The Testing of Our Faith: What Can We Learn from Daniel?

Daniel 6:16-28

May 4, 2025

**Introduction**

 Good morning! Today we are going to return to our primary book of study which is Daniel. It has been seven weeks since we have been in this book, so as we begin today, we need to review what has happened so far in the book. Daniel and his three friends were taken from Jerusalem and forced to serve on the court of Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon. After they were taken, they were instructed in the ways of the Babylonians and also faced several trials for their faith. Daniel was used by God to interpret two dreams of the king and then his 3 friends were thrown into the fiery furnace for refusing to worship the king’s statue. Now we are finding that Daniel himself is being persecuted for his faith in God. In chapter 6 so far King Darius has been manipulated into signing a new law forbidding people from praying to any other God than him for a period of thirty days. The men who got the king to approve of this measure did so in order to have Daniel eliminated from the council to the king. When Daniel was accused by the other wise men in the kingdom the king had no choice but to have him thrown into the lion’s den. As we begin at verse 16, we will see what unfolds after Daniel is thrown into the den. Please read with me Daniel 6:16-28 **“16 Then the king gave orders, and Daniel was brought in and thrown into the lions’ den. The king said to Daniel, “Your God whom you continually serve will Himself rescue you.” 17 And a stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signet rings of his nobles, so that nothing would be changed regarding Daniel. 18 Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting, and no entertainment was brought before him; and his sleep fled from him. 19 Then the king got up at dawn, at the break of day, and went in a hurry to the lions’ den. 20 And when he had come near the den to Daniel, he cried out with a troubled voice. The king began speaking and said to Daniel, “Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you continually serve, been able to rescue you from the lions?” 21 Then Daniel spoke to the king, “O king, live forever! 22 My God sent His angel and shut the lions’ mouths, and they have not harmed me, since I was found innocent before Him; and also toward you, O king, I have committed no crime.” 23 Then the king was very glad and gave orders for Daniel to be lifted up out of the den. So Daniel was lifted up out of the den, and no injury whatever was found on him, because he had trusted in his God. 24 The king then gave orders, and they brought those men who had maliciously accused Daniel, and they threw them, their children, and their wives into the lions’ den; and they had not reached the bottom of the den before the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones. 25 Then Darius the king wrote to all the peoples, nations, and populations of all languages who were living in all the land: “May your peace be great! 26 I issue a decree that in all the realm of my kingdom people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel; For He is the living God and enduring forever, And His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed, And His dominion will be forever. 27 He rescues, saves, and performs signs and miracles in heaven and on earth, He who has also rescued Daniel from the power of the lions.” 28 So this Daniel enjoyed success in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.”**

**Daniel’s Faith is Tested (vv. 16-17)**

 As the passage begins Daniel is thrown into the lion’s den by order of the king. What the king says to Daniel after throwing him in is very powerful. The king says “Your God whom you continually serve will Himself rescue you.” Now why would a pagan king say such a positive thing about the God of Israel? Very likely the king is aware of what happened to King Nebuchadnezzar during his seven years of living like a wild animal. He was also aware of the way that God rescued Daniel’s three friends from the fiery furnace. Even though we do not have verification of this we can also assume that King Darius knows something about the history of the Jewish nation, how God delivered them from Egypt through His many signs and wonders. The king shows that he has confidence that the God of Israel will deliver Daniel from this horrible situation.

 Once the king says this to Daniel the stone is rolled over the mouth of the den and is then sealed with the signet ring of not only the king, but his nobles as well. A rope would be tied around the stone and then wax was put on the front where the ropes combined where then the wax would be melted so that the ring insignia could be seen. If anyone were to tamper with this in any way the king would know. This is similar to what was done to the tomb of Jesus when it was being guarded by the Roman soldiers. The chief priests wanted every precaution possible to be taken because they feared that the disciples would try to steal the body and then claim that He had been resurrected. As we continue in the passage, we will find that the den will not be tampered with from the outside in any way, it is what happens in the den that makes all the difference in this account.

