israelite life in mind. He's a teenager and he's training in the palace. Then, suddenly Daniel is a slave, taken about 1000 miles, probably made a eunuch, forced into pagan training and serving a pagan king, and Daniel records this transition as: The Lord gave Jehoiakim, King of Judah, into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar. God did this to me!<sup>1</sup> And Daniel's response is, okay, well, plan change, I'm going to try to honor the Lord in service to this pagan king. And I'm gonna trust him to keep me alive. And then, in chapter 2, we see a new demand by this king, an unreasonable, impossible demand, and Daniel's about to die again, and he says, guys, we have got to seek the Lord for wisdom. He will provide, and God delivers Him again. Chapter 3 is different, we don't even see Daniel, but shadrach meshack and abendego resist enormous pressure to worship a false God and leave the results up to the good God they trust. And then in chapter 4 Daniel is back and trusts the Lord and risks giving horrible news to Nebuchadnezzar. Last week, we saw a bad king having a bad party, and again, and Lord chose to use a now old Daniel, to tell a king very bad news, and Daniel just trusted the Lord once again to keep his head attached to his body. We see all these huge episodes of Daniel's trust and God's faithfulness, but I really think one of the big, maybe overlookable things, is the decades of mundane life between these mega episodes. That's how that's how life kind of goes, isn't it? Some big moments of triumph and crisis, with a lot of mundane years in between. Your trust and joy or lack of trust and joy is illustrated in the big episodes of life, but it's sort of built in the

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<sup>1</sup>John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion 1.16.3.

mundane years. I'm excited because in Daniel 6, we get a really unique mix of Daniel's everyday life plus a lion's den sized crisis. In 6:1 we are in a new kingdom. For Clarity, Daniel 6, really begins in chapter 5.<sup>2</sup> At the end of chapter 5, the Babylonian empire was in its final death throes being ruled by Belshazzar, the grandson of the guy that captured Daniel in Chapter 1. A lot of time has passed, Daniel has been through 3 generations of kings and we see Belshazzar pull Daniel from the archives when he saw a floating hand and needed some spiritual help. Whether Belshazzar was saving face, or just trying to get Daniel killed, 10 seconds before the Medo-Persians burst down the door He clothes Daniel like royalty and makes him number 3 in the Babylonian kingdom. The verse before the chapter we are going to study tonight says "That very night, Belshazzar was killed and Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about 62 years old."

It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom 120 satraps, to be throughout the whole kingdom; 2 and over them three high officials, of whom Daniel was one, to whom these satraps should give account, so that the king might suffer no loss. So Darius takes over as the new ruler of a kingdom<sup>3</sup>, & starts setting things up.

Let's say you get a call. And let's just say that the company "amazon" has fired Jeff Bezos and everyone he hired is suspect. The board calls you and says we need you to replace him and put this place in order. And for some insane reason you say yes. What's the first priority you would have? I think I would be desperate to learn as much about amazon and the key people as I could, and I would take all that I could read and all the people I could meet and I would try to delegate authority to the people that, according to the records, are trustworthy and well suited to take care of things. I think that's what we see Darius do in verses 1 & 2. He is obviously giving lots of thought to who to put where. He divided the kingdom into districts known as

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<sup>2</sup>Stephen R. Miller, Daniel, New American Commentary 18 (Nashville: B&H, 1994), 26.

<sup>3</sup>Stephen R. Miller, Daniel, New American Commentary 18 (Nashville: B&H, 1994), 172.

satrapies, then he set up governors, or satraps to rule those 120 sectors. Then he appointed 3 men to rule those 120 governors.<sup>4</sup> I think the reason Daniel is immediately a main character is because Darius got into his new office and opened up the archives and read about the people that were already there, he found that Daniel had been a key player in a lot of crisis moments for generations, and Darius recognizes the wisdom Daniel must have and he wants to benefit from it.<sup>5</sup> V3 says that Daniel faithfully fulfilled his role as 1 of 3 top governors and he began to distinguish himself because of the excellent spirit that was in him. So much so that Darius was about to set Daniel over everything in the kingdom! Isn't that so good!? That's encouraging and challenging. We see Daniel's years of dedication to the Lord, make Daniel excellent wherever God put him. Darius sees Daniel's excellence and decides 1 of 3 top dogs isn't high enough, I need this Daniel guy over all my stuff! That is encouraging to see, but we know that's not always how it goes. When you openly follow the Lord, some people are drawn to you and some people despise you,<sup>6</sup> and that's exactly what happens in the next verse. This excellent Spirit in Daniel kicked an anthill of jealousy.

