

## **The Den - Part 2** **Daniel 6:15-28**

Last week we talked briefly about the beginning of **Daniel Chapter 6**. We saw the fall of one kingdom and the start of another. Throughout history empires rise and fall all around the world. Just in that area the Hittites, the Egyptians, the Assyrians, then came the Babylonians. This is where we were in **Chapter 5**, directly after this the Medes and Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans. All of them came and went, when **Acts 17** says talks about the times of the nations are bounded by the sovereignty of God. Do you all believe that God uses people to fulfill His plan? Could those people be rulers or kings that we would not consider Christians?

Do you remember the dream Nebuchadnezzar had back in **Chapter 2**? It was about the statue with the head of gold, chest and arms of silver, abdomen and thighs of bronze, legs of iron, feet of mixed iron and clay. The end of **Chapter 5** is the fall of the first kingdom of that statue, the head of gold. And this, the suspected greatest empire the world had ever seen was overtaken by the Medo-Persian army with absolutely zero opposition.

**Chapter 6** starts the second empire of the statue, the chest and arms of silver. Just as the kings before this thought their kingdom would last forever, the Medes and Persians thought they had the magic formula to an everlasting domain. This is common here in America too. We think that God is going to spare us from the turmoil, because we claim to be a nation who stands on the word of God. He certainly would not let the United States demise be to an ungodly nation. We all know that is far from the truth when looking at it from a national standpoint. The only thing that is for certain is that no matter what we do as a nation, God's work will go on.

In **Isaiah 40:15**, it says, **"Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket; they are regarded as dust on the scales; he weighs the islands as though they are fine dust"**. When God looks to weigh humanity, the nations will not affect the outcome. The nations are like a drop from a bucket. It will not amount to anything, and like dust on the scales, that will not change the weight.

Even though the Babylon empire was destroyed and now a new nation has begun, Daniel was exactly where God intended him to be. God will not be swayed by man's decisions. It's not like God woke up from a nap, and says, "Wow I wasn't expecting that". Nations have continued to rise and fall from the time of Daniel to us, and none of it has changed Gods plan for a single person. Nebuchadnezzar went so far as to have his name written on as many bricks that went into building the city as he could in the attempt to build an everlasting empire. It doesn't matter what we do to prolong it, or what attempts we make to stretch it out, nothing will change the timing of God.

Read **Daniel 6:15-28**

**The Penalty, The Perseverance, The Punishment**

### **Vs. 15-16 The Penalty**

So, the king is confronted, but he has no way to change the decree, and the sentencing must be fulfilled. Daniel is brought straight to the lion's den. He doesn't try to get out of it or change the story. He accepts that there will be a penalty for breaking the king's law. There will always be a price to be paid for following the word of God. When you surrender your life to Jesus does life instantly get easier? Nope. The world will do its best to punch you in the mouth, your "friends" will abandon you, and even some of your family will have a hard time being around you. How many of you, when you started to volunteer here at church, things seemed to get a little interesting. It's the same for staff and Pastors, once we are called to do a job for the kingdom, we are hit with some serious spiritual warfare.

These are real lions, lions that are intentionally starved for days so they would, without a doubt, be the executioners. We do not know how many lions were in the den. Some pictures show 2 or 3, but I would say it was many more than that. Down in the end of this chapter, we will talk about the counter measure that comes from the accusation brought on Daniel, and they throw in the men who started it, along with their children and wives... It says that they are consumed before they hit the ground. This could not have happened with only a few lions.

Let me tell you a couple of true stories that I heard about online. A young man was hiking alone. A boulder fell on his hand. He waited for 4 hours for help that never came at which point he cut off his own hand with a pocketknife. A woman was bungee jumping, and the cord broke. She plummeted into the river below, where she had to swim to shore in crocodile infested waters with a broken collar bone. A woman was smashed in the face by a 5 lb. watermelon propelled by a slingshot. A field and track athlete was hit by a javelin, and another was punched in the mouth by a kangaroo.

When asked about their incidents, they all said "well I guess things could have been worse." We want to complain about the things in our lives that bother us, that decimate our day. So, tell me about how bad your job is, tell me about your car breaking down, tell me how hard it is to get up out of your bed to the alarm clock. I'm not saying that no one here knows what a hard time life is, but are you being thrown to your certain death, because you are faithful and just?

Those folks were not spared from their incidents. We read about Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who were not spared the fiery furnace, just as Daniel was not spared from the lion's den. But God, spared every one of them through the incident; through the furnace, through the lion's den. God may not stop the storm from coming, but He will never let it consume you.

Darius shows a form of faith, but it is not from his faith in God. It's from Daniel's faith in God. See, some people may not know the Lord themselves, but they can't deny what they see in us. Daniel's witness in this ungodly land is showing results. The king is saying that he did the best he could, but now if Daniel was to be spared, it would have to be his God who did it.

**Vs. 17** To very possible would have been for 2 reasons: one, to ensure that no one went in to break Daniel out; two, to make sure that someone did not attempt to get in and kill him if the lions didn't. These dens were said to be deep caves with an opening on top, the lions would be lured in the cave entrance and then sealed inside. They would feed them through the opening in the top. When used for execution the opening made for a great viewing spot.

**Vs. 18** We get to most "on the edge of our seat" moment of the text, and it changes the location. I don't really care what happens to the king, if he sleeps or not... what happened to Daniel.

