

“When Rebellion is Obedience”

Daniel 6:1-28

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“Peter T. Forsythe was right when he said, “The first duty of every soul is to find not its freedom but its Master.”

Warren W. Wiersbe, The Integrity Crisis, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1991, p. 22.

Matthew 10:24-25 ²⁴ “A disciple is not above *his* teacher, nor a servant above his master. ²⁵ It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master.”

Romans 6:16 “Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether of sin *leading* to death, or of obedience *leading* to righteousness?”

- While that is certainly true of your will and life, it’s also true of a nation and its people.
- As an example, Israel in the Old Testament found themselves in that cycle of choosing to obey their sinful nature above the God of Heaven and as a result found themselves literal slaves to foreign nations.

This is the setting for what we will read here in Daniel 6.

The Rebel

Daniel 6:1-5 ¹ It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty satraps, to be over the whole kingdom; ² and over these, three governors, of whom Daniel was one, that the satraps might give account to them, so that the king would suffer no loss. ³ 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. ⁴ So the governors and satraps sought to find *some* charge against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but *they could find no charge or fault, because he was faithful; nor was there any error or fault found in him.* ⁵ Then these men said, “We shall not find any charge against this Daniel unless we find *it* against him concerning the law of his God.”

- Daniel was about 80 when this occurred about 539 B.C.

- He had been taken captive at 16, about 605 B.C.
- *Daniel was a faithful man that...*
 - **Psalm 1:1-3** “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; ² But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. ³ He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.”
- As a result of Daniel doing good, he was persecuted.
 - **Matthew 5:11-12** “¹¹ **Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. ¹² Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.**”
 - **1 Peter 2:20-25** “²⁰ For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. ²¹ For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: ²² “*Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth*”; ²³ who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed *Himself* to Him who judges righteously; ²⁴ who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness— by whose stripes you were healed. ²⁵ For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.”
 - **1 Peter 4:14-16** “¹⁴ If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. ¹⁵ But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people’s matters. ¹⁶ Yet if *anyone suffers* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.”

The Tyranny

Daniel 6:6-9 “⁶ So these governors and satraps thronged before the king, and said thus to him: “King Darius, live forever! ⁷ All the governors of the kingdom, the administrators and satraps, the counselors and advisors, have consulted together to establish a royal statute and to make a firm decree, that whoever petitions any god or man for thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. ⁸ Now, O king, establish the decree and sign the writing, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter.” ⁹ Therefore King Darius signed the written decree.”

- Because they knew they couldn't trap Daniel by some sin, they had to make a law concerning prayer. The Law they made would make it illegal to pray to his God for a month.
- There always has been and always will be a plot against God's people.
 - **Daniel 3:12** "There are certain Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego; these men, O king, have not paid due regard to you. They do not serve your gods or worship the gold image which you have set up."
 - **Matthew 26:3-4** "³ Then the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of the people assembled at the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, ⁴ and plotted to take Jesus by trickery and kill *Him*."
 - **Acts 17:5-8** "⁵ But the Jews who were not persuaded, becoming envious, took some of the evil men from the marketplace, and gathering a mob, set all the city in an uproar and attacked the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. ⁶ But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city, crying out, "These who have turned the world upside down have come here too. ⁷ Jason has harbored them, and these are all acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king—Jesus." ⁸ And they troubled the crowd and the rulers of the city when they heard these things."

Rebellion to Tyranny

Daniel 6:10-11 "¹⁰ Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, *as was his custom since early days*. ¹¹ Then these men assembled and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God."

- **Rebellion is obedience when you obey God rather than men!**

"Rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God."

– Thomas Jefferson/Ben Franklin

"Those who will not be governed by God will be ruled by tyrants."

-William Penn

"An unjust law, is no law at all."

-Saint Agustin

- Daniel knowing the law had been signed, and that it would directly affect his freedom to pray, chose to deliberately disobey the law.
 - Notice that it was already Daniel's habit to pray daily.

- Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego disobeyed the command to bow and worship the gold image Nebuchadnezzar had set up.
 - **Daniel 3:15-18** “...if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who *is* the god who will deliver you from my hands?” ¹⁶ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. ¹⁷ If that *is the case*, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver *us* from your hand, O king. ¹⁸ But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up.”
 - God approved of their rebellion by delivering them from the fire.
- When *Pharaoh* commanded all the Egyptian midwives to put the newborn Hebrew babies to death, they disobeyed.
 - **Exodus 1:17** “But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the male children alive.”
- *Esther* disobeyed the royal command to not enter the king’s presence unless called to save the Jews from being killed.
 - **Esther 4:13-16** “¹³ And Mordecai told *them* to answer Esther: “Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king’s palace any more than all the other Jews. ¹⁴ For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father’s house will perish. **Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?**” ¹⁵ Then Esther told *them* to reply to Mordecai: ¹⁶ “Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which *is* against the law; and if I perish, I perish!”
- What if Shadrach, Meshach, Abed-Nego, and Daniel had just sat back and said, “*We MUST obey the government no matter what?*”
- It would be the misapplication of Romans 13.
- Now wait a minute Shadrach, aren’t we supposed to obey whatever the government decrees?
- I’m glad you brought Romans 13 up, let’s turn there and read it and see if we can discover its true meaning.
 - **Romans 13:1-3** “¹ Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For *there is no authority except from God*, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. ² Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. ³ For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority?”
 - Verse 3 is the qualification on the types of laws we are to obey.
 - Laws that are good and morally upright.

