

## **The Lion's Den**

### **Daniel 6:1-28**

Today's message and subject is "THE LION'S DEN." Our scripture is Daniel Chapter 6. I have titled this message "The Lion's Den" for several reasons. First of all, it will be easy for you to remember the title in the event you want to order it and listen to it again, and to share it with someone else. Secondly, the scripture from which this is taken is familiar to all of you. I don't know of anyone listening to this program that hasn't heard or read about Daniel in the lion's den (everyone has). I want you to turn to Daniel 6, and let's look at the Lion's Den.

I looked at this chapter carefully this morning. This entire chapter of 28 verses is given over to the story of God's servant, Daniel's experience regarding the den of lions. From verse 1 through verse 28 is all about Daniel and the lion's den. Why do you suppose so much of the scripture, (the Bible's not that big of a book), is devoted to this experience of Daniel and the lion's den? It could be told in three verses. Daniel offended the king, and the king cast Daniel into the lion's den, and God delivered him. It could be told in two or three sentences. Why did it take 28 verses, why is so much scripture dedicated to this story of Daniel and the lion's den?

One thing, this chapter reveals the faithfulness of God's servant, Daniel. He was a faithful servant of God. He believed God and he would not worship idols, even if it cost him his life. Daniel was faithful to God; he believed God and would not bow down to an idol, even if it cost him his life. That is told in this scripture.

Secondly, this chapter also shows how a true believer can occupy a place of leadership. Daniel was a prominent leader in this country of Babylon, in a world of business, in a world of unbelievers, in a world of idolaters. Yet, Daniel in the midst of all this darkness did not compromise his faith and did not compromise his convictions and his principles. It can be done. Somebody said, "Well, if a man is not a crook before he goes into office, he will be after he goes into office." That's not true; it doesn't have to be so, not if he really knows God. Daniel held the highest office in the land under the king and remained firm and true to his convictions. He walked among people that didn't know God, and yet he believed.

Thirdly, this chapter reveals the power of God to deliver His people from the most difficult trial and the most difficult, impossible situation. God can literally stop the mouths of lions. I like what the three Hebrew children, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego said to the king, who cast them into the furnace of fire (that's another story in which you're familiar). He said, "*Is your God able to deliver you?*" They said, "*He's*

able.” *But, if He doesn’t, He’s still God and we’re not going to worship your idol.”* God is able to deliver us, but if He doesn’t, He’s still God.

You know, the main reason for this story’s prominent place in these 28 verses of Daniel chapter six, is to reveal not just Daniel’s faithfulness, and not just his principles and convictions in the face of compromise, and not just God’s power to deliver us out of trials and troubles, but this scripture is in the Bible to reveal how God Almighty can be a Just God, a Holy God, and justify you and me who are guilty sinners. It is how God can be Just and justify you and me. In other words, this scripture is all about the Lord Jesus Christ, our Substitute.

You mean you can preach Christ from Daniel 6? Oh yea, yes sir, I intend to! In the Book of Acts, it says, *“To Him give all the prophets witness.”* Our Lord told the Pharisees, *“You search the scriptures, because in them you think you have life, but they are they who testify of me.”* This is all about Christ. I’m going to show you this very day, the gospel of Christ in this story of Daniel’s deliverance from the lion’s den.

Now, here’s the story. We’ve got to have the whole story. Daniel was a man of God who was in captivity in the land of Babylon. Daniel, by the power of God, had interpreted dreams for several kings. Do remember in Daniel Chapter 4? He interpreted the dream of Nebuchadnezzar. He told him how God would turn him out to pasture like an animal; his hair would grow long like feathers on a bird. His claws would grow long, and he would lose his senses and reasoning, and seven times would pass over until he knew that *“God reigned in heaven among the inhabitants of the earth and the armies of heaven and He giveth to whomsoever He will.”* Nebuchadnezzar had bragged about how he had built great Babylon, how powerful he was and God said, *“I’ll put you out to pasture until you learn that I am God and everything you have depends on me and my will.”* Daniel interpreted the dream and it came to pass.

