

Thy Kingdom Come
National Ministries Conference 2025
“When Kingdoms Collide”
Daniel 6
Dr. Sandy Willson

Well thank you Hunter. It's great to hear that all of us in Memphis are thankful for the support of this congregation, and for more churches in the Memphis area. We desperately need your help. And we're grateful that you send this. Good men like Hunter and that you support them. It is great to be with you tonight, because we're going to be able to see several of the national missionaries and mission agencies in just a few moments, and we're going to finish right on time.

It's funny, when I, when I come to Birmingham, I see so many people I know, and then I see some Covenant Presbyterian people I know. Because, you know, I was the interim pastor there for about three years, a few years ago. And I saw one of them, this very weekend. And he's at least as old as I am, I don't know. We're both kind of decrepit, but he came up to me and he said, do you remember this conversation we had? He said, I came to your office, and I suggested to you that you cut back the time of your sermons. And he said, and then I'll never forget what you said to me. I said, what was that? He said, you said that I would do well to stop bringing my watch to church. And I said, well, what did you say back to that? He said, I said to you that I would stop bringing my watch to church if you would start looking at your watch. And I said, well, so we had a deal. He said, yeah. I said, here's the part you forgot I out negotiated. You because it's one thing to look at your watch. It's another thing to do anything about it. Isn't that terrible? It's just terrible. But tonight we have important business to do at 6:40 so we shall conclude.

Now, this morning, we talked about the necessity to grasp this whole idea of being transferred from the dominion of darkness, as Paul calls it, to the kingdom of his beloved son, in whom we have redemption, the kingdom of light. It's a kingdom. We have a king. He's established the kingdom. And we are to pray for the coming of that kingdom. The kingdom has come in Christ in his first advent, and then it will come in his fullness at his second advent. We're between the advent and so we have the kingdom which has come but hasn't yet come in all of its fullness. We saw that if we're to pray that way, we must be Kingdom people. We must be the people who lay aside our own kingdom agendas, our personal kingdoms. And we embrace the kingdom of God and of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, it's a wonderful thing to be a Christian and to come into the new kingdom of light. Isn't it terrific? And is this is going to be fun? And since God

is a king and we're his subjects, we're going to be protected. Everything's going to go great. We thought, until we look into the word and have our own experience, and we realize it's not quite that way. And I want us to look at a text that shows us what it can be like and how we are to deal with it.

Would you please turn your Bibles to Daniel chapter six? You remember that, Daniel? In the earlier part of Daniel, he was a young man. He was just a teenager. Very impressive teenager. Now he's an impressive old man. He's probably 80 years old in this text. He's been through a lot. He's coming to a place of high privilege and power within the medo- Persian empire which they had just defeated. The Babylonians and he had been, a high official in the Babylonian Empire. So he was a very impressive immigrant, rising to the top kind of Henry Kissinger type person. So let's look now at Daniel six. Would you stand with me? We'll read the chapter, then I'll take the good part of our time. But I do want to make three comments from the text.

Lord, please help us to understand this, your word and to put it into practice. We pray in Jesus name.

Amen.

Daniel 6. Hear the Word of God.

It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom 120 satraps to be throughout the whole kingdom, 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. 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. Then the high officials in 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. 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. Then these high officials and satraps came by agreement to the king and said to him, O King Darius, live forever. All the high officials of the kingdom, the prefects in the satraps, the councilors and the governors agreed that the King should establish an ordinance and inform and enforce an injunction that whoever makes a petition to any God or man for 30 days except to you, O King. Shall be cast into the den of lions. Now, O King, establish the injunction and sign the document so they cannot be changed according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which cannot be revoked. Therefore, King Darius signed the document and injunction. 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. Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petitions, and plead before his God. Then they came nearer and said before the king concerning the injunction, okay, did you not sign an injunction that anyone who makes a petition to any God or man within 30 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. 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. 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. Then these men came by agreement to the king, and said to the king, no king, that it is a law. The Medes and Persians, that no injunction, no ordinance that the king establishes can be changed. Then the king commanded, and Daniel was brought in, cast into the den of lions. The king declared to Daniel, May your God whom you serve continually deliver you. 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 signal of his lords, that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel. Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting. No diversions were brought to him, and sleep fled from him. Then at daybreak, a break of day, the king arose and went in haste to the den of lions. 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 is your God whom you serve continually been able to deliver you from the lions. Then Daniel said to the king, okay, you can live forever. My God sent his angel and shut the lion's mouths, and they have not harm me, because I was found blameless before him, and also before you, O King, I have done no harm. 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. 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. Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth. Peace be multiplied to you. 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. 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. So this Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

