



Ministry of the Word

**Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2017**

by Vincent Gannon

**Scripture:** Daniel 6:20:28

**Subject:** Chapter 6, Part 21 -

It is evidently true, both Scripturally and Historically, that when the enemy is on the move, so is the Lord. Some of the great revivals swept into places and people, who were not in any way looking for God. However, it is true that most revivals, in fact the great majority, have their roots in someone somewhere praying for God to move. Strange as it may seem but it was never lots of people, no, it has always been the twos and threes, just like when the Lord reduced the army that Gideon needed to win the victory over the Midianites [Judges 7], so that the glory would be given to the Lord. Some of the loveliest and profound verses we find are in Colossians 1:15-20 that explains the reason why God moves in such amazing ways:

*“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.”*



Christ is glorified throughout time, historical events, and in the lives of individuals. Make no mistake, each and every soul saved is a Divine Miracle.

As we come to the end of this account in the sixth chapter of Daniel, let's look at Darius as promised from last week. It all started back in verse 3 really.

*“Then this Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm.”*

Darius observed Daniel. He witnessed Daniel had an excellent spirit. Now what was that? Well it was not just the gifts of the Holy Spirit but also the fruit as described in Galatians 5:22-25 and in verse 26 it says “if we live in the Spirit let us also walk in the spirit”. Many claim to be indwelt by the Spirit because they are “saved”, but the way they live and behave you never think that. Daniel held such convictions and was not afraid to live by them. His characteristics were not equalled by any of his contemporaries. Also, Daniel was not killing himself trying to outdo the rest, it came supernaturally. Perhaps even at this time Darius has been awakened by the Lord. The likes of Daniel had not been seen by him up to this point in time.

Thinking along the same lines, what do the Darius' in your life observe? The bible as well as many of our experiences, tell us that the testimony of the Christian is precious and powerful, if it is pure. The unsaved are completely turned off by the counterfeit, the compromised, and the confused because it's a sham and who wants that? Daniel was not like that in any shape, way, or form. In fact, to be honest, he is a very hard act to follow. He stood out, stood up and simply shone for the Lord, a light shining in the darkness.

### **THE CONVICTION OF THE KING**

When the satraps and governors approached Darius, informing him that Daniel had breached the decree he had signed (verse 9), what a shock he must have felt, but also what a reaction, Verse 14 –

*“And the king, when he heard these words, was greatly 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.”*



He had repented over his actions. How do we know that? The verse informs us. He was not just sorry about what he done, he done everything to rectify it. He put himself out trying to sort out the problem. Think about that.

So what is the difference between condemnation and conviction? Condemnation is the sense of ruin, hopelessness and destruction. It's a strong disapproval and condemns regardless of the facts. Conviction is being found guilty by the compelling truth. Condemnation is looking in and down while conviction is about looking in and up. By understanding the difference, we see clearly that Darius was under conviction as he acknowledged the wrong doing and he displayed the desire to put it right. Guilt? Yes, Fear? Highly probably for all kinds of reasons, yet the desire to put it right. This is true for us today. It's not about self-justification but doing the right thing and there is always a cost to that but it can lead to restitution. This can happen in the heart that never comes to know God, so what do you think should happen in one that does know God?

We know that Darius searched for a way out for Daniel due to his conviction. He faced a terrible dilemma which was the result of entrapment, but regardless the law had to be upheld no matter what. Part and parcel of the consequence. We are all aware of such dilemmas and surly we can sympathise with Darius. Regardless of such dilemmas the consequences are always there to be faced. There is also another law at work which leads to conviction, is there not? God's law, a greater law.

***“So the king gave the command, and they brought Daniel and cast him into the den of lions. But the king spoke, saying to Daniel, “Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you.” Verse 16***

Darius was convicted through the outcome of the decree's implication. Surely this woke him up to his pride and foolishness of thinking he could be treated like a god for a month. This same pride and foolishness was now condemning the one man he obviously could truly trust. Does this not sound familiar to us? Think about man's pride and foolishness thinking that he can be a god, if not just like him (Genesis 3:15) and the one person that mankind can trust is betrayed, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

## THE PARTING COMMENT OF THE KING

The parting words of the king that we have just read are phenomenal. Was it wishful thinking? was it prophetic? Why did he say as he did?

You know enough about Daniel, if you've been with us in this study, to know that he had been around the palace for many years. We also know that Daniel was not a silent witness. Darius must have heard about Daniel's God, he knew that Daniel's God was not like any other for he had witnessed that Daniel had an excellent spirit in him, yes God possessed Daniel.

Just a little side note, Possession means to be controlled. Isn't it funny how we often talk about possession mostly in relation to people who are being possessed by demons. Sometimes it's noted by Christians that we possess God but actually in Christ, it is the Holy Spirit, yes God, who possesses us.