After Nebuchadnezzar was dead, another king arose in Babylon called, Belshazzar. Do you remember how he was having that feast and party and drunken brawl? He sent somebody down to get the vessels from the temple of God. He and his cohorts drank wine and out of the Holy vessels, the fingers of a man’s hand appeared over on the wall, writing, and the king’s knees smote together and he was afraid and he cried for all of his astrologers and soothsayers and wise men. They couldn’t figure out what it was and they called for Daniel.

Daniel came and said; *“I’ll read it.” “MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; Thy kingdom*

*is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.* Oh king, you're weighed in the balances and found wanting and this night your kingdom will be taken from you and given over to the Medes and Persians. That night Belshazzar was slain.

Another king took over; his name was Darius. Daniel was well thought of, he was a man that this king respected and admired greatly. Daniel was held in high esteem. Darius the king selected 120 senators, and princes to rein over his kingdom, 120 prominent men. Over these 120 men, he placed three presidents. There were 120 rulers and three presidents. Over the presidents, he made Daniel (number one). He was the number one president over all of them. Daniel was second to the king in all of Babylon, this man of God, this child of God, this servant of the Lord in captivity. These other fellows, these 120 became envious and jealous of Daniel. You can read it there in Chapter 6. Because of the king's preference, he preferred Daniel, because of Daniel's ability and wisdom. They tried to find a way that they could discredit him. They tried to find a way that they could discredit Daniel before the king. They couldn't find a flaw in his character. They couldn't find a flaw in any way he did his business, or the way he conducted himself. They couldn't find a single flaw.

In verse 5, now watch this, Daniel 6:5, they got together and said, *"We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God."* You see, Babylon was a pagan country and the people from the king on down were idolatrous people. Daniel was a believer; he was different.

When we were kids, they use to tell us, "Dare to be a Daniel, dare to be different." He was different and they said that if we're going to find anything wrong with this fellow, if we're going to discredit him, it's going to have to be concerning his God. Look at verse 6 through 9 in Daniel 6 and read it. These fellows got together, all 120 princes, two presidents and they came to the king and this is what they said, *"Oh king, king Darius, we want to honor you."* What they are trying to do is get Daniel. They are envious and jealous of Daniel. They want to discredit him and get him out of the kingdom, out of the way!

So, they were using the King and taking advantage of him. They said, *"We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God. Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever. All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counselors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. Now, O*

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

Well, did you know that? That is the way that came about. The king was flattered. He was a very foolish man. He wasn't suspecting what these men were doing. He didn't suspect that they were after Daniel, so he signed this decree into law that for 30 days if anybody in the kingdom asked a petition of any man or any God except the king, (king Darius), he would be cast into the lion's den. This law was the law of the Medes and Persians, which could not be changed or altered.

Well, look at verse 10. These fellows knew that they had Daniel; they knew they had him, because the scripture says in verse 10, *"He kneeled upon his knee, three times a day, with his windows open toward Jerusalem and he prayed."* The scripture says he kneeled three times a day; he prayed; he worshipped God, with the windows open, he gave thanks to God.

These fellows were waiting. When they found him praying, they came running to the king and they said, "Oh king, Daniel is breaking the law you signed, a law that cannot be altered, that if any man prays or asks a petition of any God or man for 30 days that he would be cast into the lion's den." Didn't you say that? It's a law that cannot be changed. We say, "Daniel goes to the lion's den."

Verse 14 says, that the king was so displeased with himself; he realized what he had done. The king set his heart on Daniel to deliver him. He didn't want to put him into the lion's den. It says, *"That he labored until the going down of the sun to set Daniel free."* He walked the floor. The law says that Daniel must die. The law is the law that cannot be changed. The law was signed in the king's hand. If he doesn't carry out his law he'll lose his kingdom. He'll lose all of his support; he'll lose all the people because he's made a law. His other laws won't be worth anything. *"He labored until the going down of the sun."* He stayed awake all night, the scripture says in verse 18, *"Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of musick brought before him: and his sleep went from him."* But he found no way to deliver Daniel, so he sent Daniel down to the lion's den.

