

July 1st, 2018

The Lion of Statism in the Den of Daniel's God

Daniel 6

The serpent behind statism

We need to define our terms before we begin. What is statism? The atheist Ayn Rand who fought against, wrote against, spoke against statism her whole career said this regarding statism:

*“statism, which holds that **man’s life and work belong to the state**—to society, to the group, the gang, the race, the nation—and that the state may dispose of him in any way it pleases for the sake of whatever it deems to be its own tribal, collective good...Nothing can ever justify so monstrously evil a theory. Nothing can justify the horror, the brutality, the plunder, the destruction, the starvation, the slave-labor camps, the torture chambers, the wholesale slaughter of statist dictatorships.”*¹

Statism is the most popular political view amongst young Americans today. On Tuesday of this week 28 year old Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez defeated 10 term incumbent Joe Crowley in New York’s 14th congressional district. How did she win? She ran as a statist—specifically as a Democrat Socialist. Socialism, is just a species of statism, along with Marxism, communism, and Nazism.² Statism is not about politics. Statism is about worship.³ It answers the questions: Who

¹ Source: <http://aynrandlexicon.com/lexicon/statism.html> accessed June 30, 2018

² Source: <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2018/6/27/17508528/alexandria-ocasio-cortez-new-york-primary-election-socialist> accessed June 30, 2018

³ At the heart of statism is humanism. “Humanism is the placing of Man at the center of all things, and making him the measure of all things.” Francis A. Schaeffer, *A Christian Manifesto*, (Westchester, IL.: Crossway, Revised Edition 1982), pg. 23

will take care of you? Who do you owe *ultimate* allegiance to? Who do you belong to? The state. The government. The city of man.

Whose is the kingdom?

Daniel 6 couldn't be more relevant to the age that we live in. What was required of Daniel? He *wasn't* required to give up his God. Daniel's predicament paralleled of the early church in the Roman empire. Rome did not care what you believed. You could believe in one hundred gods, one god, or no gods. "But you had to worship Caesar as a sign of your loyalty to the state."⁴ Daniel could continue to worship Yahweh, but he had to do this *little* thing, this *tiny* thing: he had to align politically with the Darius administration. For thirty days, he had to show his loyalty by looking to Darius as his provider and protector. And I believe this is where many Evangelicals are fooled today: 'I can keep my Christianity, I can keep my own personal Jesus, and my comfortable lifestyle as long as I acknowledge the state's sovereign authority. I can still worship Jesus, and the state can make whatever policies and whatever demands it wishes.'

Daniel saw that tiny little thing as treason to God's Lordship over all of life. He refused to comply. And for that he was thrown to the lions. The message of the world's gospel has never been "Live and let live." History shows us time and time again that the message of the world's gospel has 'Worship at this altar or you will pay with your life, liberty and property.' Daniel 6 like Daniel 3 is battle over worship. And it's a battle over authority—over lordship. The grace we find from this chapter is that it is not Daniel who finds himself in danger in the lion's den. The real danger is when the lion of statism finds himself in the den of Daniel's God.

⁴ Francis A. Schaeffer, *A Christian Manifesto*, (Westchester, IL.: Crossway, Revised Edition 1982), pg. 92

The Big Idea...

Through the eyes of faith we see that it is not we who stand in the Lion's den,
but rather all who oppose Christ

- ☆ The Lordship of Christ Over All of Life (v.1-5)
- ☆ The Lordship of Christ in a Hundred Deaths (v.6-10)
- ☆ The Lordship of Christ Over Every Kingdom (v.11-28)

I. The Lordship of Christ Over All of Life (v.1-5)

Political corruption

Let's look at v.1-2 "It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom 120 satraps, to be throughout the whole kingdom; [2] and over them three high officials, of whom Daniel was one, to whom these satraps⁵ should give account, so that the king might suffer no loss." As King Darius begins his reign, he places authority structures in his kingdom. He does this to avoid loss through political corruption. Just as politicians today pursue their own private agenda for private gain, so the politicians in Persia did the same thing.

