

Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

You Must be Born Again!

“Hear then His voice today. Perhaps you are made aware of the necessity of a change of heart and life, at some future period, in order that you might die safely. Such a change is equally necessary if you wish to live comfortably now. As long as you are unfit to die, you can have no true enjoyment of life. It is an easy thing to prove that procrastination is highly dangerous. Do you consider how many uncertainties you must presume upon? Are you sure that you will not be suddenly cut off by an unexpected stroke, or visited with fever? Tremble lest such be your end, if you are trifling with God, who is now calling you by His Gospel to seek Him today.” [John Newton]

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Daniel in the Lions’ Den – God is God in Babylon AND Jerusalem

January 19th, 2025

Sermon Text: Daniel 6

Scripture Reading: Daniel 6

The book of Daniel, like most of the Bible, has been the object of attack by higher critical academics

who maintain that it was not written by Daniel, but by some unnamed writer or writers many centuries after the time of Daniel. These people of course approach the Bible in a largely anti-supernatural mindset. They deny that God intervenes directly in human events and therefore the miracles and prophecies of Scripture are myths. Folklore.

We reject these falsehoods and with good reason accept the Bible as the inspired, inerrant Word of God. We maintain that Daniel was a real historic person and the author of this book which bears his name. Furthermore, the Lord Jesus Himself testified to it:

And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. "So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. (Matthew 24:14-16)

God, speaking through Ezekiel, presents Daniel as a real person:

And the word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, when a land sins against me by acting faithlessly, and I stretch out my hand against it and break its supply of bread and send famine upon it, and cut off from it man and beast, even if these three men, Noah,

Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver but their own lives by their righteousness, declares the Lord GOD. (Ezekiel 14:12-14)

NOTE: As we consider this account of Daniel and the lions' den, or the record of the days of Noah for example. *Let's be very, very careful not to tell "Bible stories" in a way that we might tell a fairy tale to our children.* This is a mistake that I believe is much easier to make than we might realize. *We should teach God's Word to children in much the same manner and tone as we would teach it to adults.* I do not like books which, for instance, have a title like, "Bible Stories for Children." That communicates an unspoken, non-verbal yet strong message that the Bible contains "stories" which are fitting for children but which the more mature person treats differently.

I don't want to spend much time on this matter of the historicity of Daniel, but let me just point out one more example of the critics' attacks. These supposed scholars

will claim, for instance, that no other record of Darius the Mede has been discovered and therefore he never lived and this account here in Daniel 6 is false. Such claims have been made about other facts in Scripture which archaeology later discovered were in fact real.

And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. (Hebrews 11:6)

Lawfare is Nothing New

Daniel 6:1-5 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.** (3) Then this Daniel became distinguished above all the other high officials and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him. And the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. (4) Then the high

officials and the satraps sought to find a ground for complaint against Daniel with regard to the kingdom, 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.”

The king set up his administration in the newly-conquered Babylon. 120 officials were appointed, perhaps assigned to particular districts, and then – to hold them accountable – he appointed three “high officials,” one of whom was Daniel. The purpose was this – *so that the king might suffer no loss.* That is, these three were particularly trusted by the king and their job was to oversee the 120 to prevent corruption, especially the embezzlement of the king’s funds. Corruption by government officials is nothing new. We are seeing a somewhat similar thing happening in our own nation today. Measures are being taken to

oversee and hold accountable government officials and agencies which without doubt have been misusing if not outright stealing public funds. And what is the reaction? It is this:

(4) Then the high officials and the satraps sought to find a ground for complaint against Daniel with regard to the kingdom....

Why were these wicked men trying to destroy Daniel? Well, they may have been racist – Daniel was a Hebrew. But more than that, they hated him because he was an honest man. They had no doubt hear of his record under Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar *and they feared him*. They were corrupt and they knew that Daniel would put an end to their money-skimming tactics. It would be like a wise, honest person being appointed over our congress to watch very carefully all of the stock market activities of the members of congress. So they hated Daniel and they feared him. They had to get rid of him.

Let's be wise. When we see one person being attacked and accused by people who themselves are of doubtful character and who have been growing wealthy since obtaining a position or office, it is time to suspect that they are targeting that one person to cover up their own crimes and protect their own illegal sources of income. In our nation it is not the king, but we the people whose money is being stolen.

But these evil officials ran into a big problem:

...but they could find no ground for complaint or any fault, because he was faithful, and no error or fault was found in him.