We know that God sent an angel down and closed the mouth of the lions and they didn't harm Daniel. When the king came down to the lion's den the next morning, Daniel was still walking around down there, and the lions were lying around like shepherd dogs at his feet. The old king took all these wicked fellows and cast them into the den of lion's with all their families.

What you see here is the gospel of substitution. This is the gospel of Christ in this story. Let me show it to you. Almighty God is king and Almighty God has a law that He has put in effect over His universe, His kingdom. His law cannot be changed. God's law is a revelation of much of God's character, at least His Justice, His Holiness and Righteousness. He has a law. It says this, *"Thou shalt have no other God's before me,"* and we have broken that law. Unfortunately through our lives, we have been subject to a lot of different false god's. That's right, idols! It says, *"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, of any likeness, of anything in heaven or in earth, nor bow down to them."* But, we have! Some of us love our children more than we love God. We love our luxuries and riches more than we love God. Men are lovers of themselves more than lovers of God. That's an idol!

*"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord in vain,"* but we have broken that law too. That's God's law. You'll not use my name, in any way, that's not respectful and reverent and describing to me all Holiness, but we have!

*"Honor thy father and thy mother. Thou shalt not kill."* Christ said, *"To hate in your heart is to be guilty of murder already."* Have you ever hated anybody in your life?

We've broken God's law. *"Thou shalt not commit adultery."* Christ said, that the very look of lust is to commit adultery in your heart. The desire in the sight of God is as bad as the act. *"Thou shalt not steal."* Taking anything that is not ours, or doesn't belong to us, or rightfully ours, or even desiring things that are not ours. *"Thou shalt not lie or bear false witness,"* or exaggerate; we have! *"Thou shalt not covet. What the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law that every mouth may be stopped and all the world become guilty,"* guilty, guilty before God.

I'll tell you, when we look at God's law, God has established the law, the law of heaven and earth. It wasn't the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be altered. It's the law of heaven and earth that cannot be altered. I'll tell you this, here's the lion's den, *"Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them."* We're under the curse of God's holy law (Gal. 3:10).

Daniel broke the king's law. It was a bad law, it was a foolish law, but it was his law, but he promised to put the man in the lion's den that broke his law and it has to be done. God Almighty has a good law, a Holy law, a Righteous law, a Godly law, we've broken it, we've sinned, and we've deliberately and willfully broken God's law and do break them. He said, *"The soul that sinneth shall surely die. God will by no means clear the guilty. Sin when it's finished, bringeth forth death."*

The only difference is that old king Darius labored until the going down of the sun, to deliver Daniel, and he couldn't do it; but God can deliver us. King Darius found no way to save his friend, but God Almighty knows the way to save His friends (His elect). He can save us, He can deliver us and at the same time honor His law, satisfy His justice and fulfill every requirement because the scripture says, "*Deliver him from going down into the pit, (the den of lions), I have found a ransom.*" I've found a ransom (Job 33:24).

I know Darius would have liked to have come out of the palace after laboring to the going down of the sun and said, "Hold it, Hold it, don't throw Daniel into the lion's den, I have found a ransom." He couldn't do it. Daniel sinned and Daniel had to pay. You and I have sinned, but we have to pay, but we pay in the person of our Substitute. The Lord Jesus became one with us. "*He was numbered with the transgressors.*" Listen, Galatians 4:4-5, "*In the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law to redeem them that were under the law, to redeem them that were under the law.*"

By the disobedience of Adam, we were made sinners, by the obedience of Christ; we were made righteous, that's representation (Romans 5:19).

God, it says in Romans 3:25-26, "*Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.*"

God set forth His Son to be a substitute, to be a representative, to be a surety, to be a propitiation, a substitute, a redeemer, through faith in His blood, faith in His sacrifice to declare God's righteousness. King Darius must fulfill his law. He's got to punish the offender if He's going to stay king. They will ride him out of town on a rail. He signed a law. He's got to put Daniel into the lion's den. There's no way around it. God is God. God is King and God is Just. God has got to punish sin.