Anyway, back to our study, Daniel's life as well as career credentials proved God. So I'm sure the message was very clear about the power of Daniel's God who had delivered him before and maybe Darius was hoping that Daniel's God would again on this occasion prove himself strong and able to deliver. Regardless of how he felt, Darius spoke like he knew it would happen, it was a statement of fact. Of course he was not the one being placed in the lion's den but the fact that he said that, and out loud for all to hear, really is an insight of what was taking place in his heart.

This would become a reality for Daniel by God's grace.

***"The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles."*** Psalms 34:17

Yet, it's not every believer that can be certain that this will always literally happen. History and the Bible tells us how many of God's people had to face terrible things. But we are looking at a very special event never to be repeated for Daniel again. Had the Lord a purpose in it all? Of course He did, God was in it from start to finish. There are many verses about God delivering his people like the following:

***Psalms 107:6 – "Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses."***



**Psalms 50:15 – “And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.”**

**Psalms 34:4 – “I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.”**

You by God’s grace, have not, and probably never will be cast into a lion’s den, but you have been in many difficult circumstances which seem to have an impossible positive outcome and I’m sure you have been there spiritually. So, can you say with Daniel that God’s word is sure and can be trusted?

**2 Samuel 22:2 - And he said, The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer;**

**Psalms 40:17 - But I [am] poor and needy; [yet] the Lord thinketh upon me: thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God**

So, Verse 17 –

**“Then a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signets of his lords, that the purpose concerning Daniel might not be changed.”**

Verse 18 – **“Now the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; and no musicians were brought before him. Also his sleep went from him.”**

You know, the Holy Spirit is so delicate about things. Even when it comes to convicting people about right and wrong, as well as of their need for Salvation. Darius was not behaving like a king who believed he was a god! No, he was behaving like a man that was not just sorry for what he done but was repenting, doing all in his power to correct the matter.

In verse 18 it says **“And the king spent the night fasting”**, and neither were instruments of music,” one text says. Actually the Aramaic word is “diversions.” It could be music, women, dancers, whatever they used to divert the king. But he didn’t want any of that: No music, no dancers, no food, no nothing. **“His sleep went from him.”** And he just paced around. So why was Darius fasting. Its implies more than that he just couldn’t eat due to worry or guilt, no this was something intentional. Usually when people fast it is due to seeking God, whoever their god may be. So who was Darius seeking? Did he seek after Daniel’s God knowing how he had worked in the past, yes this living God was active. Was the Spirit of God at work? Indeed, He was.

Verse 19 - *“Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions.”*

By the way, the “very early in the morning” means literally “at the brightness of the dawning.” As soon as the sun was visible, he was gone. Most commentators feel Darius was probably in his early 60s, that didn’t stop Darius. He ran down to the den of lions, at the crack of dawn to try to see what happened. Was it faith in the God of Daniel or a test, either way, it proves that Darius heart had been changed towards God. Now he wants to know for himself. Most kings would wait but not Darius he was involved. He wanted to see or hear for himself, no doubt he would not trust the other lot. He was there when they put Daniel in the lion’s den and he wanted to be there when they brought him out. God was in it all the way. He may not have been aware of the full moving of God, no more than we are at times, but that didn’t mean God wasn’t at work. God does not always reveal to us everything at once for good reason. We would try and put our hands on things, trying to get some of the glory. Also, we might not go down the road marked with pain and suffering if we knew what really lay ahead, we are not by nature that kind of people. But in any situation with God’s help, we can, and we do, rise above our circumstances.

### THE CRY OF THE KING

Verse 20 – *“And when he came to the den, he cried out with a lamenting voice to Daniel.”* - a sad sorrowing voice, a voice of anguish, a voice of anxiety, you know, hoping for the best, but perhaps believing the worst.

*“The king spoke, saying to Daniel, “Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?”*

Frankly, it’s a little late for that question? Now we’re at the crux of the matter, aren’t we? Was God able? Yes, he was!!! Also, Darius realised something we may not, and that is our brothers and sisters are servants of the living God. Darius also realised that Daniel’s king was his God, do you? Darius may have lost his sleep but not his senses. Yes, his eyes were opened to the reality about himself, his appointees, and who his real friend were. Where do you think he learned that statement, “Servant of the living God”? I’ll tell you where he learned it, from Daniel. Daniel had given him many lessons by his excellent way of life, and who know if he got to talk to him about how great his God is, I’m sure he did at some point, in some way.



