

Dr. Wendy L. Widder, Daniel, Session 9, God's Superior Law and His Servants' Faithfulness

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This is Dr. Wendy Whitter and her teaching on the book of Daniel. This is session 9, Daniel 6, God's Superior Law and His Servants' Faithfulness.

We are in Daniel six for this lecture and I think the focus of Daniel six is God's superior law and his servants faithfulness.

So, we'll see the contrast between God's law and the law of Darius, the law of the Medes and the Persians. We will also see the faithfulness of Daniel, God's servant, in the midst of it. This is in our chiasm, the fifth of six chapters, so we are looking at the chapter that relates to chapter three, where Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to bow down to Nebuchadnezzar's golden image, and they were thrown into the fiery furnace for their faithfulness.

In chapter six, we'll see Daniel refuse to obey the law of the Medes and the Persians and he will face death and danger on account of it. So, there are some similarities in the stories and a few differences too, but both of these chapters show us the way that God's people can live under Gentile kings, whether they're hostile, whether they're well-meaning but go astray, and they can still be faithful to their God in the midst of it. So, let me just give you a little bit of background information for this chapter.

We are set in the Persian period here, so if you remember, at the end of chapter five, Belshazzar, the last Babylonian king, was killed, and Darius the Mede received the kingdom at 62 years old. So, we've transferred kingdoms from Babylon, and now we're in the reign of the Medes and the Persians, and that brings us to the question or the issue surrounding this character Darius the Mede. Darius the Mede has been a long-standing difficulty in the study of the book of Daniel because history knows no person named Darius the Mede, at least nothing in any records we've found to this point.

The only place we know Darius the Mede is in the book of Daniel. Interestingly enough, the book of Daniel refers to him as Darius the Mede about four or five times, so it's pretty important to the book of Daniel that he's the Mede. And yet it's difficult to explain historically because he's not in the records that we have.

Persia has many kings named Darius, but they don't start appearing until 522, and so this Darius the Mede would be about 539. So, we're a little off in those terms. So, there are a couple different ways that people have dealt with this problem.

The most common way is that of critical scholarship. They just say it's an error, and an author who is writing after the time period in which Darius, the supposed Darius the Mede, would have actually been in power just got it wrong. They pulled the name Darius out of Persian records, and, you know, they made him a Mede.

They just got it wrong. It's an error. Another way to deal with it in terms of historical figure, a way that's been fairly popular for many years, although it's not quite as popular anymore, is that Darius was an official who was appointed by Cyrus to rule over Babylon.

So, Cyrus's Persian empire was quite vast, and so he would have appointed officials over different parts of it. And so perhaps Darius the Mede was the one he appointed over Babylon. And there are a couple of specific names for who that person may be known in historical records.

But it's unusual that the name Darius would never appear with respect to one of those people. And we know who Cyrus appointed. We have their names.

And so, it's a little curious that there's no place in all of this for an unnamed, unknown person. Another way to deal with it, and actually the way that I prefer, is for Darius the Mede to be actually Cyrus the Persian. It is one and the same person, given two titles and names in the Book of Daniel.

That's a complicated issue to sort out. Where this comes from is the end of chapter 6, which we haven't read chapter 6 yet, but I'm going to jump to verse 28. And many translations, most translations probably say, so this Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

But the construction, the Aramaic construction that represents could also be translated as, during the reign of Darius, that is, the reign of Cyrus, the Persian. There's another example of that in Hebrews and 1 Chronicles. Actually, even in the Book of Daniel, we have a similar construction in chapter 4, where the watcher comes down.

The text said, where the watcher, that is a holy one. And we don't think there are two characters there. So, it's possible this was raised, as far as I know, initially in the 60s, the 1960s.

It doesn't explain for us why the name Darius. Cyrus, who is well known in history, was actually both Median and Persian. So, his mother was a Mede, his father was a Persian.

So, he technically counts as a Median, a Mede, and a Persian. But yeah, that doesn't explain why we don't just call him Cyrus the Mede and Cyrus the Persian instead of Darius. So, there's no way to explain all of it satisfactorily.

But I think one of the reasons the narrator may have done this, allowing for Cyrus the Persian and Darius the Mede to be called two different things, is because it helps the narrator demonstrate the fulfillment of the prophecy by Isaiah and Jeremiah that Babylon would fall to the Medes. Well, history tells us it fell to the Persians, but Cyrus was also a Mede. So, in that respect, it fell to a Median ruler.