All flesh is grass, and all of its glory is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades. But the word of our God stands forever. Amen. Please be seated.

So it's not all very rosy. It's not all cookies and cream. It's very difficult to seek truly to advance the kingdom of God. And the reason is there are two kingdoms, and they are in conflict. They are colliding very early on in the church. This would be the early fifth century A.D.. Augustine wrote about this at length. The title of the book, as many of you know, is *The City of God*. And it was, of course, a defense of the Christian community in Rome that they had not caused, the downfall of Rome to the Visigoths in 40. And it was an apologetic for the sake of the Christians. But in the midst of which Augustine explains how there are two cities, the city of man and the city of God, and that actually the city of God blesses nations, including Rome. Augustine made the argument Rome lasted as long as they did not, in spite of the Christians, but because of the Christians. And we should be able to say the same thing about any nation where Christians have salt and light type of influence. So we have these two citizenships. And of course, Paul speaks of this in *Philippians* chapter three. You remember what he says there in verse 20? He says, but our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body is by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself. So Paul's making it clear that we have two citizenships, and he says in chapter one when he says, walk worthy of the gospel, he literally says, walk in citizenship worthy of the gospel. So in other words, he's saying, walk as citizens of your ultimate commitment, which is not to your national commitment or your local commitment. It's your eternal heavenly commitment. Your citizenship in heaven dominates all other citizenships, your secondary citizenships. And this is one of the secrets to living the Christian life. In, in the secular realm and even especially, I would say, the political realm in which Daniel was here functioning.

I want us to notice three things about this text briefly, because I believe there are three things that you and I desperately need. As we engage the kingdom. Those of us who are in full time ministry certainly need these things. But all of us are in full time ministry. If you're a student, you're in full time ministry to advance the kingdom and the school where you are.

If you're in business or the professions, in the medical practice, legal practice, any other kind of practice, you're in full time ministry to advance the kingdom through the profession that you're living out. For the sake of the glory of God, that your primary mission to live out your vocation through your occupation. Being a doctor is not your vocation as your occupation.

If you're a doctor, that's your occupation, your vocation. Your calling is to follow Christ and to advance the kingdom. That's all. There's the same vocation. Every one of us adds, but we have different occupations, and it is perilous. It is difficult. And we want to look at this. Now, if you'll look at verses one through ten, here's the first observation.

We should make your devotion to the kingdom will be challenged. Your devotion to the kingdom, wherever you are, will be challenged. And here's why I say that Daniel was a very

respected high authority in the most powerful government. In the world of his time. He was a very powerful person, well proven over decades of service, to the palace.

And he had been elevated to one of the top three positions underneath the King. And the king was contemplating making him the prime minister so that he was over all the other ministers. There were 120. Shall we say governors or satraps. And they were going to be collectively reporting through these three people, these regional presidents, if you will.

And the King was contemplating making Daniel the chief president, the prime Minister, because of the excellent spirit within it. Darius didn't understand everything, but he did understand enough of spiritual things to know there's something beyond mere human performance in this man. It reminds you of Joseph in some ways. He had the blessing of God's hand of favor upon him.