 What do we learn from these first two verses? We see that Daniel was falsely accused of breaking a law that was designed to keep people from worshiping the God of heaven. The heart of this law was to make certain that the subjects of the king would remain loyal to him. Just like Daniel there will be times in our lives where we may face trials for our faith and also have to endure accusations that are not true. One of the false accusations that has been levied against followers of Christ lately is that we are intolerant and unloving because we speak the truth regarding the way that God has designed His creation to live. This is a false accusation because being unloving means that someone has no care or concern for others. The reason why followers of Christ want others to know the truth is because we love them. If you love someone you want to be open and honest with them, not allow them to do things that will cause them to stumble and rebel against their creator. Regardless of our intention, it is still easy for others to label us as intolerant because they do not agree with the message. We do not have to fear that mankind responds this way to the Word of God because God shows us in His Word that when we are faithful to His Word, He will be with us. We may have to face persecution or possibly even death for our faith, but no matter what happens He is with us all the way. Daniel remained obedient to God despite the circumstances he found himself in. Will we be able to say the same?

**God is Present with Daniel in His Trial (vv. 18-23)**

 In verse 18 the king goes back to his quarters and is unable to sleep all night because he feared for Daniel’s life. Why was this the case? For what reason might the king be worried for Daniel? I think it is at this point that the king realized the trap that his officials had put him in. Even though Daniel remained faithful to God by continuing to pray, he also showed nothing but loyalty to King Darius as well. This made the king regret what he had done. Guilt is a horrible feeling and we can be certain that the King was really feeling bad for what has transpired.

 In verse 19 the King gets up early to run to the den to see if Daniel was still okay. He calls out to Daniel in verse 20 to ask if he was still okay. When he received the affirmation in verses 21 and 22 the king is very happy to see that Daniel is till alive and as we are told in verse 23 that there was no injury found on him in any way.

 In verses 18-23 we have seen that God sent the angel into the den to shut the mouths of the lions. God chose to act in a miraculous manner to save his prophet which also has a life-changing impact on the Kingdom of the Medes. What this shows us is that no matter what trials we face in life that God is going through those trials with us. What is the most challenging aspect of this point is that God knows all things, so the way He chooses to intervene is based upon His will. Accepting the will of God takes a lot of trust and in doing so we must admit that we do not know what is best, but certainly God does. This brings up a question that I know challenges many of those who have a hard time accepting the Christian faith. Why does God sometimes rescue people from horrible situations like the lion’s den or the fiery furnace, but He did not save the Christians persecuted for their faith by the Roman Empire? I have to admit that I do not know why God would save some, but then choose not to save others. What I do know is that all of the things that God allows to happen takes place because He knows what is best that will bring about His perfect will. **“28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28).** Now what does Paul mean when he says that all things work together for good? He means that all things work together for the will of God to be fulfilled. In this situation it was good for Daniel to be spared so that those in exile would be encouraged which would eventually lead to the people returning to Jerusalem. In the case of the persecuted Christians who were not spared, their sacrifice encouraged other Christians to remain in the faith. No matter what the reason, we trust in God because He has always acted in ways that has resulted in the prosperity of His people. Even in exile God was with His people, He never left nor forsook them even though many times they forsook Him. We can expect the same from God who will walk through our trials with us. Even if our faith costs us our life, we know there is a great reward for faithfulness.

**Daniel in Vindicated by the King (vv. 24-27)**

 After Daniel is removed from the den, the men who had falsely accused Daniel of wrongdoing are thrown into the den. Not only are those men thrown in, but their wives and their children were as well. They were torn to shreds before they ever hit the ground. Now a question that may be asked is why the women and children were punished with these evil men? In the Ancient Near East, it was a common practice to punish the entire family when the father did evil against the empire. The reason for this was to stop any possibility of the other members of the family taking retribution against the king. In our modern day understanding of justice this seems very harsh, but this was the usual custom at this time.

 It is ironic that these men and their families received such a harsh punishment, but that was the result of them manipulating the king and then using the law to force Daniel out of the king’s court. In essence these men not only desired to discredit Daniel, but what they did was conspire to murder him. What they had done was so egregious that the king felt it demanded blood for blood.