It allows the narrator to make the point that history is moving exactly as God had said it would. It also fits this scheme, which we see in other literature in the ancient Near East, of successive kingdoms. So, in ancient Near Eastern literature, Assyria-Babylon is sort of one in the same.

Assyria sort of becomes Babylon, sort of taken over by Babylon. It doesn't totally disappear. This is an extension of Assyria.

And then there's Media, then there's Persia, and then there's Greece. This is a pattern that we see in some other ancient Near Eastern literature. And this is, by calling Darius the Mede, it would fit this established pattern that's known in ancient Near Eastern literature.

So, it doesn't resolve all the difficulties, but I think it helps us sort of navigate our way around why the narrator may have done that. He's trying to make a theological point that history is moving as God designed it to, prophecy is being fulfilled, and it also fits within this familiar schema in that context. All right, so let's get to the text itself.

That's the fun part. Okay, the first section is verses one through four, chapter six, verses one through four. 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, Daniel became distinguished above all, 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. So, this first section introduces us to the main characters. We've got Darius, we've got his satraps, and we've got overseers, and we've got Daniel.

These are the characters who are going to be involved in the conflict that drives this chapter. This section also links us back to chapter five, just by mentioning Darius and by how it describes Daniel. It says Daniel has an extraordinary spirit, an excellent spirit, and that's what the queen in chapter five said of him.

Another thing that this opening section does is it sets up some word plays that are going to be used in chapter six. It introduces some ideas, specifically of to seek and to find. So there are Aramaic words to seek, ba'a, and to find, shachach, and it's repeatedly in here.

The opening clause seemed good to Darius. Hang on, sorry, I think I just lost my spot. Okay, so we set up this wordplay.

In verse five, as we keep going, they're going to seek to find a cause against Daniel. Also, in verse five, these conspirators are unable to find any cause against him because of his character. In verse six, they realize they won't find anything against Daniel unless they find it with respect to the law of his God.

In verse eight, they propose a law that whoever seeks a petition from anyone other than Darius will be punished. Then later they find Daniel seeking his God, and then they report his seeking to the king. At the end, Daniel will say that his God found him innocent, and then the narrator will say that no harm was found on Daniel because he trusted in God.

So, seeking and finding is a key word play throughout this chapter. Bill Arnold has written an article on the wordplay in Daniel 5 and 6, and what he says of this is that in Daniel 6, these two words denote the insidious hatred of Daniel's enemies in their attempt to gain favor politically. Both parties, Daniel and his enemies, are seeking something.

His enemies are seeking security by finding fault in Daniel, but Daniel is seeking God, where he will find security as a byproduct. This becomes a central motif in the chapter. The irony is that his enemies think they have found Daniel's weakness, but the narrator knows they have actually found his greatest strength.

It is his devotion to God that delivers him from the lions. So, it's just a theme, a wordplay that plays itself out throughout the chapter. It's interesting to follow.

All right, the next section is verses five through nine. So, the officials, the satraps, have a problem because Daniel is such a good official, a good person, actually. In verse five, these men say that we shall not find any grounds for complaint against this Daniel unless we find it in connection with the law of his God.

Then these high officials and satraps came to an agreement with the king and said to him, Oh, King Darius, live forever. All the high officials of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the counselors, and the governors agreed that the king should establish an ordinance 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 that it cannot be changed according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be revoked.

Therefore, King Darius signed the document and the injunction. A word that's repeated in this section is law, injunction, statute, and document. This whole idea of Darius needs to make a document, make a law that Daniel is going to be forced to disobey because he will be faithful to the law of his God.

So, we have this setup of the law of God versus the law that Darius will sign, the law of the Medes and the Persians. The conspirators know that the only chance they have of catching Daniel is to create a conflict between the law of the land and the law of his God. The law of Daniel's God and the law of the Medes and the Persians will come into conflict here.

Daniel's going to have to break one of them. Ironically, by breaking one, Daniel is actually freer than Darius, who is bound by his law. It's an interesting contrast between this law and the power of the law.

Whose law is more powerful, the law of the Medes and the Persians or the law of God? This group of conspirators comes together. The word that describes their hustling about and coming to the king, in the ESV, it's they came by agreement. That word shows up several times in here.

It's kind of a tricky word to translate. I think the translation that does the best with it is the Net Bible. And they say, came by collusion.

This is a group of people who are conspiring together. They've agreed to do something. And they're really sort of rushing about to get it done.