Chief of staff Daniel

What I think is remarkable about Daniel being promoted to one of these three high officials is that we normally don't see that in our own political system. When a new president comes into the White House, he doesn't keep the former chief of staff, but brings his own. But Darius kept Daniel when he conquered Behshazzar. What's going on? God is exercising his Lordship over the Persian government. Just as God placed Daniel in the government in Babylon in ch.1,

⁵ Persian officials

so He places Daniel in the government of Persia in ch.6. And the particular way that God does this is through giving Daniel a wisdom⁶ that exceeded his counterparts. Look at v.3 “Then this Daniel became *distinguished* above all the other high officials and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him.” Daniel was distinguished—there was an invisible mark or quality about him that separated him from others. This is true of all godly men, and godly women. Just as lightning storms are self-evidently fierce, just as water is self-evidently wet—so Godly people are self-evidently different. That’s how God’s glory works. It’s self-authenticating. When a saint communes with God and lives for God, there is a residue of God that gets in them. Others see it.⁷ That’s what Darius saw. He couldn’t deny it. And because of it he knew that he could trust from political corruption. And so the end of v.3 tells us that “the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom.”

True spirituality

This set off a chain reaction of envy.⁸ v.4 says “Then the high officials and the satraps sought to find a ground for complaint against Daniel with regard to the kingdom,” But the problem was, they couldn’t find anything. Halfway through v.4 “but they could find no ground for complaint or any fault, because he was faithful, and no error or fault was found in him.” Daniel had more integrity in the city of man than it’s own citizens. He did his job above all

⁶ Daniel 2:21 “He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding.”

⁷ So excellent was Daniel that the prophet Ezekiel mentions him as one of the three most righteous people on earth (**Ezekiel 14:14**).

⁸ Authors Anselm Hagedorn and Jerome H. Neyrey argue that society is always *competing* for honor (1). Honor is the way that society rewards its members (2). With insight they point out how most cultures believe that honor exists in a limited supply. Kind of like how many wrongly view the economy—as a pie with a limited number of pieces (3). If you get a bigger piece of the pie, that means less for me. Honor is viewed the same way. If you are honored, then that means less honor for me. And thus envy is born. In this sinful world, honor *always* provokes envy (4). (1) Source: <https://www3.nd.edu/~jneyrey1/envy.html> accessed March 24, 2018 (2) At the Emmy’s or Grammy’s it’s not the hunk of metal or plastic that the recipient treasures, it is the honor that society bestows upon them. (3) Source: <https://tifwe.org/beyond-the-pie-model-how-our-economy-is-more-than-the-sum-of-the-slices/> accessed March 24, 2018 (4) Source: <https://www3.nd.edu/~jneyrey1/envy.html> accessed March 24, 2018

reproach, above all accusation. He had no shady deals. He wouldn't take any bribes. All of his accounts with the king were square. Daniel wasn't a Sunday-only-Christian. The Lordship of Christ was the banner over all his life. There was no corner, no crevice, no closet where Christ didn't have complete control. This is what true spirituality is.⁹

The Moral Majority

It's been fad in religious circles to look back at the Moral Majority of the 80's the Jerry Falwell's and the Pat Robertson's and the James Dobson's and scoff at their politics. Certainly I don't agree with many of their positions. However they did one outstandingly right. As Francis Schaeffer said

“They carried the fact that law is king, law is above lawmakers and God is above [all]...the Moral Majority [drew] a line between the one total view of reality and the other total view of reality and the results this brings forth in government and law. And if you personally do not like some of the details of what they have done, do it better. But you must understand that all Christians have got to do the same kind of thing or you are simply not showing the Lordship of Christ in the totality of life.”¹⁰

Jesus Christ must dominate every part of your life—your politics, your economics, your relationships, your 9-5 job, the way you suffer through illness or loss, the way you take vacations, how you play video games, how you make

⁹ Franky Schaeffer, the son of the late Francis Schaeffer said this: “Either God is the Creator of the whole man, the whole universe, and of all reality and existence, or he is the Creator of none of it...if God is only the Creator of some spiritual little experiential “praise the Lord” reality, then he is not much of a God..If our Christian lives are allowed to become something spiritual and religious as opposed to something real, daily applicable, understandable, beautiful, verifiable, balanced, sensible, and above all united, whole, if indeed our Christianity is allowed to become [a] waffling spiritual goo...then Christianity as truth disappears and instead we only have a system of vague experiential platitudes in its place.” Quoted in Francis Schaeffer's *A Christian Manifesto*, (Westchester, IL.: Crossway, Revised Edition 1982), pg. 68-69

¹⁰ *ibid*, pg. 61-62 Schaeffer says later “A platonic concept of spirituality which does not include all of life is not true biblical spirituality. True spirituality touches all of life, including things of government and law, and not just “religious things.” *ibid*, pg. 124

love, how you pay your taxes, your Facebook-ing, what you view on your smart phone, what books you read. The Lordship of Christ means that He is Lord over every aspect of your existence, not just your religious existence.

