**Daniel in the Lion’s Den (SR: Daniel 6)**

 *“Children thrill at this story of Daniel in the lion’s den, but it is more than a child’s story. It is for [people] of great courage who have childlike faith and humility.”* (Robert Harkrider, *Daniel*, 33) So today let’s consider this amazing account today as we build our faith in God!

**I. An Overview of The Book Of Daniel**

A. Daniel 1 – ***Babylon*** – Daniel & friends resolve to abstain from King Nebuchadnezzar’s choice meats and wine. They are tested for 10 days, excel all others, and enter King Nebuchadnezzar’s personal service. They are found to be 10x better than all other advisers and Daniel is revealed to live until the 1st year of Cyrus, a Persian ruler who was prophesied to release Israel & Judah from their 70-year captivity.

 B. Daniel 2 – ***Babylon*** – King Nebuchadnezzar has a series of troublesome dreams. Desiring interpretation he challenges the wise men of Babylon to tell both the dream and its interpretation. Nobody is able to do this, so Nebuchadnezzar decrees that all wisemen die. Daniel offers to interpret the dream and after a short time, reveals the content of the dream and its interpretation. The dream concerns a succession of four world empires depicted as a statue (Babylon, gold head; Medo-Persian, silver chest and arms; Greece, bronze belly and thighs; Rome, legs of iron and feet of iron/clay). This succession will culminate in the coming of the kingdom of God (an uncut stone which grows into a mountain) which will destroy all of these kingdoms.

 C. Daniel 3 – ***Babylon*** – King Nebuchadnezzar gloats in being the golden kingdom, building a statue in his honor which is to be worshipped. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refuse and are cast into the fiery furnace. They are spared by God with the presence of one like a son of the gods within the furnace itself. Nebuchadnezzar recognizes the God of the Hebrews as a chief god.

D. Daniel 4 – ***Babylon*** – Nebuchadnezzar authors at least some of this chapter and relates how the most high God humbled him. As Nebuchadnezzar flourished, he received a vision of a massive tree which is cut down, stump bound, and the one who the tree represents is made as a wild beast until he recognized the power of the most high God. Daniel (aka Belteshazzar) interprets the dream saying that the tree represents Nebuchadnezzar. It all comes to fruition & Nebuchadnezzar humbly recognizes the most high God, and is restored to power.

E. Daniel 5 – ***Babylon*** – A new king, Belshazzar, rules and has a drunken feast using the holy objects taken from the Jerusalem temple. The fingers of a man’s hand appear and write *mene, mene, tekel, upharsin* upon the wall. Daniel is asked to interpret the inscription. He reveals that the empire of Babylon has come to an end and that very night, the Medo-Persian Empire, the 2nd empire from the vision in Daniel 2, takes over Babylon, led by Darius the Mede.

F. Daniel 6 – ***Medes/Persians*** – Daniel in the Lion’s Den (our subject today)

 G. Daniel 7 – ***Babylon*** – During the reign of Belshazzar, Daniel receives a vision of four terrifying beasts. This vision is essentially the same as that in chapter 2, but with more detail, specifically on the coming of the kingdom of God and the Son of Man as well as the 4th empire, Rome.

 H. Daniel 8 – ***Babylon*** – During the reign of Belshazzar, Daniel receives another vision with a ram and a goat. The ram represents the Medes/Persians and the goat which destroys the ram represents the Grecian kingdom. Notable figures like Alexander the Great and Antiochus the Great are discussed and the breaking apart of the Grecian Empire is also foretold here.

 I. Daniel 9 – ***Medes/Persians*** – During the reign of Darius, Daniel reads from the scroll of Jeremiah and realizes that the 70 years of captivity have come to an end and the exiles are soon to return to their land. He offers communal intercessory prayer acknowledging the sins of the people and asking for the grace of God to abound toward them. Angel Gabriel answers Daniel & foretells period of “70 weeks” preceding coming of Jesus.

 J. Daniel 10 – ***Medes/Persians*** – During the reign of Cyrus, a message is revealed to Daniel. In the vision, it is revealed that the archangel Michael had been warring w/ prince of kingdom of Persia. The kingdom of Greece is said to shortly arrive.

 K. Daniel 11 – ***Medes/Persians*** – During the reign of Darius the Mede, the warring between the Persians and the Greeks is beginning to be seen by Daniel. The *king of the south* wars with the *king of the north*, all culminating in one ruler of Greece, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, exerting a hateful and consuming power over God’s people. Though he is powerful against God’s people, his end is prophesied.

 L. Daniel 12 – ***Medes/Persians*** – An expansion of ch. 11, influence of Antiochus IV will be great, but Michael the archangel will overpower him. God’s people are given a closing exhortation to remain faithful throughout these difficult years to come.

**II. The Famous Narrative in Daniel 6**

 A. vv. 1-5 – Daniel, the distinguished and blameless commissioner of the Medo-Persian Empire & the plotting jealousy of the other leaders.

 B. vv. 6-9 – The jealous leaders succeed in tricking the king to sign a decree which will cost the life of Daniel. *“They knew the only way they could bring some charge against him would have to be related to his service to God…His outward life was without fault because his inward life was wholly devout and pure. Three times a day he kneeled upon his knees and prayed.”* (Harkrider, 32) Their trickery is calculated to boost his ego & give expression to his new authority having just taken over the Babylonian Empire.