And as you follow these conspirators through the chapter, they're always sort of rushing somewhere to get something done. And Darius himself ends up furiously, frantically trying to accomplish something. The only person in the chapter who just is unfazed and steady is Daniel.

And he's the one who's being threatened. It's a contrast of characters. Did you notice what the officials said to Darius? They said, all the high officials of the kingdom, et cetera, et cetera.

Everyone agrees. I'm guessing that's probably an exaggeration. First of all, does anyone in government always agree? Everyone agreed? I doubt it.

Secondly, when you get to the end of the chapter, and the conspirators are punished, they are thrown into the lion's den. And if it's everybody, that's an awful lot of people to throw into the den. I forget the commentator, but someone says

they would have died by suffocation before they ever got to the bottom of the lion's den.

So, it's probably hyperbole. I also think it's intentional by these officials. They want to communicate to Darius that everyone agrees.

You sort of have to. Everyone in the government agrees that this is a good thing to do. Darius is going to be portrayed as a weak king.

Here his officials come, and they sort of strong-arm him into this. How can he refuse if everybody in the government says it's a good idea? He's not going to stand alone and go against it. As you read it, you think, well, everybody except Darius appears to be against Daniel.

If you compare this to chapter 3, the bad guys in chapter 3 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were really opportunists. They saw the Jews not bow down, and they said, oh, we have a chance to get them in trouble. In chapter 6, these guys have to create a situation to get Daniel in trouble.

They are entrapping him. They set the conditions for the law and the punishment because they knew that Daniel would be guilty. That's the only reason for this law.

The law itself is a little interesting. It seems kind of contradictory. It's for 30 days, but yet it's the law of the Medes and the Persians, so it's irrevocable.

What's a little more unusual about it is that Darius doesn't seem to realize that Daniel will be affected by this law. He seems to be either ignorant or maybe he's just being gullible, but later on in the chapter, he will demonstrate that he knows that Daniel serves his God. He knows Daniel's faithful.

He knows Daniel's character, which is why he wants to promote him, yet he doesn't seem to realize that this law will affect Daniel. Add to that that, at the end of the chapter, Daniel claims innocence.

He claimed that he was innocent before Darius, and then he was innocent before God. So, Daniel doesn't even seem to think that this was a law that he had violated. It's a little peculiar because in that time period with the religion of the Persians, they were not known, the kings were not known to deify themselves.

It wasn't something that they did. So how do we get around what this law actually might have been in terms of historical record? John Walton has a proposal. He's written an article called The Decree of Darius the Mede, and he suggests that the question is why neither Darius nor Daniel thought that this decree would apply to him.

And he proposes that in Darius' mind, the decree was for the Persians, whose religion was Zoroastrianism, and they worshipped Ahura Mazda. But at the time that Darius makes this decree, the Persians maybe had corrupted their Zoroastrian religious practice. It was more syncretistic.

They'd mixed religious practices together. And so the conspirators convinced Darius that if they funneled all worship through him for a period of time, they could get Zoroastrianism back on track. Now, why doesn't that apply to Daniel? Well, Daniel's technically a foreigner.

He had his own god, and he wasn't part of this Persian problem. The Persians were tolerant of other religions. That may all be true, but then why was Daniel guilty? Walton proposes that Darius' officials could easily have made the case that if Daniel is such a high-ranking official, and you're actually going to promote him even higher, he really ought to abide by the letter of the law, even though technically, he would be exempt from it.

I like the proposal. Walton admits you can't prove it. But what exactly this meant, they create a law that Daniel's going to have to break.

And when push comes to shove, Darius is going to lose if Daniel were really innocent and Darius thought he was innocent; he's not going to be able to stand against his officials. So, Daniel would have been thrown into the lion's den. I don't know.

It's possible. At the very least, Darius, I think, gets strong-armed into this decision. I think, as we get a little further and these conspirators keep coming to Darius and they say things to him, we're going to compare the three times they come before him and just see the progression of their speech.

Darius doesn't talk here. These high officials have given several speeches, and they give a long speech to Darius about this law. Darius doesn't ask any questions.

He doesn't respond. He simply signs it. His men said to do it.

He did it. All right. Let's move to the next section, verses 10 through 14.

So, Darius has signed the injunction, the document. 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, or collusion, and found Daniel making a petition and plea before his God. Then they came near and said before the king

concerning the injunction, O king, did you not sign an injunction that anyone who makes 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.