“4 Then the high officials and the satraps sought to find a ground for complaint against Daniel with regard to the kingdom,” Daniel 6:4a

So the other rulers saw that Darius was taking special notice of Daniel and they started hunting for some accusation they could make to take Daniel down. That's classic, right? You know what's not normal about this Daniel?

“...but they could find no ground for complaint or any fault, because he was faithful, and no error or fault was found in him. 5 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.” Daniel 6:4b–5

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<sup>4</sup>Herodotus, Histories 3.89–94.

<sup>5</sup>John Calvin, Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Daniel, on Daniel 6:1.

<sup>6</sup>John MacArthur, “Daniel in the Lions’ Den,” sermon 27-14, Grace to You, gty.org.

Woah! They couldn't find a legitimate fault. What a great case study for Titus 1, "An overseer, as God's steward must be above reproach"<sup>7</sup> Clearly that's Daniel, and really as all of us believers are representing God in this world, that should be all of us! Faithful, not because it saves us, no Daniel's faithfulness made the fires of jealousy burn hotter, but in those fires we have hope!

"Even if you suffer for righteousness sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them nor be troubled" 1 Peter 3:14

We get so much wisdom by way of example here! Not only did these corrupt leaders know that Daniel was righteous, but they knew the only way to trap him was to force him into a choice between King Darius and Daniel's God, they apparently expected that Daniel would choose His God no matter the cost! This is part of how Daniel can suffer for righteousness sake without anxiety and fear. Daniel does not center his life on service to man, even one globally dominant man, Daniel Serves God and God alone.<sup>8</sup> And as we progress further into this chapter we will peel back more and more layers of why and how he endures.

Daniel has been captive for 70 years, nothing about Daniel's situation is how he would have planned it, & now his faithfulness to God is getting him in hot water again, but he is still walking with God. Why?! Daniel Knew the truth! He knew without question, where his only hope in life could be found. And by God's grace, he was not willing to disregard the truth for temporary pragmatism. And in a very convicting example for us, these other rulers knew that about Daniel! They were actually so confident in Daniel's faithfulness that they came up with a plan perfectly calibrated to kill one man in the kingdom.

**6** Then these high officials and satraps came by agreement to the king and said to him, "O King Darius, live forever! **7** All the high officials of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the counselors and the governors are agreed that the king

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<sup>7</sup>John Calvin, Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Daniel, on Daniel 6:5.

<sup>8</sup>John Piper, "Lay Aside the Fear of Man," Desiring God, [desiringgod.org](http://desiringgod.org).

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. **8** 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.” **9** Therefore King Darius signed the document and injunction.

They came by agreement and laid out the plan for Darius. “all your high officials think we should venerate you for 30 days, also anyone who petitions anyone besides you should be thrown into the Den of lions.” Side note: A den of lions may seem random here, but it’s really not, it was just the Persian-preferred fatal torture method. For execution, Persians use Lion Pits like the Romans use crosses.<sup>9</sup>

Ok, so these jealous men took everything they knew about Daniel and his life and went to Darius to set the trap. I do not know how Darius didn’t think of Daniel! C’mon now, he is about to set Daniel over the entire kingdom, maybe he did think about him. Maybe they convinced Darius that Daniel is one of these “all the high officials” who support this law. And it’s very obvious Darius knows Daniel as a good man, that loves his God, and his religion seems to make him kind and wise and valuable. **How many times have you heard someone praise the side benefits of following Christ (they are good people, honest, hard workers) and it’s a serious problem if that’s not true of believers, but this is just a side effect. Our love for and Calling to God is way more radical than the world can see at a glance. And I’m concerned about this because of whats happening here– Darius knows Daniel, and he is treating Daniel’s God and Daniel’s religion just like all the other gods and ideologies he knows. That’s just what the world does. When the world says to us, oh yeah yeah, I respect that, it’s all the same. When we are asked to reciprocate that, we have got to be ready to live in a faithful way that demonstrates this**

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9J. M. Cook, The Persian Empire (London: J. M. Dent, 1983), 142.

is so much more important and so much better than you imagine. But Darius doesn't know yet, so he signs the injunction cementing this into Persian Law.<sup>10</sup>

These jealous rulers have won. They can taste the power and the revenge, and in verse 10 we see Daniel's response.