 C. vv. 10-15 – Daniel hears of the decree, continues to petition the Lord (cf. Ps. 55:17f; 1Kgs. 8:41-43//2Chron. 6:34), and is entrapped in this web of deception and jealousy. King Darius makes every effort possible to free Daniel, highly motivated to save his effective commissioner. It may have also been that Darius may have been motivated by a generational connection as he was in his 60s and Daniel was at the very least in his upper 70s, since Babylonian captivity of 70 years has passed.

 D. vv. 16-18 – Daniel is cast into the lion’s den and wished good luck from Darius. Darius fasts all night, denies all luxuries typically afforded the king, and could not sleep. One of Darius’ descendants, Darius III, will later face the same situation, having convicted an innocent man to death, unable to change the law, regretting his error (Diodorus Siculus xvii.30).

 E. vv. 19-24 – Daniel’s trust in the Lord and blamelessness, as well as the mercy of God by means of an angelic protector, cause him to ascend harmless out of the pit at sunrise (cf. Jer. 38:11-13; Heb. 11:33f). Darius gives orders that all those who plotted against Daniel, as well as their families, be cast into the pit. They lions devour them instantly. The famous Greek historian Herodotus attests to the principle of familial punishment being common among the Persians specifically (3:119).

 F. vv. 25-28 – Darius makes a formal decree unto all the peoples of the empire glorifying the “God of Daniel”. *“The decree recalls that of Nebuchadnezzar (3:29), but whereas his was couched negatively to punish any word against the God of the three men, here awe of him is positively commanded throughout the empire.”* (Baldwin, *TOTC,* 146) A final note closes out this historical section of the book by explaining that Daniel continues to excel in his service as a now aged commissioner of the Medo-Persian Empire.

**III. This Famous Narrative Points Us to Jesus!**

 A. The Apostle Philip told Nathanael, *“We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”* (Jn. 1:45)

B. Jesus said that He came *“to fulfill the Law and the Prophets”* (Matt. 5:17). After His resurrection, He spoke to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus and told them, *“O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?”* (Lk. 24:25f)

C. Daniel was a prophet of God who wrote of Jesus! And since the Bible explicitly says this about the prophets, we would do well not to overlook the connections provided in the account of Daniel in the Lion’s Den to the account of the death, burial, and resurrection of the Son of God. Let us detail just a few! (Perry Hall, “Jesus in the Lion’s Den,” *Biblical Insights* 14.5 (May 2014), 28)

1. Of the tribe of Judah & of the royal family (Dan. 1:3-6; Matt. 1:1-16; 2:6)

2. Was to receive a kingdom (Dan. 6:3; Lk. 22:29; 23:42; Jn. 18:36)

3. Envious enemies try to trap an innocent man (Dan. 6:3f; Matt. 22:15; 26:59f; 27:18; Mk. 15:10)

4. Betrayed by associates (Dan. 6:3f; Lk. 22:3-6)

5. Enemies try to accuse of breaking law (Dan. 6:5; Mt. 26:65f; Lk. 6:7; 11:54; 20:20)

6. Enemies appealed to governmental authority, to which they falsely claimed loyalty (Dan. 6:6; Matt. 27:2, 11f; Lk. 23:1f; Jn. 19:15)

7. Enemies colluded together (Dan. 6:7; Matt. 26:3f)

8. Suffered because the law cannot be changed (Dan. 6:8; Heb. 9:22; Gal. 3:13)

9. Prayed 3x on knees before arrested and then arrested in the place of prayer (Dan. 6:10f; Matt. 26:36-44; Lk. 22:39-56)

10. Another attempted rescue (Dan. 6:14; Jn. 19:12; Lk. 23:1-25)

11. Placed in a cave, stone rolled closing the cave, and official seal place on the cave (Dan. 6:16f; Matt. 27:60, 66)

12. Uninjured in cave & discovered alive at sunrise (Dan. 6:19-22; Mt. 28:1-6; Acts 2:31)

13. Of the living God (Dan. 6:20; Matt. 16:16)

14. Angels came (Dan. 6:22; Matt. 28:2)

15. Exits from the cave victorious (Dan. 6:23; Matt. 28:6; Acts 2:31)

16. Families of the guilty mentioned (Dan. 6:24; Matt. 27:25)

17. Enemies destroyed through these events (Dan. 6:24; Col. 2:14f)

18. Exiting the cave results in worship/praise (Dan. 6:26f; Lk. 24:53)

19. Exalted after leaving the cave (Dan. 6:28; Mk. 16:19; Acts 2:36)

D. With numerous Scriptures explicitly stating that the OT prophets spoke in divers ways of Jesus, including foreshadowing & typology, & w/ such obvious connections b/w the account of Daniel in the lion’s den & the death, burial, & resurrection of Jesus, we would wholly deprive ourselves of the riches of this text by not seeing Jesus in it! Daniel in the lion’s den illustrates Jesus in the lion’s den on our behalf!

 God saved Daniel from a pit in which lions devoured many other men. In a much more profound way, God entered the flesh in Jesus, was crucified and buried, entering the pit of death, so that He might save us from Satan, a roaring lion who devours many souls.

Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God? He can wash away your sins through your obedience and faith. If you would like to be delivered from the eternal pit of torment that you have earned for your sins and be transferred to God’s kingdom of marvelous light, today is the day of salvation. Express your need as we stand and sing.