Well, verse 21 – *“Then Daniel said to the king, “O king, live forever!”*

Despite the fact that he is still in the den Daniel none the less had respect for the king. He didn't shout “Get me out of here”! because the presence of God was still there, otherwise the Lions would have gone for him! There was no panic in Daniel's heart just heavenly peace. What a statement to Darius and the others who were looking on, enemies included! Not only was Daniel alive, but Daniel was in peace and still in perfect character, respectful as ever. What must have been going through his enemies' heads? Fear? Amazement? Shock? The sudden realisation that yes Daniel's God was truly living and active, would Daniel's God be after them now? For Darius, it was sweet words of comfort, knowing that Daniel his friend had been delivered, by God. It's also an example for us, isn't it. That while we are in the tick of whatever situation, when we know God's presence, how are attitudes should remain humble and not telling ever one, well I told you so or well look at my Faith! But not only that, doesn't it encourage us to stand on God's word regardless of how impossible the situations in our lives look like to us! Remember what God says -

*“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.”* Isaiah 26:3 KJV.

Also Isaiah 12:2.

*“Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; For the LORD GOD is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation.”*

Brothers and sisters of the Living God, we need to take the word of God at face value and apply them to our lives no matter what!

Another thing that Daniel demonstrated was respect. Respect is something that we ought to show in our lives in every situation and to everyone, yes even those who you consider your enemy. This type of respect is something more than what is taught to you but it is something that comes from a dedicated walk with God.

Then verse 22, *“My God hath sent His angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths.”*

God sent an angel. Angels are powerful as we know, remember it only took one angel to take care of 185,000 Assyrians as he slew them all by himself. So one angel was plenty.

*“My God sent His angel, and he shut the lions' mouths, and they have not hurt me: for as much as before Him innocence was found in me.”*

That was not pride. That was true. Just to get the record straight. Isn't it remarkable, Daniel defends himself only after he has given God the opportunity to put him through the



test. After God delivered him, he said, “I haven’t done anything. I’m innocent before God.” Now if you read carefully, Daniel didn’t say “I have done no wrong.” No, he went on to say

*“And also, O king, before you I’ve done no hurt, either.”*

To the legalist, he did do wrong. He broke the law by disobeying it. However, it was not a personal attack against the King in any shape or form. It did not alter the King’s authority, rule or reign. It was an unjust law and everyone knew it, more so now than ever.

Well, verse 23 says, - *“Now the king was exceedingly 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 injury whatever was found on him, because he believed in his God.”*

Do the unsaved believe in miracles? Yes, they do, when they see them or when they hear about them but to witness one is something else. No-one had ever before remained alive long enough to come out of the den in one piece. The king seemed more relieved than Daniel, more excited, more everything. Why? The proof was standing before him. Not only was Daniel safe, alive and well, but also this was proof of the existence of the living God. Was this an answer to Darius’ long night fasting? Surely, this was so different to what he was brought up to believe. Yes, the living God is gracious and merciful to all who believe on him. Yes, the living God, hears and answer prayer.

Daniel demonstrated that this was a vindication of his great faith in God. He believed God and God honoured his faith. But, this doesn’t always happen that way, does it? Isaiah believed God, too, but he got sawn in half. Paul believed God, too, and he laid his head on a block, and an axe head flashed in the sun, and severed it from his body. Peter believed in God, and he got crucified upside down. Believing in God doesn’t mean that the lions aren’t going to eat you. There have been martyrs throughout all the history of God’s dealing with men that have believed God and they’ve died. The issue is that we accept God’s will. If it is to live, it is to live. If it is to die, it is to die. But in either case, we’re never defeated. Surely, God was breaking into the Medo-Persian Empire as he had with the Babylonians. Yes, God was proofing himself then, but he done it in a nation who kept amazing written records so that even to this day, we can find in their annals, independent verification of Daniel’s accounts and records of these events demonstrating the truth of the living God to all of mankind.



## THE KING'S VERDICT

Verse 24 -

*“And the king gave the command, and they brought those men who had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions—they, their children, and their wives; and the lions overpowered them, and broke all their bones in pieces before they ever came to the bottom of the den.”*

The command was just that, not blind rage or anger but justice. They had hood winked him once too often. They wanted to take out their rival and they manipulated the law as well as the king to do so. Treason. They proved they would stop at nothing to get their way. The judgment to us may seem harsh and it was but the consequence if he hadn't judge them would have lead to instability within the empire. The consequence for such actions would have been know particularly to these men who knew it well enough to manipulate it. So it was passed and prosecuted right away. Horror of horrors!

Now friends, the scene before us is one of extreme horror and so is should be to remind us of a judgment that we have been delivered from. Like these, we were guilty and we would have received a just judgment from the King of Kings. The righteous anger is against the sin of the unrepentant. Man by nature looks at the sad face of the individual and not the sin, but not God. Luke 16 tells the story of the rich man and Lazarus. There was not a plea of the rich, of sorry, regret, repentance, because there is no escape but only the cry for 'mercy'. (Luke 16:24) but it was too late for the rich man. The law was enacted by the king and it was final. This has a very solemn and sobering implication. Many think that ignorance will be their excuse but that is far from valid. God in His mercy has made known to all in so many different ways what will be their end. Can you rejoice because you made the right decision? because God had mercy on you, He was gracious and longsuffering, and in the end drew you to Himself.