So ask yourself: is Jesus God of your life Monday through Saturday—in the “real world” or is he only the God of your “spiritual world” on Sundays? How would your co-workers answer that question? How would your children answer that question?

Someone is out to get you

Daniel’s co-workers knew that his life was controlled by God. So they had to change their strategy. Look at v.5 “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.” Two things to see here. **First**, Daniel was being persecuted solely because he followed God’s law. And this is the warning that Paul gives all believers, **2 Timothy 3:12** “Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” In others words, Christian—somebody is out to get you. You live in a world that hates you. Jesus said in **John 15:19** “If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.”

Second, when the church places all of life under the Lordship of Christ, the state will attack. These corrupt politicians sought to change law in order to get rid of Daniel.¹¹ Make no mistake about it, laws have been and are currently being formed to silence the Christian voice from the public square. Right now in California a law is being proposed to make gay conversion therapy illegal.¹² Ask yourself: what is that law aimed at? The law of God. The gospel. It’s almost as if when we open our Bibles to Daniel 6, we are reading current events. Nothing is more relevant than the Scripture. These first five verses give us a picture of

¹¹ Explore in the future: All worldview are inherently totalizing. pg. 51 in Schaeffer

¹² Source: <https://www.nbcsandiego.com/news/california/Gay-Conversion-Therapy-Could-Be-Deemed-Illegal-in-California-480325673.html> accessed June 30, 2018

what happens when just one Christian submits under the Lordship of Christ in all areas of life—he finds himself in at war with the city of man. Not because he is doing anything evil. On the contrary, it’s his godliness, his integrity to God and man that make him an enemy of the state. When Christ is Lord, that means Caesar is not. That’s our **first point**: the Lordship of Christ over all of life.

II. The Lordship of Christ in a Hundred Deaths (v.6-10)

Darius Appreciation Month

What happens next? Look at **v.6-9**

Then these high officials and satraps came by agreement to the king and said to him, “O King Darius, live forever! [7] All the high officials of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the counselors and the governors are agreed that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce an injunction, that whoever makes petition to any god or man for thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. [8] Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which cannot be revoked.” [9] Therefore King Darius signed the document and injunction.

Notice a couple things here. **First**, these politicians were lying. In **v.7** they say “*all* the high officials” agreed in this proposal. Daniel was one of the three high officials. He wasn’t in agreement. He wasn’t even there.

Secondly, notice what their proposal was—end of **v.7** “whoever makes petition to any god or man for thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions.” These men intended to flatter King Darius. They whispered the same lie to Darius that Satan told Adam and Eve: ‘You will be like God’ (**Gen. 3:5**) “Darius—you will be honored above all. You are the protector and provider of the realm. Everyone must see that. Everyone must acknowledge your greatness.’ One commentator humorously called this “Darius

Appreciation Month.”¹³ Now Darius agreed to this. The question is why? It’s clear that his politicians were duping him. Was he just gullible? Not entirely. No doubt he was flattered by the Darius-worship. But I believe Darius saw this as political expedient. He was just now establishing his kingdom. He probably viewed this edict as the key to uniting the realm. Everyone had to recognize that King Darius was the head and source of peace and blessing in the kingdom.

‘You can keep your gods’

This law didn’t required anyone to deny their own gods. Pluralism and polytheism was not going away. This law simply required that you acknowledge that there is another equal authority with your god—namely the state. ‘Prove your loyalty to the state by making this petition for the next 30 days. Prove that you are not intolerant of other citizens. Prove that you are brave enough and sophisticated enough and humble enough to accept another authority.’

What would Daniel do?

Look at v.10 “When Daniel knew that the document had been signed,” Let’s stop there at the comma. That’s a huge comma. Daniel is ninety or so years old.¹⁴ This book covers the whole spectrum of a Christian’s life. In Daniel 1, Daniel was under severe testing as a young teenager, and now in his twilight years he is being tested again. Dear congregation, some of you are in your twilight years, others of you will be there very soon. God’s not through with you. Daniel’s greatest test came at the end of his life, not at the beginning.¹⁵ God doesn’t look at age like we do. He is active with you as 15 year old, and He is active with you as a 90 year old. He doesn’t put His saints on a shelf.