Now, this is something that is very, very rare. Daniel had an absolutely clean record. These evil enemies gave it their best shot to try to discover even some small detail to accuse him of – but they failed. There was nothing but honesty and integrity. Think carefully on this – how long would it take your enemies or mine to look into our

history to find some blemish, some basis of accusation? Would you want to be scrutinized by that kind of lens? NOTE: This is the tactic we see very typically in the current confirmation hearings. Again, Satan's methods are the same. But in Daniel's case there was absolutely nothing these enemies could even twist into an accusation.

But they don't stop there....

(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.**"

"We are going to have to attack him in regard to his religion." Sound familiar? They did the same with Jesus –

Matthew 26:59-61 Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking false testimony against Jesus that they might put him to death, (60) but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward (61) and said, "This man said, 'I

am able to destroy the temple of God, and to rebuild it in three days.'"

Once more current application is not difficult. "Is it not true that you believe the Bible says that homosexuality is a sin?!" "Did you not refuse to make a wedding cake for a homosexual wedding?" See it? Finding a basis for accusation in the truth of a Christian's faith. The thing is Satanic. This is what they resolved to do, and this is how the plot went:

Daniel 6:6-9 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 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.

Came by agreement. In other words, this was conspiracy. Here it is in our own criminal code definition-

A RICO crime is a racketeering offense that violates the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act. RICO crimes are illegal activities that are part of a pattern of racketeering activity, which is a type of organized crime.

Nails it. That is what these political terrorists were doing to Daniel. They came *by agreement*. It is incredible how we see the wicked forming these alliances of organizations. They are united by the hatred of a common enemy, but more fundamentally they are united by Satan to destroy the righteous. It is a *racket* –

- A fraudulent scheme or enterprise
- An illegal or dishonest activity that makes money

This is what these enemies of Daniel were – racketeers.

NOTE: You cannot help but see direct parallels here between the tactics of Daniel’s enemies and the enemies we face today here in our own nation. What do we call this type of enemy today which Daniel faced? It is this - *the deep state*. This is Satan. He works in darkness. There is a rightful king, but Daniel’s enemies are working secretly to oppose the king and further their own evil program.

The king was a dupe. He did not consult advisors – such as Daniel whom he realized had “an excellent spirit in him.” No. He just signed the decree –

... 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.

What stupid law!!! If in fact making a request to a god or a man besides the king were an evil thing, *why limit the law to only a 30 day duration?* The king should have known immediately that there was a conspiracy and evil motive afoot. But he was fool, and he signed it.

Now, this is what gave their trap what they thought would be a no fail element –

“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.”

Once again we see the very same kind of lawfare at work today. Without doubt many of the laws and orders which have been put into effect in our own nation have had their origin in an identical pattern. They are not issued for the good of the nation or for the effecting of justice, but are weapons designed to attack righteousness. And without doubt many of them originate in the

schemes of evil people who hate righteousness and have the king, or in our case, the President, sign them.

We have in our own nation an example of the unchangeable law of the Medes and Persians – *the presidential pardon*. A pardon cannot be changed, if I understand things rightly. If it is a righteous pardon, that is a good thing. But this pardoning power certainly can be abused.

Well, you know how things proceed. These enemies spy on Daniel.

NOTE: it is amazing to me how current this history is for us! Wicked government officials have monitored the social media accounts looking for a ground of accusation. Spying on the righteous.

Daniel 6:10-13 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.”

In some ways this is the most wonderful part of this history –

When Daniel knew that the document had been signed...

What you have here is civil disobedience at its best. Daniel did not alter his prayers nor did he change the place of his praying. Fully visible to all, in the same manner as always, Daniel kept right on praying – and without doubt his prayers were aloud. He no doubt knew the enemies were watching him. Centuries later the Apostle Peter would say it –

We must obey God rather than men.

Now it is profitable for us to consider how Daniel would have been tempted, as we would be tempted and as we *may well be tempted now* to avoid the lions’ den.