It says without eating and without entertainment. The Aramaic word here is "diversions". This could have been several different things, music, dancers, women what ever would divert the king's thoughts, but he refused them all and instead stayed up all night pacing the floors.

While Darius is pacing the floors, I'm sure Daniel spent part of his night praying. We all would in this situation. But that's not why Daniel was praying, he was praying because that's what Daniel does. He doesn't start praying because of the situation he was in.

**Vs. 19-20** Darius was up all night, couldn't sleep, worried, wondering. So, as soon as the sun starts to rise, he hurries down to the lion's den to see how Daniel had fared the night. I'm sure he was hoping that the lions had fasted through the night just as he had.

When he gets there, he calls out to Daniel with a sorrowful voice, a voice full of anxiety. I'm sure he was hoping for the best, but feared the worst. As he reaches the den, the king calls out "**Daniel, servant of the living God**". Now how does the king, a king who is an unbeliever, know anything about a living God? Through Daniel's faithful and steadfast trust in the Lord is the only way that Daniel's life could have been preserved.

*The New Testament* tells us that the devil is like a lion looking for someone to devour, and that we should stand firm in our faith and resist him. We all will face lions someday, maybe as financial problems, maybe as sickness, maybe something else. Will you stand firm knowing that the Lord will stand with you?

### **Vs. 21 The Penalty, The Perseverance**

Is that how we would have responded to the one who literally just tried to have us KILLED? Long live the king! I struggle not being furious with someone who is barely doing the speed limit and refuses to move out of the left lane. Not only is it illegal, but it really upsets people. I don't think my witness would be so strong at that moment.

**Vs. 22** My God sent His angel, we do not know if Daniel saw an angel or if he just knew the angel was there. Or how the angel shut the mouths of the lions. Was it by its brilliant light, did the angel threaten the lions, or scare them with noises and other things they do not like? All we know is the lions knew better than to mess with Daniel, because he was innocent in God's eyes.

I do like that Daniel was also bold enough to let the king know that he was innocent towards the king too. Yes, he broke the king's law, but it was not out of disrespect to the king. It was due to his loyalty to the real King.

**Vs. 23** Why was Daniel spared? Because of his faith. So why was Peter not spared? He had faith, and he was hung upside down. What about Paul? He had faith, and he was beheaded. See, we do not get to decide what path God picks for us. Believing in God doesn't mean that you will always be spared. There have been plenty of martyrs throughout history. You know what makes them martyrs...? They all died. If we live through facing our lions, then God is not done with us yet. If we die, then we die.

Daniel lived, but if he would have died, it would not have changed the fact that we will never be defeated. Truthfully, Daniel was about 90 at this time. I think he would have been just as happy to have gone on home to be with the Lord.

### **Vs. 24 The Penalty, The Perseverance, The Punishment**

There is always a consequence to our actions. Some may take getting to judgement to come to fruition, while others are pretty much immediate. **Verse 6** said, "**so these administrators and satraps went as a group**". I'm not real sure how many exactly, but it would have been several people total, counting all the children and wives of this group of men. Darius did not have to be talked into this command. I think that he would have made it to this decision, whether Daniel would have lived or died.

Some teachers try to say that the lions where not hungry, or they were old lions, and that's how Daniel did not get eaten. So, did these same lions go back in time, or suddenly work up an appetite? No, Daniel was saved by God, and these people did not know God. This brings up another Medes and Persian law, which was "on account of the guilt of one, all kindred must perish".

**Vs. 25-28** Daniel has a running theme; step one, God's people stand in their faith through their convictions; step two, God honors and protects them; and step three, the testimony of God's work works even through the ungodly to testify of the greatness of God.

This happens 6 times in the first 6 chapters.

1) Daniel and friends stand firm on the food they ate, and Nebuchadnezzar saw the difference. 2) Daniel interprets Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and the king honored Daniel and God. 3) Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego would not bow to the king, and the king gave glory to God. 4) Daniel boldly tells Nebuchadnezzar the hard truth, and the king humbled himself. 5) Daniel tells Belshazzar the truth, and the king honors Daniel. 6) Daniel will not stop praying to God, and the king honors God.

The proof is there, when we stand firm for God, especially in our convictions and honor God. Even when it is going to cost us something, others will see our living testimony, and people will be changed. We are not doing this so that we will prosper like Daniel does, but to glorify God with all we are.

Nations rise, and nations fall. People come and go. A lot can be done with a few. It is not the number of people. It just takes the right kind of people. When God puts you somewhere it is for a reason, it is to get His word through.

In closing, I hope you saw the hints in this story that reflect our Savior, Jesus. A blameless man, who was faithful to God in all his ways was sentenced to death by people who were jealous of him. Lies were told to convict him, and he was put in a cave meant to be his final resting place. A stone was rolled in front of the door, and even being sealed inside, death had no power over him. On that morning, the stone was rolled away, and he came out victorious. He glorified God, the pagans glorified God, and his enemies were judged.

Isn't it amazing how wonderful God is? Do you share the virtues of Daniel? Are you consistent in prayer, do you have a good attitude, are you guilty of righteousness, are you known for having integrity, are you faithful even in your storms? If you find yourself struggling with some, or all these, there is one sure way to get on the right path. Jesus made a way for us, so if you don't know Him, for that reason then, today is the day for you to get to know him. Don't let the opportunity pass. We see the penalty for being obediently disobedient getting closer and closer.