**10** 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. **11** Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and plea before his God. **12** 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." **13** 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."

Wow! So just like that Daniel is caught in their trap... All because he prayed to God.

That flat finality of this just blows me away. I know, this is a story that we know super well, so well that it's easy to just bounce through it noticing this and that but never really stopping to look through Daniel's eyes. I want us to look carefully at v10, because I think there are several key details that can help us understand what's happening here!

The first thing that we see,

When he knew the document was signed, he prayed.

At a glance this may give us the impression of casual, maybe even American style resistance to anything we may feel is overreach. I really want to pull us back from looking at Daniel like that, not because being a rebel isn't cool, but because Scripture speaks pretty clearly here. Just for one example 1 Peter says "Honor everyone, love the brotherhood, fear God, Honor the Emperor". I know Daniel isn't reading 1 Peter, but the same spirit at work in Peter, is the

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<sup>10</sup>John Calvin, Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Daniel, on Daniel 6:8.

Spirit revealing truth and guiding Daniel's Life. So if this act of Lawbreaking was done without sin, (and we are told later in the chapter that it was) then the truth of 1st Peter illustrates the confines in which Daniel is acting. So we know this isn't a snub of the King, so why did Daniel choose to disobey? Well, we will get to a more satisfying answer later, but the short answer is that He's not being a rebel, actually the opposite.<sup>11</sup> Instead submitting to the King, He has another authority that he had to submit to, and he knew that to obey man rather than to obey God was a grievous evil, and even deeper,

“the fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is safe!” Proverbs  
29:25<sup>12</sup>

He Knew the truth, so even though he knew the Document had been signed, he prayed anyway. He prayed with his window open to Jerusalem, 3x per day on his knees, as he had done previously. “As he had done previously” that's important. Remember why they set the trap up like this! The others knew Daniel's prayer pattern. At specific times of the day, they knew exactly where faithful Daniel could be found. If suddenly when he knew that it was signed, he skipped his prayer time, there is a much worse situation, now rather than catching him in faithfulness, they would catch him in faithlessness, and their knowledge of Daniel and his “different” God would vaporize and they would know, “he's just like everyone else, When he has to choose between loving his God or loving his life, easy choice, my God will have to go. But that's not what Daniel did! Even faced with the choice to pray or live, He prayed!

These details certainly add color to the situation, but there is one last detail that bothered me. Daniel, close the window. I mean would you not have felt tempted, or even justified to, yes of course keep seeking the Lord in prayer, but with a closed window, providing at least some ambiguity to the testimony of your accusers. As we look at this well known chapter, if we boil it

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<sup>11</sup>John Calvin, Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Daniel, on Daniel 6:10.

<sup>12</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, “Two Ancient Proverbs,” Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, no. 3080 (1874).

down, I think the key to understanding this story is here in verse 10. It's apparently the most important part. Think about it, whatever is happening in this upper room, this seeking of God was clearly so vital, it led Daniel straight into the Lion's Den. I think that's enough to say we have got to know more about what went on up there, but even further, Daniel's Seeking God is also what led him into and out of every episode recorded in this book. This has defined Daniel,<sup>13</sup> It made him Number 2 in the new kingdom, and number 1 on the hit list. So what is he doing? Why didn't he close the window?<sup>14</sup> We see Daniel sought God in prayer, but he also sought God in His Word. Apparently Daniel knew what King Solomon prayed after the dedication of the Temple.<sup>15</sup> Here are Solomon's words, speaking about God's people

