

Survey of the Bible Daniel 6:1-28

The last time we were in Daniel we ended chapter 5 which also ended the reign of Belshazzar as God judged him and took his life.

Daniel 5:29-31 ²⁹ Then Belshazzar gave orders, and they clothed Daniel with purple and *put* a necklace of gold around his neck, and issued a proclamation concerning him that he *now* had authority as the third *ruler* in the kingdom. ³⁰ That same night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was slain. ³¹ So Darius the Mede received the kingdom at about the age of sixty-two.

So, Darius receives the kingdom.

As we come to chapter 6 we might entitle it, Unfairness in life is Fueled by Jealousy and Hatred.

We usually think that if we work hard and are fair in all our dealings with people that we will be rewarded for that. After all doesn't the Lord tell us, "do unto others as you would have them do unto you"?

But as we'll in this section of Daniel it is the proverb, "do to others before they do it to you" that is at the forefront.

Daniel was promised by Belshazzar to be the third ruler in the Kingdom and apparently he was given this honor after Belshazzar's death as we see in verse 29 of the last chapter.

And with Darius on the scene he is setting up his government and keeps Daniel in that third place at the beginning of his reign. But like the first proverb where treating people fairly and with respect is the approach Daniel takes it is not reciprocated by his peers.

In fact, it seems the more Daniel desires to work with his peers in a fair fashion the more it infuriates his peers, because they acknowledge that Darius is taking note of Daniel.

Daniel 6:1-3 ^{NAU} It seemed good to Darius to appoint 120 satraps over the kingdom, that they would be in charge of the whole kingdom, ² and over them three commissioners (of whom Daniel was one), that these satraps might be accountable to them, and that the king might not suffer loss. ³ Then this Daniel began distinguishing himself among the commissioners and satraps because he possessed an extraordinary spirit, and the king planned to appoint him over the entire kingdom.

This is a good thing right? You work hard and you rise to the top. Unfortunately, in the real world, this is all too often not the case. How many times have you worked for someone who was so incompetent that it amazed you that they were in any position of authority?

This has been going on for millennia and Belshazzar is a perfect example of how a ruthless incompetent man can assume power. And this is why we can identify with delight when we see that justice actually comes to the forefront to deal with such people.

But more often than not it doesn't seem to work out that way, and even the psalmist concedes this point.

Psalm 10:3-5 ³ For the wicked boasts of his heart's desire, And the greedy man curses *and* spurns the LORD. ⁴ The wicked, in the haughtiness of his countenance, does not seek *Him*. All his thoughts are, "There is no God." ⁵ ***His ways prosper at all times;*** Your judgments are on high, out of his sight; As for all his adversaries, he snorts at them.

But we would be mistaken that God's judgments are out of sight before the Lord in the case of the man who seems to never receive justice as the psalmist in this same psalm concludes.

Psalm 10:16-18 ¹⁶ The LORD is King forever and ever; Nations have perished from His land. ¹⁷ O LORD, You have heard the desire of the humble; You will strengthen their heart, You will incline Your ear ¹⁸ To vindicate the orphan and the oppressed, So that man who is of the earth will no longer cause terror.

All men will be judged before our Holy God, but that doesn't mean that people in this world won't attempt to gain the advantage through ungodly means and the people of Daniel's day were no different as they saw their positions being challenged by an outsider, a Jew of the dispersion.

Instead of rejoicing in Darius' choice to elevate Daniel from the third position to the first the other satraps understand that whoever was first was now second and whoever was second was now third. We call that demotion and so did these peers of Daniel's.

Keeping all of this in context let us not lose sight of the purpose of this book and every other book of Scripture. It is all about Christ and His redemption of His people. This portion of Scripture, though it may include a moral story of good vs. evil, the good vs.

evil is really a story of the seed of the serpent vs. the seed of the woman.

In other words, the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom He came to establish and bring to fruition on the last day.

This section of Daniel is describing something bigger than any personal issue we may have with the world and the people in it who are trying to destroy us to whatever degree we perceive that.

This section, as we will see, ends with the truth that Daniel is delivered and his God is the deliverer to be praised forever more.

But let's look at this.

We're told that Daniel found favor with Darius as he distinguished himself among his peers for this reason.