- *“Paul could admonish only Christians. What he requires is submission, a term that calls for placing oneself under someone else. Here and in v. 5 he seems to avoid using the stronger word “obey,” and the reason is that the believer may find it impossible to comply with every demand of the government. A circumstance may arise in which he must choose between obeying God and obeying men (Acts 5:29).”*¹ Harrison, E. F. (1976). *Romans*. In F. E. Gaebelin (Ed.), *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Romans through Galatians* (Vol. 10, pp. 136–137). Zondervan Publishing House.
- *“I am convinced, after studying the historical situation and the principles of Scripture, that the American Revolution was morally justified in the sight of God.*

The reason that a number of early Americans thought it was justified to rebel against the British monarchy is that it is morally right for a lower government official to protect the citizens in his care from a higher official who is committing crimes against these citizens.

This thinking in Protestant circles goes back as far as John Calvin. In his Institutes of the Christian Religion (1559) he argued as follows about “magistrates” (lower government officials):

*If there are now any magistrates of the people, appointed to restrain the willfulness of kings ... if they wink at kings who violently fall upon and assault the lowly common folk, I declare that ... they dishonestly betray the freedom of the people, of which they know that they have been appointed protectors by God’s ordinance.”*⁵ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 4.20.31.

¹ Grudem, W. A. (2010). *Politics according to the Bible: A Comprehensive Resource for Understanding Modern Political Issues in Light of Scripture* (p. 89). Zondervan.

- **1 Peter 2:13-17** ¹³Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake, whether to the king as supreme, ¹⁴or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and *for the praise of those who do good.* ¹⁵For this is the will of God, *that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men*—¹⁶as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. ¹⁷Honor all *people*. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.”
 - So then, our form of government is established by God.
 - Government exists to punish evil.
 - IF government exalts evil, government is wrong and needs to be changed.
 - By doing good we ‘put to silence the ignorance of foolish men’

- **What kind of government do we have in the United States?**
 - *Republic* – a state in which supreme power is held by the people and their elected representatives, and which has an elected or nominated president rather than a monarch.
 - We have a government that is, *“Of the people, by the people, and for the people.”*
- *So, as a rule of thumb, we obey the government until the government oversteps and writes a law that mandates, we disobey God, or legislates the disobedience of Gods law.*
- *This is why when Peter and the apostles when commanded not to preach Jesus said...*
 - **Acts 5:29** “We ought to **obey** God rather than men.”
- Daniel was labeled a rebel because he prayed!
- The law stated there was to be no prayer to anyone for 30 days.
- Daniel knowing it was an unjust law and would violate scripture, knelt and prayed.
 - Prayer is always a threat to the enemy.
 - **James 5:16** “The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”
 - **Philippians 4:6-7** “⁶ Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷ and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”
 - **2 Corinthians 10:3-6** “³ For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. ⁴ For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, ⁵ casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, ⁶ and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.”

The Result of Rebellion

Daniel 6:12-23 “¹² And they went before the king, and spoke concerning the king’s decree: “Have you not signed a decree that every man who petitions any god or man within thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?” The king answered and said, “The thing *is* true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter.” ¹³ So they answered and said before the king, “That Daniel, who is one of the captives from Judah, does not show due regard for you, O king, or for the decree that you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day.” 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 labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him. ¹⁵ Then these men approached the king, and said to the king, “Know, O king, that *it is* the law of the Medes and Persians that no decree or statute which the king establishes

may be changed.”¹⁶ 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.”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.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.¹⁹ Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions.²⁰ And when he came to the den, he cried out with a lamenting voice to Daniel. 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?”²¹ Then Daniel said to the king, “O king, live forever!²² My God sent His angel and shut the lions’ mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you.”²³ 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.”

- Daniel obeyed and even King Darius was rooting for him!!!
 - Because Daniel lived uprightly before the Lord, and because he prayed, the mouths of the lions were shut!
 - Daniel trusted and obeyed the Lord and was protected!

The Tyrants End

Daniel 6:24-28 “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.²⁵ Then King Darius wrote: To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you.²⁶ I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom *men must* tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. 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.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.²⁸ So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.”

- Earthly rulers come and go, but the God of Heaven is eternal!
 - Nebuchadnezzar is dead, Artaxerxes is dead, Alexander the Great is dead, the emperors of Rome are dead!
 - Their kingdoms are gone, but His will never be destroyed!
- This earth is not our home, and these kingdoms are not our kingdoms.
 - **Hebrews 11:13-16** “¹³ These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced *them* and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.¹⁴ For

those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. ¹⁵ And truly if they had called to mind that *country* from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶ But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly *country*. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.”

In closing, I want you to know that a moment of decision is coming for all of us.

Whether that moment is to proclaim the truth before rulers or family members.

A moment that will test whether you will say;

- I will pray!
- I will not bow!
- I will proclaim!
- I will stand!

It's a moment that will test our faith!

Then we will join in the ranks of the Great Hall of Faith!

Hebrews 11:35-38 “Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. ³⁶ Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. ³⁷ They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented—³⁸ of whom the world was not worthy.”

1 Peter 3:13-17 “¹³ And who *is* he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? ¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, *you are blessed*. “*And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled.*” ¹⁵ But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always *be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;* ¹⁶ having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. ¹⁷ For *it is better*, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.”

- The key is to be suffering for doing good!
 - **Isaiah 5:20** “Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”

Matthew 10:24-28 “²⁴ “A disciple is not above *his* teacher, nor a servant above his master. ²⁵ It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more *will they call* those of his household! ²⁶ Therefore **do not fear them**. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known. ²⁷ “Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops. ²⁸ And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”