**46** "If they sin against you—for there is no one who does not sin—and you are angry with them and give them to an enemy, so that they are carried away captive to the land of the enemy, far off or near, **47** yet if they turn their heart in the land to which they have been carried captive, and repent and plead with you in the land of their captors, saying, 'We have sinned and have acted perversely and wickedly,' **48** if they repent with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their enemies, who carried them captive, and pray to you toward their land, which you gave to their fathers, the city that you have chosen, and the house that I have built for your name, **49** then hear in heaven your dwelling place their prayer and their plea, and maintain their cause **50** and forgive your people who have sinned against you, and all their transgressions that they have committed against you, and grant them compassion in the sight of those who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them" 1 Kings 8:46–50

Wow! That is exactly the situation that Daniel is in. He has been carried away captive, and he is on his knees praying to God toward God's City. So he was always praying with his window open to Jerusalem just like Solomon said, Daniel is just continuing the pattern. **But what is he saying? What would you say in this situation? It's easy to imagine, you're a captive, your life has been characterized by faithfulness and yet has been destroyed and rebuilt over and over. Now you are in your 80s, and because of silly jealousy, a new crop of guys want your head on a**

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<sup>13</sup>John MacArthur, "Daniel in the Lions' Den," sermon 27-14, Grace to You, gty.org.

<sup>14</sup>John Calvin, Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Daniel, on Daniel 6:10.

<sup>15</sup>John F. Walvoord, Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation (Chicago: Moody, 1971), 170.

spike, literally because you're faithful, they want you to be eaten to death by lions. I'm afraid I know what I'd be praying. "God, I'm tired. I can't do this anymore, I have tried so hard, have I not been faithful, This burden over and over again is just too much, I just want to go home."

Well, thank the Lord, we don't have to guess. Daniel chapter 9 actually tells us what he prayed! In Daniel 9, after reading Jeremiah (which is just awesome), and in the first year of King Darius Daniel records his prayer. **You ought to go to Daniel 9 tomorrow morning and read it, it's an unbelievable prayer, I can't even get through it.** But Daniel prays a radical prayer of Confession, Acknowledgement of God and Confident pleading for mercy. He says things like "The curse & the oath that are written in the Law of Moses have been poured out on us" The curse Daniel mentions here is recorded in Leviticus 26. Daniel prays "Because of our iniquities, the Lord has kept ready the calamity, and has brought it upon us, for the Lord is righteous in all that He Does"

Do you hear that?! Daniel is affirming the righteousness of God in bringing devastation upon Israel. This is proper unrestrained fully laid bare confession before God. This is Seeking God. Daniel is in the Word, and then he is on his knees agreeing with God about God's righteousness and his sin. He is desperate, he is longing, he is in sackcloth and ashes, not because he had a terrible life, but because he had been confronted in God's word with the depth and severity of his sin. He is pleading with God saying, "God, I'm so sorry, and you are right to do all you've done. And the way he ends the prayer eliminates any question of why this prayer was so important that kings and lions could not keep Daniel from praying.

"Oh God listen to the prayer of your servant, and his pleas for mercy... for we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy Oh Lord Hear, Oh lord Forgive, Oh Lord Pay attention and act, Delay not for your own sake, Oh my God because your city and your people are called by your name."

Daniel comes to God desperate, and this right here is his anchor in the ashes. Daniel Knew God. He sought God in His word and was confronted by his greatest, most desperate need.

When Daniel's need for mercy and forgiveness was revealed, he was broken by his sin, but he was sure of his pleas, not based on his own righteousness, but because he could confidently call on God to act mercifully with His servant. Because Daniel knew God, and he knew that's what God says he will do. **We, Like Daniel, can seek God and know God because He has revealed Himself.** This God Daniel is praying to is the same God we know, with the Same Character, Hebrews 11 refers to old testament saints as dying in faith, having greeted these things from afar. Daniel lived in a unique time period. The requirements of the Law were written and known, the need for the sacrificial system was known, but Daniel is 1000 miles from Jerusalem, sacrifices for sin physically could not be made. So as he prays confident based on God's great mercy, he has an awareness that God is going to have to provide for his need for atonement and in a way he greeted our sealed confident forgiveness and redemption in Christ from afar.