God sent Jesus Christ to take our place, to take our guilt and to take our sin, and He did punish our sin in Him (our Substitute)! Christ died on the cross not as a picture, but He died as a substitute. He didn't die as a reformer; He died as a substitute. He didn't die as an example; He died as a substitute. "*He bare our sins in His body on the tree*" and paid for them, (all the debt we owe). He paid the sin debt. Now, God can set you and me free because our sin debt is paid. We have righteousness in Christ.

So, if a man were to ask me, "Preacher, am I delivered from condemnation? Am I a child of God? Do I have a hope of eternal life?" Well, I'll let you answer that. Why don't I just let you answer that! You are asking me what I think, if I think you're saved or

somebody else who claims to be a Christian, claims to be a child of God, claims to have a home in heaven, am I saved, am I a child of God? Do I have a hope in heaven? Let me ask you, are you perfect? No, I'm not perfect! But, God requires perfection. He can be satisfied with nothing less. To be accepted it must be perfect. If you're not perfect, I ask you this, "Then, do you have one who is perfect and will stand for you?" The scripture says, *"There's one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."* Do you have an Advocate? *"If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous."* If you have one to stand for you, Who is perfect, then you've got a good hope! God will receive you on the basis of His perfection, and His righteousness. Do you see that, if you and Him are one?

I'll ask you a second question. Do you have a perfect righteousness before the law; have you kept the law? Well, preacher, no! Then, do you have someone who has kept the law, who will stand for you? Someone who has a perfect righteousness? *"Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth."* I have a hope of eternal life, because He stands for me as my Mediator. He stands for me as my Righteousness.

They asked old John Jasper, "Are you going to heaven?" He said, "yes!" When you get up there and they ask you, "what right have you got to be here, and what are you going to say?" I'm going to say, "I have no right at all to be here, I'm not here on my right; I'm here on the righteousness of Christ; He's my representative."

Thirdly, let me ask you this question. Will God hear you when you present your case? The scripture says that those who sin, were speechless. Are you going to do the talking? Do you think you've got God's ear? Really, the God of Glory; do you believe He'll hear you? No! Then, do you have one whom He will hear, who will intercede for you?

Paul said, *"Who is it that condemneth, it's Christ that died, yea rather is risen again and who is even at the right hand of God, who ever lives to make intercession for us."* Christ said, *"The Father always hears me."* I've got a hope. I don't hope that God will hear me, but I hope that God will hear Christ, and He intercedes for me.

Let me ask you again, "You say, do I have a hope? I'll ask you this, do you have a suitable sacrifice for sin, with which God is pleased?" The scripture says, *"That without shedding of blood there is no remission."* Where's your blood sacrifice? *"It's the blood that maketh atonement for the soul."* If you're going to intercede for yourself, you're going to represent yourself and you are going to come before God as your own priest, where's your offering, where's your sacrifice? Even Christ the man, had to have somewhat to offer. The scripture says, *"Lo I come to do thy will O God. He taketh away the first that he may establish the second and by one offering He hath perfected forever,*

*them that are sanctified.*” He laid down His life, he shed His blood. I have a hope of eternal life because He is a High Priest at the right hand of God, who gives His blood, who has His blood as a sacrifice for sin.

Now, the fifth question, this is the last one. Psalm 24 says, “*Who shall ascend unto the hill of the Lord?*” That’s what we’re asking, am I going to heaven? “*Who shall ascend unto the hill of the Lord? Who shall stand in His Holy place? He that hath clean hands;*” is that you? No! “*He that hath a pure heart;*” is that you? No! “*He that has never lifted His soul to vanity,*” is that you and me? No! “*One who has never spoken a lie,*” is that you and me? No!

Well, I’ll tell you it is Jesus Christ. That’s who it is. “*He hath clean hands and a pure heart, never lifted His soul to vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.*” He’s the perfect one! So, a man who is in Christ has a good hope. A man, who has a Mediator, Jesus Christ, has a good hope and the king’s law can’t touch it. The lion’s den can’t hold him, because Christ goes there in his place and he is set free! “*Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage*” (Gal. 5:1).