

Title: **THE GOSPEL OF THE LIONS' DEN**

Text: Daniel 6:1-28

Subject: *Darius, Daniel and the Lions' Den*

Date: Tuesday Evening — March 9, 2010

Tape: #Z-81b

Readings: *Darin Duff and Joe Blakely*

Introduction:

The title of my message is **THE GOSPEL FROM THE LIONS' DEN**. My text will be the 6th chapter of the Book of Daniel.

Daniel was one of the Jews carried into Babylonian captivity by Nebuchadnezzar. He had been given unique gifts by the Spirit of God, gifts only God could give to a man. By those gifts, Daniel was distinguished from other men and distinctly honored as the prophet of the most high God.

He had both told Nebuchadnezzar his dream and its' interpretation (Daniel 2); and he had interpreted the hand writing on the wall for King Belshazzar (Daniel 5). Belshazzar commanded that Daniel be clothed with scarlet, a gold chain was put on his neck, and he was made the third ruler in the kingdom (Daniel 5:25-29).

“And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. 26 This is the

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interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. 27 TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. 28 PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians. 29 Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.” (Daniel 5:25-29)

That night Belshazzar was slain and Darius became the king (Daniel 5:30-31).

DANIEL PREFERRED

Darius set one hundred and twenty princes over the kingdom. He established three presidents over those princes; and Daniel was made the Chief President. All the other princes had to report to Daniel. The Median king, Darius, so greatly respected and admired Daniel, “*because an excellent spirit was in him,*” that he planned to set him over the whole realm (Daniel 6:1-3).

“It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom; ² And over these three presidents; of whom Daniel *was* first: that the princes might give accounts

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unto them, and the king should have no damage. ³
Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents
and princes, because an excellent spirit *was* in him;
and the king thought to set him over the whole realm.”
(Daniel 6:1-3)

TRAP LAID

The other presidents and princes were jealous. They were green with envy. Their jealousy caused them to despise Daniel. Daniel had done nothing to harm them. They hated him because they envied him. Their hatred of God's servant caused them to seek some way to discredit him, some way to make him look bad to the king. But they found no fault with this faithful man.

They finally decided that the only area in which Daniel could be charged would be concerning his love for and faith in the true and living God (Daniel 6:4-9). Though Daniel was in a pagan society and surrounded by idolatrous people, he worshipped, prayed three times daily, and gave thanks before God (Daniel 6:10)

(Daniel 6:4-9) “Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he *was* faithful, neither was there any

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error or fault found in him. ⁵ Then said these men, **We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God.** ⁶ ¹ Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever. ⁷ All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, 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. ⁸ 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. ⁹ Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree.” (Daniel 6:4-9)

Pretending to honor King Darius, these wicked men drew up a decree. They called it a royal statute. In the decree, it was required that **for thirty days** if anyone in the kingdom prayed or asked a petition from any god or man, other than King Darius, that person would be cast into the den of lions.

They knew that, that this would be a sure trap for Daniel, because they knew him well enough to know that he would not go even a day without prayer. **Darius, fooled and**

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flattered by those men, signed the degree “*that it could not be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not*” (v. 8).

DANIEL ACCUSED

In verses 10-17, we see that Daniel did exactly as his enemies expected. Daniel prayed and gave thanks to God, just as he did every day.

“Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime. ¹¹ ¶ Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. ¹² Then they came near, and spake before the king concerning the king’s decree; Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask *a petition* of any God or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said, The thing *is* true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. ¹³ Then answered they and said before the king, That Daniel, which *is* of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day. ¹⁴ Then the

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king, when he heard these words, was sore displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him. ¹⁵ Then these men assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, **Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, That no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed.** ¹⁶ **Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions.** Now the king spake and said unto **Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee.** ¹⁷ And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and **the king sealed it with his own signet,** and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel.”
(Daniel 6:10-17)

The princes of Babylon reported Daniel to the king and reminded the king of his decree. Darius knew he had been fooled; and he was displeased with himself; but he was trapped by the very law he had made. He was honor bound to abide by the law, no matter the cost. Because he admired Daniel he labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him (v. 14); but there was nothing he could do.

- The law was established.
- Daniel had violated the law.
- And the sentence must be executed.

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The king commanded Daniel to be cast into the den of lions and said unto him, "**Thy God, whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee.**"

DANIEL DELIVERED

Read on...

(Daniel 6:18-28) "**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. ¹⁹ **Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions.** ²⁰ And when he came to the den, **he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?** ²¹ **Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever.** ²² **My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me:** forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt. — ²³ **Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den.** So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God. ²⁴ And the king commanded, and

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they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast *them* into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den. ——— ^{25 ¶} **Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth;** Peace be multiplied unto you. ²⁶ I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before **the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end.** ²⁷ He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions. ²⁸ So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.” (Daniel 6:18-28)

The Lord did indeed deliver Daniel from the lions. Daniel told Darius, “**My God hath sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me.**” Then the king brought those men who had accused Daniel and put them in the den of lions.