**Daniel prays this way because even from captivity, Judgement, and the threat of lions, he knows his need, and he knows his God. and nothing could be more important than confession of sin, and throwing himself on the rock solid mercy of God. This seeking of God, produces a trust in God. Even in his position of not fully knowing how God will keep his promises to deal with sin and be merciful to him, he prays confidently trusting in God that he WILL do what he says he will do Even as he faces lions. If Daniel prays like this, then we who have a full written record of the atoning work of Christ have no excuse.**

Daniel prayed and sought God and just like that, Daniel is caught. His accusers go to the king and say "Hey Are we remembering this right, didn't you sign a law forbidding prayer to anyone but you? Well, Daniel, one of those exiles from Judah, (just a little jab, hey we can't trust this guy, he's not loyal) He doesn't pay any attention to you or the injunction you have signed but makes his petition 3x per day." And Darius' response is amazing!!

“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.” Daniel 6:14

Darius realizes, ohh no. Not Daniel. This is such a beautiful detail, Darius, the king sets his mind to deliver Daniel. This is an answered prayer. When Solomon prays to the Lord he specifically asks that the Lord grant the repentant captives favor in the sight of their captors! This compassion Darius shows for Daniel has got to be a little boost for Daniel, Yes he is headed to the Lion’s den, but after 70 years of seeking the Lord this is a sweet little reminder from the Lord “yes Daniel, you know me, and you can trust me. Because seeking and knowing God leads to trusting God. **Yes, there’s going to be Turbulence in our life and in our faith even, but the more you read what God says about himself, if you believe it, like truly believe it, God becomes the solid rock that can hold anybody through anything!**<sup>16</sup>

We see a great example of this Solidness of God as we continue the story,

**15** 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.”

**16** 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!” Daniel 6:15–16

These guys are relentless! They do not stop until Daniel is buried with the lions! The king hated it, he didn’t want Daniel dead, and traditionally executions happened at sundown, so the king spent the daylight hours doing everything he could to deliver Daniel! But these other rulers, intoxicated by the closeness of revenge and power just pop in (by agreement of course), they drop the honorific “oh King live forever” and they just remind Darius, “hey, you may be king, but you have no power to stop what’s going to happen, your hands are tied.” I think this is crazy of them, but this is a perfect picture of Jeremiah 17.

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<sup>16</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, “Two Ancient Proverbs,” Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, no. 3080 (1874).

Thus says the Lord:

“Cursed is the man who trusts in man  
and makes flesh his strength,  
whose heart turns away from the Lord.

**6** He is like a shrub in the desert,  
and shall not see any good come.

He shall dwell in the parched places of the wilderness,  
in an uninhabited salt land. Jeremiah 17:5–6

If Daniel had obeyed the king rather than God, or been trusting in the King for Deliverance here, he would be wasting away in a dry desolate place. This is also why Jesus told us in Matthew 10, “Don’t fear man, man can only harm your body, fear God, He has the power over both body and soul”

Daniel has made his choice here, He fears God rather than men, and despite what his flesh and blood circumstances may say, Daniel made a wise choice! Daniel Knew Psalm 118:6 “the Lord is on my side, what can man do to me!?” We see in Chapter 9 of Daniel that very recently Daniel has been meditating on the book of Jeremiah, so he knew not to place his trust in the king, but he also knew the 2nd half of Jeremiah 17, “Blessed is the man whose trust is the Lord, his roots are in a river and he does not fear when the heat comes, his leaves remain green!

Wow! That is how and why Daniel continued to walk with God for 70+ years. He knows God and so now God is his trust. Did you notice the barrage of cross-references there? I hope helpful and not distracting. But I actually did intend for it to be noticeable, because all that bible, the product of storing up God’s word in your heart, that is how we trust!! God’s revelation of himself is what enabled Daniel to sit and simply wait for the stone to seal him into the Den. Through this chapter we see Daniel silent, from accusation to condemnation, he doesn’t respond, but we see him Pray. **Knowing God leads to trusting God, but trusting actually requires knowing,**

doesn't it?<sup>17</sup> “How can they believe on Him whom they have never heard?” Answer Paul, They can't! Daniel is an old man and this scripture he has stewed on his entire Life actually protects him and enables him to make the Lord his trust rather than a feeble king. Age and getting closer to death doesn't naturally protect you from fear of trial, and death. **Whether you are young in obedience, or old in faith, trust and peace in the trial doesn't come “naturally” it comes from steady seeking and deeper knowing. The beautiful thing is, this is not at all how to grit your way through a trial, this is how to be planted in God's river, so it actually does not matter how hot the desert around you gets, your leaves are nourished and cooled by living water.**