He had the Spirit of God in him, and even Darius secular Darius recognized it. So Daniel was in a very high, powerful position, and furthermore, he was 80 years old. I mean, look, when you get to be 80, if you're still in business, you expect to have a little respect from the people around you. You expect them to acknowledge that you're trustworthy, that you've proven yourself, you expect them to defer to you.

The man is 80 years old and they're plotting against him. It's a palace coup. And who's doing it? The other two presidents let me just complete betrayal. So if someone with Daniel's profile can be betrayed, and if he can be challenged because of his religion, do you think you can't? Of course you can. And you will be. And besides, Daniel, let's look at our Lord Jesus Christ, who is perfect.

And he certainly was challenged every day of his life. People asking him tough questions, people questioning his integrity. Was he really just exercising the power of demons? They accused him of that. Now notice. Secondly, not only is Daniel this classic example of someone who was of the highest caliber person with very powerful position who's being challenged, but notice how they challenge him.

It's just a bunch of lies. And you have to realize that when you're promoting events in the kingdom, there are no rules there. There are no boundaries. Anything goes. Now you have rules. You have boundaries. You have ethical standards for certain things you will not do. Your opponent has none of those. So do not be shocked when, for example, you're in high school and rumors start about you.

They have no grounds of truth whatsoever. That's exactly what's happening to Daniel. Now, they were looking for some way to accuse him of something, to take him before the king to demote him. At least they couldn't find anything. Here is the big accusation against Daniel. He's following the law of his God. How would you. How would you like it?

If that's all anybody could find out about you? You'd be in really good shape. Daniel was due, but these folks were simply going to lie about it. And then they come together. They have this scheme. They obviously are trained in the law. And the law. They're referring to the statute. Law is really it has constitutional status because it actually comes from the Code of Hammurabi. Hammurabi is from the 18th century BC. This is sixth century. So we're talking 1200 years later, they are signing a law in Hammurabi. If you've been to the Louvre in the Richelieu wing, you can actually see the Code of Hammurabi. I never forget when I. The one time I've seen it, I looked at it. No, my jaw just was slack. I just couldn't believe I'm looking at the Code of Hammurabi. It's a stealing about seven feet tall. And it's got all this Akkadian language. Of course, nobody here can interpret Akkadian except for Dr Redd, who studied. You know, Semitic languages, but I can't read Akkadian again. But in the Akkadian language on that still is the law that once a judge makes a statement, it is irrevocable.

And certainly these guys know that law. And they're bringing it up to Darius and saying, you know, the law of the made some Persians. Why don't you make a declaration? That's it. So they turn him into entrapping Daniel. What a wicked, sinister thing to do. And what I'm saying to you is don't be surprised. Ladies and gentlemen, when these things are perpetrated against you.

But notice in all of this that we have the power to resist. If you'll look at verse ten, you see this great statement of Daniel's resistance. He absolutely refuses to be intimidated away from his devotion to his king and his kingdom. And I'm not talking about Darius. I'm talking about the living God. There was nothing that was going to thwart him from his devotion to the living God.

And so he goes about his prayer life just like he always did. He throws up in the windows to pray toward Jerusalem, where the destroyed temple, used to stand and will soon be rebuilt. And he prays three times a day, and he starts always with Thanksgiving, even when he's being trapped by two people who betrayed him. He will not start any other way.

But with thanksgiving. That's all in verse ten. Now secondly, we've seen, first of all, that your devotion to God's kingdom will be challenged. Secondly, please notice in the long verses that follow, this will be verses 11 through 28. Your devotion to God's kingdom will be punished. You will actually be penalized for your devotion to the kingdom in this world, in the city of man, you will be penalized, you will be punished.

And of course, your natural instincts say, that's not fair. Of course it's not fair. That's what I'm saying, that there will be fairness. We'll get to that. But in the moment it's not fair. And that's our role. We are sheep fattened for the slaughter. Sorry. You're expecting a little bit more cheerful sermon tonight. But that's our role. The Apostle Paul last letter that we have extant from Paul.