- Don’t pray in front of the windows
- Don’t pray aloud
- Pray less often
- Pray at a different time – perhaps at night

Can you see how these alterations could be argued to be reasonable? Other Christians – for instance in

times of Rome's persecutions – have met together secretly. Calvin left France and went to Geneva due to Rome's persecution. Luther's friends essentially kidnapped him and took him into hiding. But Daniel's conscience and faith in the Lord directed him to keep right on just as he always had. *There are great lessons for us here in Daniel which directly address the Christian's experience of living in times of persecution when perhaps tyrants even forbid people to profess Christ or for the Christian church to exist.*

In our nation we enjoy a right which Daniel did not have (but which is often under attack today)

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.” (First Amendment to the Constitution)

Notice that this first amendment *just addresses a prohibition upon the government, not upon the Church.*

But the laws of the Medes and Persians – indeed, virtually NO nation before our own – had freedom of religion guaranteed. So, the king could sign this kind of edict just as Nebuchadnezzar had earlier in Daniel's life:

Daniel 3:3-6 Then the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces gathered for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. And they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. (4) And the herald proclaimed aloud, “You are commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, (5) that when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. (6)

And whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace.”

Well, the king recognized his stupidity and he knew he was trapped by his own law. Apparently he loved and respected Daniel –

Daniel 6:14 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.

No loophole could be discovered. All night long the king tried, but he came up empty and back came the accusers –

Daniel 6:15-16 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!”

There appears to be no escape at all and you can be sure that Daniel’s wicked enemies were sneering and mocking and partying on that without a doubt they had gotten rid of Daniel.

NOTE: There are some clear parallels between Daniel and the Lord Jesus – Daniel being a kind of type of Christ (Just as Joseph was).

- His enemies hated him and sought to put him to death
- They could not find any grounds to accuse him
- He was “buried” and a stone was laid over the entrance
- And, as we will see, Daniel “rose again.”

Daniel 6:17-19 And a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet and with the signet of his lords, that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel. (18) Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; no

diversions were brought to him, and sleep fled from him. (19) Then, at break of day, the king arose and went in haste to the den of lions.

The primary message for us really throughout the book of Daniel is this –

God is sovereign over all. There is only one true and living God, and he is not the god of the Babylonians or the Medes or the Persians or the Egyptians or of America or Russia or China. God is not some localized deity among a pantheon of deities. He is One.

Ephesians 4:4-6 There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— (5) one Lord, one faith, one baptism, (6) one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Isaiah 43:10-11 “You are my witnesses,” declares the LORD, “and my servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe me and understand that I

am he. Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me. (11) I, I am the LORD, and besides me there is no savior.

We know how the event turns out, and it is glorious – one of those times at which you would like to have been present:

Daniel 6:20-23 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?” (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.

The king's behavior is interesting. We would imagine that a pagan king would have been without any hope – it was after all a hopeless situation. And yet, Darius calls out to Daniel. Do you suppose the enemies were there too? I bet they were, and what do you think their expression would have been when there was an answer out of that pit? – *O king, live forever! My God sent His angel... ”.*

And here is still another parallel between Daniel and the Lord Jesus – *his enemies are cast into the pit, just as Jesus' enemies, including Satan, will be cast into the Lake of Fire.*

Daniel 6:24 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.

There is an interesting aspect to this account which recurs in Scripture, and it is this –

“...they, their children, and their wives...were cast into the den of lions.”

This strikes us as unjust, but we know that the Lord never does what is unjust. It was Darius' command to throw them all in, but it is presented here in Scripture in a context of divine justice. You see it in Korah's rebellion –

Numbers 16:32-33 And the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the people who belonged to Korah and all their goods. (33) So they and all that belonged to them went down alive into Sheol, and the earth closed over them, and they perished from the midst of the assembly.

You see it in the flood of Noah's day. Entire families. At Jericho. At Sodom. To some extent these things we must commit to the character of the Lord and know that

all He does is right and just. But we can note this:

- All human beings are under God's condemnation from birth – fallen in Adam, totally depraved
- Not one of God's elect will ever perish
- A warning to all parents that there is a kind of truth that they can take their children to heaven or to hell.

This latter point is one which demands much sober thinking on our part. In this church, all these decades, we have seen children born, grow up, and choose to reject Christ. And largely this rejection has been due to the ungodliness of their parents. I cannot deal in depth with this subject this morning, but I very much recommend that we all think carefully about it. We do not sin in isolation. Short of the Lord's mercy and election, there is only going to be one outcome in the fruit of ungodly parents, and that is *ungodly children*.

In addition, there is a serious challenge here for children as they grow up and into adulthood. They must choose to follow Christ, or ungodly parents. "*Whoever loves father or mother more than Me....*".

Once again then we have events concluded by a declaration from a pagan king which honors and praises Daniel's God –

Daniel 6:25-28 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.

And all because Daniel feared the
Lord and not men.