I think Darius started to notice. This Daniel, his God, and his religion are different. Darius actually admits, I can't, I don't have the power. So He drops Daniel in the den and says maybe your God will deliver you. “I mean it's a lion, but maybe” Then he sets a stone in front of the den and seals it! He and all the lords seal it with their signet so that nothing could be changed about this situation” He wanted everyone to know, I love Daniel, but If somehow his God saves him, it was not by human intervention.

**18** Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; no diversions were brought to him, and sleep fled from him. Daniel 6:18

Darius was distraught and thinking all night. There was a custom that if the accused lasted all night the king was allowed to pardon him.<sup>18</sup> Darius spends the night thinking, It is a den full of Lions against an 80 year old man. There is no chance! But, maybe his God is actually a God that acts.

Then at the break of day, the crack of dawn, Darius, a 62 year old man, jumps out of bed and runs to the den. I think he was desperate to see, desperate to know, Does this God actually act? Verse 20

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<sup>17</sup>J. I. Packer, *Knowing God* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1973), 30.

<sup>18</sup>André Lacocque, *The Book of Daniel*, trans. David Pellauer (Atlanta: John Knox, 1979), 118.

**20** 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?”

Daniel 6:20

After a night of no sleep, thinking about Daniel, the lions and Daniel’s God, there is a subtle change in Darius. He said with anguish “Daniel, servant of the living God, has He been able to save you?” the anguish really suggests that Darius didn’t just want to save Daniel because he was useful, Darius loved Daniel! And Darius’ word change is subtle, but there is one massive change in what Darius is saying. Before it was “your God whom you serve” now its “servant of the living God! This is huge, and not really a Persian idea, the “living God” that’s a very hebrew way of differentiating the God who speaks and acts from the pantheon of idols. And this came from Darius’ mouth, “servant of the living God” He is not “one of the gods” He is the living God, a God set apart from the rest. The wheels of Darius’ mind are turning.

And in verse 21 we see Daniel’s response!

**“21** Then Daniel said to the king, “O king, live forever! **22** 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.” **23** 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.” Daniel 6:21–23

Wow! God actually acted! God Sent help, God delivered Daniel from the mouths and the claws of the lions! Daniel asserts that God saved him because he was blameless before Him and did no harm to the King. Daniel isn’t saying “I’m perfect so God had to save me, No, Daniel is saying, Darius, this punishment was unjust, and my God chose to vindicate me before you! V23 makes it clear, Daniel was completely unharmed, not because of his righteousness, but because he had trusted in his God! Daniel is raised up out of the den and shouts “The Lord is on my side,

what can man do to me?!” What an example of the saving power of God and an incredible call to trust! But Exoneration and trust are just part of the story, this chapter isn’t over.

“**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.” Daniel 6:24

Whew, that is tough. This verse could take another sermon series, there’s a lot here, but we just don’t have time. I think the most poignant and obvious truth here is actually for men. Men, you have been in authority, and leadership over your family. These men became consumed with lust, lust and envy for power. And it cost their wives and their children their lives at the mouths of lions.<sup>19</sup> You are leading somewhere, Make the Lord your trust, and watch your step.

“**25** Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: “Peace be multiplied to you. **26** 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.

**27** 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.”

**28** So this Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.” Daniel 6:25–28

Daniel’s trust in the Lord has led to God being glorified out of the mouth of a Gentile king! That’s incredible! Over and over in this book we see a king making a statement about God’s true dominion and power. This is the 4th decree, all of them explicitly say that God has

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<sup>19</sup>Ammianus Marcellinus, Res Gestae 23.6.81.

the Ultimate kingdom,<sup>20</sup> all of them illustrate that “a king’s heart is as water in the hand of the Lord, he turns it wherever he wishes.” But this last royal word, this final proclamation to all the nations about God is much more. We Hear of God’s endless dominion, but we hear more of Who He is, He Delivers and rescues. We can read that and be amazed and happy, happy for Daniel, God did an unbelievable work and Delivered Daniel, But I want us to feel the radical open ended nature of Darius’ words!