He's writing to his son in the faith. Timothy, what does he say to Timothy? Anybody who wants to lead a godly life will be persecuted. And all he's doing is citing what Jesus told his disciples in the upper room. If they persecuted me, they're going to persecute you. So if you're taking up the cross, the cross of Jesus Christ in your life, you're walking with him.

You will be treated ultimately the same way that Jesus Christ is treated now. We and in the US can be sometimes confused because we live in this rare moment in history, in this rare geographical location where it's actually to your advantage often to be a Christian. That's the minority report from the church around the world and through the ages.

You realize that even this year, tens of thousands of our brothers and sisters will be put to death because they're Christians. I noticed you have a prayer time in November to pray for the persecuted church. They need our prayers and hundreds of millions of people this year 100. I'm over 300 million people this year in the world will be decidedly persecuted precisely because they're Christians.

So it's rare to be treated like we are. And so when we get these little flea bites with someone who says something about us or gossips about us, or does something unfair, we get really upset because we've been spoiled by the kind of treatment we've had in this country for hundreds of years. But Amy Carmichael, one of my favorite missionaries, put it this way.

She said, can he have followed far? Who knows? No wound or scar.

When we take up the cross, we remember it's an instrument of execution. But Daniel preferred the company of ravenous lions to the company of wicked people and their schemes. Or he preferred the lions to disobedience to his heavenly King. And that's exactly what we need to learn. Our devotion to God's kingdom will be punished. Now, lastly, your devotion to God's kingdom will be vindicated.

Verses 19 through 28. It will be vindicated. You notice there was a seal put upon the den. The king put a signet ring on it and then rolled up a stone and sealed it. Sound familiar? It's funny how the Code of Hammurabi, nor the decree of Darius, can't keep the Lord from trumping both of them, and bringing about real justice.

So Darius, who couldn't sleep a wink the night before, came to talk to Daniel, who I think slept like a baby all night long. Are you in there, Daniel? Oh, yes. Oh, King speaking very respectfully to the king. He didn't say King. You're an idiot. You should have known a long time ago that my God was going to spare me. No! Oh, King. Live forever. He chose perfect respect, which is what we're called to do. Even with secular, unrighteous, cowardly leaders like Darius. We respect them. We give them their due. And that's exactly what Daniel does. And then he said, The God whom I serve sent some angels. You think Daniel will ever forget this? Send some angels and shut the lion's mouth.

Liberal scholars love to play with this. Of course, liberal scholars don't believe in miracles. So here's the theory. There was some poison that Darius could give the king. The give the lions that would make them real drowsy and they just wouldn't eat anybody. That was one theory. The other theory was, Darius was clever. He was looking for ways to rescue this Daniel that he loved so much. So he fed the lions ahead of time, and they weren't very hungry. Those are two liberal theories you can read and commentaries. Now, I want you to notice how those theories are all blown to smithereens when the other two presidents and their families are thrown into the lion's den. Those lions were not drowsy and they were not satiated with previous diet. They were hungry, and they crushed their bones even before they got to the bottom of the den, there was an angel who came and closed the mouth of the lions. You know why? Because Daniel devoted himself to the kingdom of God. And there's an ultimate vindication. Now, we close with this, a question that you have in your mind. Yeah. But 600 years later, we've got Christians in the first century being fed to the lions in the Roman Coliseum, and there were no angels, and they got devoured by lions. And furthermore, there have been the Romans who crushed people because they were Christians, and there have been people in Russia and China who have been put to death because they were Christians. Where the angels go there. How do you explain those people? Here's the answer. Come tomorrow night and you'll find out.

Let's pray together. Father, we thank you, for the important lessons of Daniel's age in which he lived when you moved mightily to show your greatness. And we too, will exalt your name. We too, with believe in you and trust you. We too. We stick to our regimen and citizens of the kingdom of heaven and of the children of the living God. Help us. We pray. In Jesus name.

Amen. Amen.