 In verse 25 the King does what the kings of those days did by writing a proclamation to all the people under the authority of the Persian Empire that the God of Daniel is to be respected and feared because there is no other God that can save in such a way. Let’s take a few moments to see exactly what the king says about God in verses 26 and 27. The first point that the king makes is that He is the living God and that He endures forever. This is in stark contrast to the gods that the Medes and Persians worshiped who were not known to be eternal in nature like the God of heaven. Secondly, His kingdom will not be destroyed meaning that there is nothing man can do to bring down the kingdom of God. This is echoed by Jesus when He calls Peter the rock and tells Him that Satan will not be able to prevail against the church. No matter what Satan does to attack the church he is doomed to fail because God will not allow His church to be defeated. Thirdly, His dominion is forever. Not only does God eternally exist, but His kingdom will never end. This is in reference to the Kingdom of God that has always existed and will exist for all time. Now, as we try to wrap our fallible minds around the concept of eternity I know that it causes mental constipation. We cannot fathom it, but I am happy to tell you that God always keeps His promises so we can rest assured in that promise.

 Continuing to verse 27 the king says that He rescues, saves and performs miracles as well as signs. These signs and acts of salvation are done so that the people would remember that He is with them no matter where they may be. The ultimate sign of His saving power is when He rescued Daniel from the mouth of the lions. This sign of power made an impression on the king that would not only impact the time of his rule, but also would have an impact on Cyrus later.

 What we learn from these verses is that God vindicates His people meaning that He rises to defend those who are faithful to Him. There are several occurrences in Scripture where God provides both physical rescue to His people such as with Daniel. He also rescued Peter from prison in the book of Acts. However, there are times when God chooses not to deliver those faithful to Him physically. This does not mean that He is not with them, this means that they are bringing glory to His name through their sacrifice. As we have mentioned before, the Christians who were persecuted by the Roman Empire as well as each of the Apostles who were martyred for their faith, glorified God by the way they faced death. We also can face physical death for our faith with assurance. In Revelation 6:9-11 the Apostle John records when he sees the dead in Christ rewarded eternally for their devotion to Him. **“ 9When *the Lamb* broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been killed because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained; 10and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who live on the earth?’ 11And a white robe was given to each of them; and they were told that they were to rest for a little while longer, until *the number of* their fellow servants and their brothers *and sisters* who were to be killed even as they *had been*, was completed also.”** Even if the enemy may take our lives he cannot take away from us the assurance of our eternal reward with Christ in His kingdom. Blessed assurance!

**Daniel is Rewarded for His Faithfulness (v. 28)**

As we conclude the passage in verse 28 we read that Daniel enjoyed success during both the reigns of Darius as well as Cyrus. God was with Daniel all the days of his life and remained his source of wisdom and guidance. What can we take from this verse? We need to remember that our God is not only with us when we have success, He walks with us through the valleys of darkness as well as in times of uncertainty. There is no situation that He does not understand or a problem we face that He cannot relate to. I have referred to this verse before, but the writer of Hebrews gives us these words of comfort **“For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things just as *we are, yet* without sin.” (Hebrews 4:15).** The Lord Jesus has been through everything we can face in this life, and He was able to do so without sinning against the Father. Even though we do sin and fall short of God’s glory, He still gives us grace and allows us to experience the power of His saving love. Just like Daniel, you and I have the assurance that God is with us and will walk alongside us no matter what storms we face in this life.

**Conclusion**

This morning as we conclude our time in the word together may we take the lessons from the life of Daniel and apply them to our lives daily. The account of Daniel is not just about how he was able to escape the mouth of the lions, it is about his faithfulness to God in every season of his life. He did not allow the threat of physical harm to deter him from his devotion to the Lord. Each of us will face a lion’s den at some point in our lives. What we need to decide is how we will respond when that den confronts us. Will we rely on our own strength and try to overcome with human knowledge, or will we follow the example of Daniel by standing firm in the faith, trusting in God no matter what happens and waiting for Him to act according to His will? May we be known as followers of Christ who stand firm in the Word, but may we also be known as God’s people who show His love and grace to others with the goal of reaching them for Christ. We are fighting the war to win the souls of men so that one day all of us may be able to stand in the presence of God covered in the blood of Christ making us pure in His sight. Thank you, Lord, for your grace and mercy making eternal life with You possible. Amen.

To all who receive our sermon mailings: We hope that you are being blessed by these sermons. We ask that you pray for the congregation as we begin our outreach activities to the community this summer. We desire to share the good news of Jesus Christ with everyone and pray that the Holy Spirit guides those whom He wills to join in worship with us. We thank you for your prayers and support. Please call Pastor Jared at 419-685-4307 if you would like communion brought to you or a visit. May the Lord bless you and keep you!

Sincerely,

Pastor Jared Smeltzer