Daniel 6:3 because he possessed an extraordinary spirit,

What was this spirit that Daniel possessed?

The word for spirit here in our text in the Aramaic is the same word in Hebrew: *ruach*.

And it simply means wind or spirit and it implies that there was something that moved Daniel in his life that was different from what moved the other satraps.

We might even look at this as a precursor of what happened after the resurrection of Jesus Christ when the disciples were indwelt with the Spirit. Remember, that the Spirit of God did not take up actual residence in the believer until after the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

John 14:16-18 ¹⁶ "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; ¹⁷ *that is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, *but* you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. ¹⁸ "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

This was fulfilled after Jesus appeared to His disciples after His resurrection.

John 20:21-22 ²¹ So Jesus said to them again, "Peace *be* with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you." ²² And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

Up to this point in redemptive history the Holy Spirit was with and came upon His people throughout the generations leading up to this point. But now in the new covenant He would be “in” them.

However, it was the baptism of the Holy Spirit, that filling of the Spirit, for empowering His people to advance the Kingdom through the gospel that we see on the day of Pentecost.

Acts 2:1-4 ^{NAU} When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. ² And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.

Keep in mind that the disciples had already been indwelt by the Spirit prior to the day of Pentecost when the Lord had breathed on them as they then received the Holy Spirit. Now they were filled or empowered as they are identified with the ministry of the Holy Spirit in power.

Daniel is receiving the benefits of the Holy Spirit who is with him even though He is not in him. And so, whatever else we can say about the extraordinary spirit that Daniel possessed it must be associated the Spirit of God who was with him in the midst of the trials he was about to experience at the hands of ungodly people.

These jealous and hateful satraps who felt their power being threatened come up with a plan to destroy Daniel.

What is interesting about their strategy is that they know they cannot find fault with Daniel’s functions within his job description. He dot’s every “I” and crosses every “T” in his faithfulness to his job as he serves the king. So, how do you destroy such a person?

One way of doing it is to lie about their duties in that position, but a lie in this case falls flat when you have no evidence. But if you can force someone to act in a way that violates the law by taking advantage of their faith you might have success. And this is exactly the tact they choose.

Daniel 6:4-5 ⁴ Then the commissioners and satraps began trying to find a ground of accusation against Daniel in regard to government affairs; but they could find no ground of accusation or *evidence of corruption*, inasmuch as he was faithful, and no negligence or corruption was *to be* found in him. ⁵ Then these men

said, "We will not find any ground of accusation against this Daniel unless we find *it* against him with regard to the law of his God."

If they can create a law of the land that forces Daniel not to obey that law then you have grounds for not simply causing Daniel to lose his job, but in this case losing his life which is the final solution for this Jew, as one particular German in the 20th century concluded as well.

But what these satraps and the world-at-large will discover is that the final solution is found at the judgment seat of Christ on the last day when they will give an account to their Creator. For you and I in Christ that final solution was found at the cross and thus we do not come into judgment.

John 3:18 ¹⁸ "*He who believes in Him is not judged*"; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

^{NAU} **John 5:24** "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and *does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.*

So, what was the plan these folks devised for Daniel's demise?

Daniel 6:7 ⁷ "All the commissioners of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the high officials and the governors have consulted together that the king should establish a statute and enforce an injunction that anyone who makes a petition to any god or man besides you, O king, for thirty days, shall be cast into the lions' den.

The King evidently thought that was a pretty good idea and so he signed it into law without thinking through the ramifications it would have on his number one official in all the kingdom.

Of course Daniel knew the ramifications of this and one would expect him to panic and get the heck out of Dodge. But what he does is very instructive for any child of God.

Daniel 6:10 ¹⁰ Now when Daniel knew that the document was signed, he entered his house (now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem); and he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously.

What we note here is not simply that Daniel prays to God. We would assume that sort of response as we all should certainly go to God in prayer in times of trouble. Rather, what we see here is that Daniel doesn't panic. In fact, he simply continues with his custom of praying to God three times a day in direct violation of the decree signed by Darius.

Acts 5:29 We must obey God rather than men.