FOUR LESSONS

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This very familiar story is another of those beautiful Old Testament pictures of our blessed Savior and of our deliverance from the judgment and curse of the law of God, which we have broken. — Let me show you four things from this story, four lessons about God's salvation in this picture of redemption and grace by Christ Jesus, our Lord.

1. THE LAW OF GOD CANNOT BE CHANGED.

Like the law of the Medes and Persians, "*it altereth not.*" Unlike Darius' law, which was a foolish one, God's law is holy and just and good (Romans 7:12). It is a revelation of the holiness and righteousness of our God.

God's law is spiritual and requires more than mere outward obedience. God's law requires inward perfection as well as outward perfection (Romans 7:14; Matthew 5:21-28). There are no loopholes; and there can be no compromise. — "**Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things written in the book of the law to do them!**" (Galatians 3:10).

2. WE HAVE BROKEN GOD'S HOLY LAW.

The law of King Darius that Daniel violated was a wicked law and should have been disregarded by a true believer; but the law of the Lord is perfect. His commandments are

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pure. God's law should be kept by all; and all would profit greatly by keeping it. — But we have not, do not and cannot obey the law of God. Sin is the transgression of God's law; and we are all transgressors, sinners and workers of iniquity (Romans 3:10-19; Psalm 14:1-3).

“As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: ¹¹ There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. ¹² They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. ¹³ Their throat *is* an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps *is* under their lips: ¹⁴ Whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness: ¹⁵ Their feet *are* swift to shed blood: ¹⁶ Destruction and misery *are* in their ways: ¹⁷ And the way of peace have they not known: ¹⁸ There is no fear of God before their eyes. ¹⁹ ¶ Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.” (Romans 3:10-19)

“The fool hath said in his heart, *There is* no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, *there is* none that doeth good. ² The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, *and* seek God. ³ They are all

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gone aside, they are *all* together become filthy: *there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*” (Psalms 14:1-3)

Though we labor all our lives, till the going down of life's sun, as Darius labored all night long to both save Daniel and maintain his law, though we labor all our lives to do it, we cannot establish a righteousness, we cannot to appease a holy God, we cannot to escape the just condemnation of the law for our sins. God must and carry out sentence and judgment his holy law against our sins (Ezekiel 18:20).

“The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.” (Ezekiel 18:20)

3. YET, GOD WILL DELIVER HIS ELECT.

Darius could not find a way to deliver Daniel from his law. But our God, he who is the living God, the Triune Jehovah, found a way to honor his law, to satisfy his justice, without compromising his holiness, a way whereby he could be just and the justifier of sinners (Romans 3:19-26; Job 33:24). — **“Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom!”**

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(Romans 3:19-26) “Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: **that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.** ²⁰ Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for **by the law is the knowledge of sin.** ²¹ **But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;** ²² Even the righteousness of God *which is* **by faith of Jesus Christ** unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: ²³ For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; ²⁴ Being **justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:** ²⁵ 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; ²⁶ To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” (Romans 3:19-26 AV)

The Lord Jesus Christ (the God-man) (1 Timothy 3:16) “*came into this world, made of a woman, made under the law to redeem them who had broken the law.*” By his perfect obedience unto death, because he was made sin for us, all who trust the Son of God are made the righteousness

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of God in him. By his death (1 Peter 3:18; Isaiah 53:4-6) he took our sins, made them his very own and our debt.

“Jesus paid it all, all the debt we owe.
Sin has left a crimson stain, —
He washed it white as snow!”

God our Savior delivered us by going into “the den of lions” for us. — Read verse 22.

- “*My God hath sent his Angel!*”
- He “*shut the lions’ mouths!*”
- “*They have not hurt me!*”
- “*Before him innocency was found in me!*”
- “*I have done no hurt!*” — Read on (v. 23).

“Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God.” (Daniel 6:23)

He did not come to destroy his law but to fulfill it, not to find a way around justice but to meet it head on. Bearing our sins in his own body on the tree, he satisfied the law; he magnified the law and made it honorable. In Christ, the Lord our God calls sinners to himself as “*a just God and a Savior.*”

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4. **THAT GOD WHO SAVES BY MERCY AND BY TRUTH, BY GRACE AND BY JUSTICE, THAT GOD WHO SAVES SINNERS HONORABLY, HE IS THE TRUE AND LIVING GOD.**

That is exactly what Darius wrote in his decree (Daniel 6:25-28).

“Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. ²⁶ I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom **men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel**: for **he is the living God**, and **stedfast for ever**, and **his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end.** ²⁷ **He delivereth and rescueth**, and **he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth**, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions. ²⁸ So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.” (Daniel 6:25-28 AV)

That is the gospel from the lions' den, the gospel of substitution and satisfaction. Christ, our substitute made full satisfaction to the law and the justice of God on our

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behalf. He obtained eternal redemption for every sinner who trusts him alone.

Amen.