God is a deliverer! And sometimes he shuts the Lion’s mouth, But sometimes he doesn’t. Sometimes the situation is different, when the lions mouth isn’t stopped, Is God still your deliverer? Lamentations 3 gives us words for this painful question:

**16** He has made my teeth grind on gravel,  
and made me cower in ashes;

**17** my soul is bereft of peace;  
I have forgotten what happiness is;

**18** so I say, “My endurance has perished;  
so has my hope from the Lord.”

**19** Remember my affliction and my wanderings,  
the wormwood and the gall!

**20** My soul continually remembers it  
and is bowed down within me.

**21** But this I call to mind,  
and therefore I have hope:

**22** The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases;  
his mercies never come to an end;

**23** they are new every morning;  
great is your faithfulness.

**24** “The Lord is my portion,” says my soul,  
“therefore I will hope in him.”

“for, though he cause grief, he will have compassion  
according to the abundance of his steadfast love;” Lamentations 3:16–24,32

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<sup>20</sup>John F. Walvoord, Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation (Chicago: Moody, 1971), 178.

How? In your life, when the lion's mouth isn't stopped, when the teeth sink deep, how can you have hope according to God's steadfast love?? How, like Daniel, can we plead for mercy, confidently?? There's one last incredible thing displayed in Daniel chapter 6.<sup>21</sup>

- Daniel is noticed by the high status and they are envious
- Daniel is pursued falsely accused and trapped
- Daniel gets alone and prays
- His betrayers get him arrested
- He does not open his mouth
- His arrestor finds himself unable to save him and throws up his hands
- He is condemned and laid in a tomb
- That tomb is sealed
- Early in the morning someone with a little hope, comes running to see what God may have done
- He is raised out of the tomb because he was found blameless
- And the truth of God's Dominion and Gospel deliverance is proclaimed throughout the whole earth

I really hope that sounds familiar.

When we are in our most desperate need, we have this, Jesus, as a sure and steady anchor of the soul. Though you may be wasting away you can be renewed every day with fresh mercies, purchased by the blood of Christ. These mercies are for an unbelievable future joy, yes, but also they are for RIGHT NOW. right now freedom from fear.

Did you know that, if you are a believer, Jesus prayed for you right before he went to the cross for you? In John 17, Jesus says "I also pray this for those who will believe" That's us! That's you! In John 17:23, Jesus says that God the Father loves you, even as he loves Jesus, His own son! As a believer, you have to know that no matter what the lions are like in your life, you have not received the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but YOU have received the Spirit of Adoption as children by whom you cry to God, "Daddy help me." And God, who didn't spare

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<sup>21</sup>James M. Hamilton Jr., *With the Clouds of Heaven: The Book of Daniel in Biblical Theology*, NSBT 32 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2014), 191.

even Jesus, but gave him up for us all, how will God not also with him, give us all good things we need. He will! That's the promise, that's the logic, that's the Joy. In Christ, You have this right now promise that whether it's a beautiful day in your life, or a scorching hot desert, like Daniel you can be planted in living water, and your leaves can be nourished and cool.

But this promise is only for those whose lives are hidden in Christ. Every King in this book has either exuberantly or grudgingly confessed the dominion of God, and Darius leaves us with the proclamation of God also as Sovereign Deliverer. But do you know that whether you like that proclamation or not, Paul says that because of Christ's humility and obedience on the cross, He has been highly exalted and at the name of Jesus, every knee in heaven and on earth and under the earth (EVERY KNEE) will bow, and EVERY tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Whether or not you die in faith like Daniel, your knee will bow. In the middle of trial, facing certain death, Daniel's knees bowed, and God delivered Daniel. When will your knees bow? Today, with confession, and confidence in God your deliverer, or will they only bow at the final judgement?