All right. So, Darius signs the injunction. And what does Daniel do? He continues his routine. He lives just exactly as he's always lived.

When he knew it was signed, he went to his home. It tells us he did this three times a day. This is a regular pattern.

We follow him through this routine. The narrator tells us that the window was open toward Jerusalem. Presumably, Daniel's praying by the open window.

It doesn't actually say that, but it suggests that he's praying by the window toward Jerusalem. What's the point of that? I think there are a couple of things going on here. Z

First of all, he's really visible. He's praying in front of an open window. And I suspect that the conspirators knew he did that. And so, they knew they would find him there.

It also, I think, suggests to us perhaps what Daniel was praying. This language of praying toward Jerusalem doesn't actually tell us what he prayed. But it just tells us where he prayed.

It comes out of Solomon's prayer of dedication for the temple in 1 Kings 8. When Solomon was dedicating the temple, he looked forward to a day, a bad day, when his people would break the covenant, and God would punish them by scattering them to the nations. So, Solomon prayed that when your people are in those faraway lands, and when they pray toward Jerusalem and confess their sin, then hear from heaven, heal their land, and restore them. So again, it doesn't tell us.

But that detail about the window facing Jerusalem suggests that Daniel is praising God for his greatness. Perhaps he's confessing the people's sin. He's pleading for restoration.

In Solomon's prayer, there's also a request that God grant the people mercy in the sight of their captors. It's interesting that in Daniel 6, Daniel's captor, Darius, tries to give him mercy. So again, it's an interesting connection back to Solomon's prayer.

I think we are meant to see Daniel praying for the restoration of his people. Although the fact that he prayed three times a day is not a pattern we know in the Bible, it became very common later in Jewish practice.

The fact that he prayed on his knees is also not common in the Old Testament. Only three characters are said to pray on their knees: Solomon when he dedicated the temple, Daniel, and Ezra on the other side of exile when he confessed the nation's sin.

So, again, maybe the connection of the temple and the restoration and Daniel's place in exile, that might all be at work in this imagery of Daniel praying on his knees before his window opened toward Jerusalem. Well, the conspirators, of course, find exactly what they're looking for. They find Daniel seeking his God, which is what their law prohibited, they find it.

This lengthy description of Daniel's response to this law, this whole business about his routine of prayer, this chapter, while it's primarily about God, it really also does care about Daniel. And it cares about the example that he sets. It cares about the example of someone living in exile sets.

His routine was important to him, and it does serve as an example. There are a number of times in this chapter where Daniel is just highlighted. This Daniel.

Well, you don't have to say this, Daniel, we know who Daniel is. We get to the end, we get more, just focus on Daniel. The narrator wants us to see Daniel as an example of how to follow God, even when the situation is difficult.

Despite what it was going to cost Daniel, he carried on his routine as if nothing had happened, as if nothing had changed for him, because nothing had changed for him, right? His God was still on the throne, and so three times a day, he went to his room, and he prays toward Jerusalem. That's what he did. Nothing has changed.

There's a new law in place, sure, but nothing has changed for Daniel. Like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, Daniel puts himself at the mercy of a God who may or may not deliver him. Why didn't Daniel close the window and pray in his closet? He puts himself at the mercy of a God who may or may not deliver him.

He's a faithful Jew, keeping the covenant, praying without ceasing. Darius's reaction when he finds out that Daniel is guilty is that he's distressed, and he's upset. Again, it doesn't seem like he expected that Daniel would be guilty of it.

And then it says he spent the day trying to rescue Daniel. He spent the whole day trying to fix things. We don't know what his options were to fix a law that apparently can't be changed.

It's interesting that the king himself is trapped by his own law. He's made a law that he can't even overrule. We just don't know what he could have tried to do.

But it is a contrast between Daniel and Darius. When Daniel hears the law, he proceeds as if nothing has changed. When Darius hears the effect of this law, he's frantic.

He labors till the sun goes down to try to rescue Daniel. Verses 15 through 18. The law, this inferior law of the Medes and Persians, is going to be enforced.

Then these men came by agreement to the king, they're colluding again, and they said to the king, No, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians, that no injunction or ordinance that the king establishes can be changed. Then the king commanded, and Daniel was brought and 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 signet of his lord, 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.

So, the conspirators come back to Darius. This is the third time they've come to Darius. They've spoken every time, and the narrator lets us hear their speech.

