**Daniel and the Lion’s Den**

Based on [Daniel 6](https://biblia.com/books/esv/Da6)

Preached on December 17, 2018

Advent Midweek 2

Pastor Nathan Fuehrer

Advent is a season when we *anticipate* the coming of Jesus Christ. God’s plan of salvation--carried out by Christ--was *anticipated* in the OT scriptures[[1]](#footnote-1). One such example is God’s deliverance of Daniel from the Lion’s Den.

God’s plan for Jesus on the cross and for Daniel in the Lion’s Den are of the same divine blueprint. The parallels and symmetry between the narratives are uncanny. The comparison begins with Daniel himself, who is described as being faithful to God and blameless before men. // Jesus also was perfectly faithful and blameless. **The blamelessness of both Daniel and Jesus makes their enemies jealous and nervous of losing their political sway.** // So the high officials and satraps sought to find fault with Daniel. // Likewise, the Chief Priests and Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees sought to find fault with Jesus. They failed to find fault with either men, because both Daniel and Jesus were in fact blameless.

Daniels enemies conspired and said, “**We shall not find any ground for complaint against this Daniel unless we find it in connection with the Law of his God.**” // So too the Pharisees tried to catch Jesus contradicting God’s Law. Daniel’s enemies flattered King Darius to make a law that forbid prayer to God. Compare this to the Pharisees who forbid healing on the Sabbath. In both cases, evil men establish rules that contradicted faithful service to God. But the faithful must serve God, and not men. So Daniel prays to the true God anyway; Jesus heals on the Sabbath anyway.

The high officials and satraps spy on Daniel and they accuse him before the king. **So too, the Pharisees and Sadducees, Chief Priests and scribes spy on Jesus and accuse him before the Sanhedrin and before Pilate.** The charge against Daniel sticks, because he prayed to God. The charges against Jesus stuck too, that he claimed to be the son of God and the king of the Jews. Both Daniel and Jesus were in violation of the letter of the Law, except that they were faithful to God, according to the Spirit.

Daniel’s enemies remind Darius that there is to be no prayer but to the King.” So King Darius orders the execution, even though he doesn’t believe Daniel deserves to die. // Jesus’ enemies remind Pilate that there is to be no king but Caesar. So Pontius Pilate orders the execution, even though he doesn’t believe Jesus deserves to die.

When Darius wanted to change Daniel’s fate, the satraps remind him “What the king has decreed cannot be changed.” When the chief priests wanted the charge against Jesus changed Pilate responds, “**What I have written I have written.**” The Law, for better or worse, was broken according to the charges and requires Justice.

Darius had made a Law ended up condemning one he loved who transgressed it. // God’s Law ended up condemning the world he loved who had transgressed it. **King Darius could not change the law once established. God cannot deny himself and change his Law.** Darius had to carry out the sentence or fail to be a just king. God had to carry out the sentence or fail to be a just God. Darius condemned Daniel for his own mistake. But God condemned Himself for ours. Darius sacrificed Daniel for his own sin. God sacrificed His own son for ours.

// Daniel was cast into the den of lions, and a ***stone*** was brought and laid on the mouth of the den. Jesus was laid in a tomb, and the tomb was secured by sealing it with a ***stone***. Darius ***forsook*** his love of Daniel by sealing the den it with his own signet, his own authority. Jesus had cried, “My God, my God, why have you ***forsaken*** me, and was delivered over to death with his father’s approval”

The next morning Darius goes to the lion’s den. // The morning after the Sabbath, the women go to the tomb. **Darius found that death did not take Daniel.** The women found that death did not hold Jesus. Daniel was taken up out of the Den. Jesus is risen from the tomb.

The story of Daniel is not a direct prophecy of Jesus. The scriptures never address the symmetry that we have seen here. But in the story of Daniel God gave a dim glimpse of his plan of salvation, and in that literary sense at least, Daniel foreshadows Jesus. **God brings low and he raises up. His plans are wiser than the plans of men.** He catches the wise in their craftiness, and he delivers his people and gets all the Glory. In the end, from the lips of Darius comes praise for the true God, “**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.**” And when Jesus died the earth shook and the temple curtain was rent from top to bottom, the centurion said, “**Truly this is the Son of God.”**

May the Son of God, on whose account you have been given redemption in heaven and a cross on earth, preserve you until you receive the fullness of glory in the life everlasting.

1. God’s “plan of salvation” is mentioned as such in Ephesians. Eph. 1:10 says that God’s will was set forth in Christ **“as a *plan* for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.”** Later in Ch. 3, Paul says he was given grace “**to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, 9and to bring to light for everyone what is the *plan* of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things,**”

   The word plan, is the English translation of the greek word Oikonomia – household management. Oikonomia is where we get the word economy, which literally means “house-law”. The world is God’s house and he manages according to a plan. He has an economy. Jesus tells parables where God is figured as the manager of a vineyard or some other thing, and the parables usually begin by saying “the kingdom of God is like”. It can be translated “the reign or rule of God is like” or “the management of God is like…” God has an approach, a mark of his craftsmanship, that is more or less pronounced, yet distinct and indicative of his handiwork. If you see several houses that are of similar design, it’s because they were designed by the same architect. So when you see stories of deliverance throughout the scriptures, you can see that the same God behind it. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)