In other words, he doesn't feel compelled to do anything out of his regular routine of approaching God on a daily basis as he did in times past when there were no trials or tribulations going on in his life.

And apparently he prayed in just the same way when life was good; that is "giving thanks before his God."

How does someone who gives thanks to God in the good times able to give thanks to God in the bad?

For the same reason that every child of God does and that is in thanks for the promise of eternal life and an appreciation for that life with a love that continues to serve in every circumstance knowing that God will never leave us or forsake us.

Romans 8:28 ²⁸ And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.

Romans 14:7-8 ⁷ For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; ⁸ for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

Titus 2:7-8 ⁷ in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, *with* purity in doctrine, dignified, ⁸ sound *in* speech which is beyond reproach, so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us.

This is Daniel and he knows God will cause his circumstance to work together for his good, but whether he lives or dies he is the Lord's and in that way he will be an example of what it means to live faithfully for the Lord even to the end, knowing that the end is just the beginning of life eternal.

When the king is confronted with the news from these unscrupulous men, that Daniel continues to pray to his God three

times a day, in direct violation of the law he signed into effect, he is troubled and tries to find a way to get around the law and save Daniel.

But his rulers remind him that he cannot skirt the law and so he concedes to throw Daniel into the lion's den as prescribed by law. And the rest of the story is a matter of history.

Daniel 6:19-23 ¹⁹ Then the king arose at dawn, at the break of day, and went in haste to the lions' den. ²⁰ When he had come near the den to Daniel, he cried out with a troubled voice. The king spoke and said to Daniel, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you constantly serve, been able to deliver you from the lions?" ²¹ Then Daniel spoke to the king, "O king, live forever! ²² "My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths and they have not harmed me, inasmuch as I was found innocent before Him; and also toward you, O king, I have committed no crime." ²³ Then the king was very pleased and gave orders for Daniel to be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den and no injury whatever was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.

Daniel, like Shadrach, Meshac and Abednego who were thrown into the flames of the furnace, knew that God could deliver, but was willing to suffer at the hands of the ungodly.

But there is a God in heaven who will not be mocked and who will not forsake His children and in Daniel's case both his salvation and vindication come together at the same place at the same time.

Daniel 6:24 ²⁴ The king then gave orders, and they brought those men who had maliciously accused Daniel, and they cast them, their children and their wives into the lions' den; and they had not reached the bottom of the den before the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.

This is the picture of final deliverance and judgment that we see in the New Testament that was foretold all throughout the Old.

Matthew 25:32-34 ³² "All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; ³³ and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left. ³⁴ "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

Matthew 25:41-46 ⁴¹ "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.

Daniel's story is our story in Christ and it is in Christ that we stand, but it is in Christ that we must go forward even when the world tries to destroy us, be that the people in our workplace or those literally trying to destroy us.

God is still on His throne and even Darius acknowledges this.

Daniel 6:25-28 ²⁵ Then Darius the king wrote to all the peoples, nations and *men of every* language who were living in all the land: "May your peace abound! ²⁶ "I make a decree that in all the dominion of my kingdom men are to fear and tremble before the God of Daniel; For He is the living God and enduring forever, And His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed, And His dominion *will be* forever. ²⁷ "He delivers and rescues and performs signs and wonders In heaven and on earth, Who has *also* delivered Daniel from the power of the lions." ²⁸ So this Daniel enjoyed success in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

Like Nebuchadnezzar, Darius acknowledges Daniel's God, and yet does so without conspicuously embracing the God of Daniel as his own.

Again, one can only hope that Nebuchadnezzar and Darius, in the end, came to faith in Daniel's God. But whether they did or not we know that in this world or the next all men will bow and give glory to God.

Romans 14:11 ¹¹ For it is written, "AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME, AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL GIVE PRAISE TO GOD."

Could God have turned the hearts of these pagan kings?

Absolutely. And God can change a heart of stone into a heart of flesh as He shows mercy to whom He shows mercy and shows compassion to whom He shows compassion.

Matthew 3:9 ⁹ and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father'; for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham.

God can and does move men to faith and every child of God can claim their father Abraham as they place their faith in Christ.

Romans 4:16 ¹⁶ For this reason *it is* by faith, in order that *it may be* in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,