Let's just compare how they've spoken to the king. The first time in verse 6, they came to the king, O king Darius, live forever. And then they make their proposal.

Verse 13, they come, and they say, O king, there's no live forever here. O king, did you not sign an injunction that anyone who makes a petition to any God or man, except you, shall be cast into the den of lions? They start with a question that's really going to trap the king. What's he going to say? No.

Of course, he's going to say yes. And then they're going to spring the fact that Daniel broke it. So first, they began with royal protocol.

O king, live forever. Then they start with a question to trap the king. This third time, they just start with an imperative.

No, O king, it's a law of the Medes and Persians. You can't change this law. You have to do it.

These conspirators are the ones with control. They have control over Darius. He is not able really to stand against them for whatever reason.

Sharon Pace has a commentary on Daniel and she's discussed this powerlessness of Darius. It's kind of an interesting statement. She says Darius's impotence vis-a-vis his courtiers leaves Daniel completely unprotected and in danger of losing his life.

Darius never challenges Daniel's accusers concerning their pretexts, even though he has several opportunities to do so. Furthermore, the king fails to challenge the law that a decree cannot be changed, nor does he offer another law to supersede it. This incompetence of the king is contrasted with the dominance of his officials, which cannot be underestimated.

Daniel 6 gives us the supposedly immutable law of the Medes and Persians and a very weak king. It gives us the law of Daniel's god and a very strong, solid Daniel. There's a sharp contrast.

Darius has to comply with the law. Some commentator, I don't remember who says, but then he actually violates his own edict by invoking the name of Daniel's god. So, when Daniel gets thrown into the lion's den, the king says, may your god, I thought you weren't supposed to pray to the end of the god, may the god whom you serve continually deliver you.

The description of this pit being sealed is picked up somewhere else in the Bible. So, he seals the pit. The stone was brought, laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet, with the signet of his lords, that nothing concerning Daniel might be changed.

Even as we get a little farther when Daniel is brought out of the lion's den, we hear it does not really echo because this book comes first, but in the book of Matthew, Matthew's account of the crucifixion and the burial of Jesus and the resurrection morning has shades of Daniel in it. What did Pilate have done to the tomb? It was sealed with a stone and then a signet. His signet was put over it. And what was the goal of that? So, nothing would be changed.

Human intervention is impossible here. The point is that nothing concerning Daniel would be changed. Did anything concerning Daniel get changed? Well, the conspirators meant that we don't want this change.

Daniel's got to go in the lion's den because he's got to die. What the narrator means is that nothing concerning Daniel is going to change. His routine is not going to change.

His faithfulness to God is not going to change. You throw him in the pit, nothing's going to change. He's going to be alive and unharmed in the morning.

Nothing changes about Daniel. There's irony in that statement by the narrator that they sealed it with the signet ring so that nothing might be changed. All right, the last section, verses 19 through 24.

That sounds a little bit like the Gospel of Matthew. Break of day, the king arose and went in haste to the den of lions. As he came near 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, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions? Then Daniel said to the king, okay, I'm going to deliver you from the lions. O king, live forever. My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed me because I was found blameless before him. 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 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.

Before they reached the bottom of the den, the lions overpowered them and broke all their bones in pieces. This is the climax of the plot. We have Daniel spending the night in the den and notice the narrator didn't leave us with Daniel.

We have the same suspense as Darius. Den is sealed and we go to the palace with Darius to wait and we don't know until the king knows that Daniel has survived. The king is anxious.

Just notice all the description of how he's feeling. He hurries, he calls out in an anguished voice, he cries, and his statement about, has your God whom you serve been able to deliver you? It's possible that what's being described here is what's known as an ordeal in the ancient Near East. So, there was a practice that if you were presumed to be guilty of something, they would let the gods decide.

And so, in Daniel's case, we're going to let the gods decide; we'll throw him in with the den of lions. If he comes out alive, then the gods have declared he's innocent. If he doesn't, well, we were right, and he's guilty.

So that could underlie what's going on here. If the victim hadn't died by the next day, then he would be pardoned. Although you might think we'd expect Darius to ask a different question.

Darius says, O Daniel, has your God been able to deliver you? Why didn't he say, did your God deliver you? He's asking if was able to deliver to you. That kind of echoes where else we've been in Daniel. That was Nebuchadnezzar's challenge. Who is the God who is able to deliver? The narrator has Darius echo that.