By the way, here we see a glimpse of pagan law. The law of the Medes and the Persians said, “On account of the guilt of one, all his kindred must perish.” That was the law of the Medes and Persians. Remember the Law of God as we read it in

Deuteronomy 24: 16 - *“Fathers shall not be put to death because of their children, nor shall children be put to death because of their fathers. Each one shall be put to death for his own sin.”*



## THE CELEBRATION OF THE KING

Verse 25 -

*“Then King Darius wrote:  
To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be  
multiplied to you.”*

You remember that little sequence is used many times in the book of Daniel, which just encompasses all the people in the realm –

*“I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom men must tremble and fear  
before the God of Daniel.”*

Another King, effected the entire empire, the whole Medo-Persian Empire was fallen under the decree to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. It doesn't take a lot of people. It just takes the right kind.

*“For He is the living God,  
And steadfast forever;  
His kingdom is the one which shall not be destroyed,  
And His dominion shall endure to the end.”*

He sounds like the Psalmist.

God has put on some convincing demonstrations in this book, didn't He? Nations come and go, and whether they be Babylonian or Medo-Persian, when God puts His men in the right place, His message gets through.

Verse 27 *“He delivers and rescues, And He works signs and wonders  
In heaven and on earth, Who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.”*

Let me ask you a simple question. Who gets the glory in the chapter? Daniel? No, not for a minute. Daniel was there, Daniel was a faithful servant of God, but it was God who got the glory. I believe that if you see one thread through the book of Daniel, it is not the exaltation of Daniel, it is the majesty of God, who stands against the nations of the world and upholds His sovereignty.

Finally, the prosperity. Verse 28 - *“So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the  
reign of Cyrus the Persian.”*

Daniel prospered. Now I want you to listen to me. As I close, I want to sum up very rapidly, in just a couple of minutes.

As we looked at this chapter, and reflect, what do we see about Darius and what do we see about Daniel?

First Darius – Darius was a King who was put into position by God. He was pagan with characteristics of any man that has sinned (Romans 3:23) but was greatly moved by God through his faithful servant, Daniel. From a self-professed ‘god’ to a self-confessed follower of God. What a change! It could only be God that does this work. The greatest miracle is still – Salvation.

Now Daniel - Do you remember when we studied chapter 1 and 2? We took all of the characteristics of the virtue of Daniel as a young man and we catalogued them and we studied them, and we saw what makes a virtuous, godly man. Well, here we are many decades later. What do we see in him again? What are the elements of character that we could translate to ourselves? What makes a man able to affect a nation? What makes a man or a woman have an impact that is as far reaching as an Empire? What is it in Daniel?

Let me suggest some things. I’m going to go through them, just listen to them, think them through.

**First of all**, this man transcended history. He was great, and he was useful to God because he transcended history. He got his feet out of the muck of human issues. He sought the kingdom of God.

**Secondly**, he lived a consistent life from start to finish. He was virtuous when he was young, and so he was virtuous when he was old. I really believe that there is no way to measure with a human measure the power of a virtuous life of that many years. The tragedy is that most of us find our virtue coming and going through those years. Not Daniel.

**Thirdly**, he utterly fulfils his calling. In other words, he lived in the absolute centre of God’s will. His only desire was that God’s will be fulfilled.

**Fourth**, he had a right attitude. They kept saying that he had an excellent spirit.

**Fifth**, he was envied and hated by the world around him, but he never let it embittered him.

**Sixth**, he is condemned, but for his righteousness, no other flaw. He was as an elder of the church should be - what? - blameless.

**Seventh**, he was known for his virtue and integrity even by his enemies.

**Eighth**, he was a faithful citizen. He subjected to human laws until they caused him to violate the laws of God.

**Nine**, he was willing to face any consequence within the framework of God's will and leave the outcome to God.

**Ten**, he served faithfully no matter what it costs him personally.

**Eleven**, he never defended himself. He left that to God.

**Twelve**, he strengthened the faith of others giving them hope in God. Didn't you see this in the king? I mean, the king was even believing because of the great faith of Daniel.

**Thirteen**, he was delivered from all harm, and was preserved for every purpose within the will of God.

**Fourteen**, he was a vehicle for God's glory. We as Christians are to be, above all things, a vehicle for God's glory.

**Fifteen**, he was avenged by God. His enemies were dealt with by God. He didn't have to deal with them himself.

And finally, **Sixteen**, he was exalted by those around him as well as by the One above him.

Principles manifest in this chapter that show the virtuous life of a man of God. I hope this has been practical for you, that God will apply this to your heart as He will to mine. Let's pray.

*Amen.*