So, has your God been able to deliver you? Did he have the power to deliver you from certain death? Now, Nebuchadnezzar didn't think there was a God who could do it. Darius is holding on to hope that Daniel's God could do it. Darius refers to him as the servant of the living God, which that's an expression that's used a lot in the Old Testament.

The living God refers to the God of Israel as being the true God. He's the living God. But for a Gentile king to state it is pretty astounding, especially since he's asking it before he knows if Daniel is alive.

So, he's showing a respect for Daniel's God. Before he knows whether Daniel's alive, he thinks about Nebuchadnezzar. It took a great humbling for Nebuchadnezzar to get to the point of acknowledging Daniel's God.

Darius proclaims Daniel's God as this true God before he even sees what he's done. Daniel responds, and he is vindicated. He says he was found blameless before God and before Darius.

He hadn't done any harm. He had done nothing wrong. Who is this angel? It's the same question we had in Chapter 3, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, where the fourth figure appears in the fire.

This angel, Daniel, doesn't tell us about his night in the den. All we know is that he says an angel, God sent an angel to close the mouths of the lions. No one else probably saw the angel.

Daniel must have seen it. But he's been protected and God was with him in the midst of what he faced. The outcome for the conspirators is pretty gruesome.

They, their children, and their wives are sent into the den of lions. They're overpowered, and all their bones are broken into pieces. But honestly, it's not out of line with the way they did things in the ancient Near East to punish a whole family on account of a father was just the way they did things, the custom of corporate responsibility.

And the last section, verses 25 through 28. 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 is the one who saved Daniel from the power of the lions.

So, this Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus, the Persian. This closing is a letter that Darius issues to his kingdom, much like the letter that Nebuchadnezzar issued in chapter four. There are some similarities between them.

Both kings had seen amazing acts of Israel's God performed. And both kings had responded appropriately to what they witnessed. But Darius actually goes beyond Nebuchadnezzar in his praise of this God.

He sees Daniel's God deliver a faithful servant from the lions. And he praises him for his surpassing greatness. He doesn't need any humbling to come to this spot, unlike Nebuchadnezzar.

Darius' doxology, if you want to call it that, pulls together a lot of themes from the first six chapters. Listen to it again and see if you can think of all the chapters and places. We've heard some of these things before.

He's the living God, enduring forever. His kingdom shall never be destroyed. We've heard that repeatedly.

His dominion shall be to the end. He delivers and rescues. He works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth.

He is the one who saved Daniel from the power of the lions. This is the end of the narrative section. The narrator ends these six chapters by pulling all of these themes together into this amazing doxology by Darius.

So, Darius declares the eternity of God's kingdom, his character that he rescues, that he delivers. This is the God who has the power. This is the God with the wisdom.

He alone has the authority to rule and reign forever. The last verse is just this little add-on about Daniel prospering during the reign of Cyrus, the reign of Darius, and the reign of Cyrus, the Persian. Again, I told you, I think they're the same person.

We might ask, why say both of them? Well, I think this is part of this march of kingdoms in the book of Daniel. So, at the end of chapter five, we went from Babylon to Media. And here we have Daniel prospering during the reign of Darius the Mede and into Cyrus the Persian, even though it's probably the same person.

But the narrator's point is history is moving exactly as God planned. Babylon, Media, Persia. The portrayal in this chapter of human law versus God's law is, I think, a challenge for those of us who claim to follow God's law, that God's law is one that does not change.

These human laws, at least for the Medes and the Persians, it was indestructible, this immutable law. And yet it proved to take captive the person who wrote it, and it ultimately proved to be worthless to the one who obeyed God's law. Whose law are you going to be faithful to? And the chapter also sets Daniel out, I believe, as an example of faithfulness.

His faithfulness in his prayer, his routine of worshiping God, and obeying God, and following God. And I think, too, these subtle links to the New Testament. Again, Matthew's account of the gospel that draws, I believe, on this imagery of Daniel being sealed in this, what should have been a tomb, and the king rushing there in the morning at break of day.

Daniel just prefigures an even greater servant of God who will suffer for obeying and for being obedient unto, and he will die. Obviously, Jesus died. Daniel lived through his experience and Jesus rose again.

Jesus serves as a greater Daniel, I think, in the New Testament. That brings us to the end of chapter six. And when we get to chapter seven, we will move into apocalyptic literature and stay there for the rest of the book.

This is Dr. Wendy Whitter and her teaching on the book of Daniel. This is session 9, Daniel 6, God's Superior Law and His Servants' Faithfulness.