¹³ Dale Ralph Davis, *The Bible Speaks Today: The Message of Daniel, His Kingdom Cannot Fail*, (Downers Grove, IL.,: IVP Academic, 2013), pg. 82

¹⁴ Bryan Chapell, *The Gospel According To Daniel*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: BakerBooks, 2014), pg. 109; Sinclair Ferguson says that Daniel is 70-80 years old— Sinclair Ferguson, *The Preacher’s Commentary, OT Vol. 21: Daniel*, (Nashville, TN.,: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1988), pg. 118

¹⁵ Sinclair Ferguson, *The Preacher’s Commentary, OT Vol. 21: Daniel*, (Nashville, TN.,: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1988), pg. 119

But I'm pretty sure Daniel was tempted here. "Lord, I'm 90. I've followed you faithfully all these years. Why this? Why now?" Don't you see? If Daniel prays, it will mean an excruciating, terrifying death.

American Idols

Dear congregation, I am compelled to ask: if this law was put into effect in our land, would it make a difference in your prayer life?¹⁶ I'm fearful that we refuse to pray for much less.¹⁷ We don't need a lion threatening us, a smart phone will do. We look at the persecuted church with the dangers that they face and we are blind to our own. Francis Shaeffer prophetically points to the two bankrupt values of the Western Church: personal peace and affluence.

"Personal peace means just to be let alone, not to be troubled by the troubles of other people, whether across the world or across the city. Affluence means and overwhelming and ever-increasing prosperity—a life made up of things and more things—a success judged by an ever-higher level of material substance."¹⁸

When did personal peace and personal comfort ever say "I AM who I AM?" When did they become our God? God is not committed to our personal peace and comfort. God is committed to taking ahold of your life and shaping it and forming it—however painful that might be—in order to proclaim His greatness to planet earth. Peter says it like this "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, *that you may proclaim*

¹⁶ cf. Thomas Brooks, *The Secret Key to Heaven*, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth Trust, Reprint 2009), pg. 107-108

¹⁷ I'm fearful that we can miss Sunday worship for much less than lions. Pastor Dale Davis recalls a time overseas when a married couple had contacted him explaining why they hadn't been at morning worship that day "their young daughter had been invited to the birthday party of one of her friends. So they were 'forced' to miss worship." Dale Ralph Davis, *The Bible Speaks Today: The Message of Daniel, His Kingdom Cannot Fail*, (Downers Grove, IL.,: IVP Academic, 2013), pg. 86

¹⁸ Francis A. Schaeffer, *A Christian Manifesto*, (Westchester, IL.,: Crossway, Revised Edition 1982), pg. 77

the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9). His wonderful plan for your life is that you would be a beacon for His beauty and a pulpit for His praise. And He will do whatever it takes to make that happen.

When worship costs you everything and changes nothing

Now when Daniel knew this edict was signed I believe he was hit with more than one temptation. The one temptation was clear: if he prayed it would cost him everything. But I believe the other temptation was—‘what difference will this make?’ Bryan Chapell asks here: “What would it matter for one person to take a stand against an entire nation, culture, and tradition of godlessness? Who would even care if Daniel did his personal duty to God? So if duty made no difference, why do it?”¹⁹ Chapell nails it. That’s how pragmatic people like us think. Daniel had been in Babylon for over 70 years. He saw no revival. He and his people were still in Babylon. As far as he could see, he was going to die here anyway. Why bother? Maybe some of you are thinking that now. ‘Why bother Lord? My witness is not working. I’m having no effect. I don’t see any fruit on the people around me.’ Listen carefully. We don’t worship God because *it works*. We worship God because He is worthy.

We worship God because from everlasting to everlasting He is God (**Psalm 90:2**)

We worship God because He is our glory and the lifter of our heads (**Psalm 3:3**)

We worship God because He the Good Shepherd who leads us through the valley of the shadow of death (**Psalm 23**)

We worship God because there is no one like Him “The Lord is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens! Who is like the Lord our God?” (**Psalm 113:4-6**).

The real den of lions: Daniel’s bedroom

And that is what Daniel does. When he hears of the king’s edict. He doesn’t look to his age, or his personal peace or prosperity, or fruitlessness of the

¹⁹ Bryan Chapell, *The Gospel According To Daniel*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: BakerBooks, 2014), pg. 121

past, he looks to his God. Look at v.10 “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.” Three things to see from this prayer. **First**, Daniel could have prayed in secret, avoiding the authorities. He didn’t, he opened his windows, just as he always did. Why? Because he was not willing to even pretend to worship the state. To change any of his previous habit of prayer would have been to bow the knee to the state.²⁰ **Secondly**, his windows were open to Jerusalem. This wasn’t superstition. Daniel was remembering Solomon’s prayer in 1 Kings 8. Solomon looked toward the future for when Israel was carried off in captivity, that if they would turn in repentance and pray towards Jerusalem that God would hear their prayer (1 Kings 8:48-49). Turning their eyes to Jerusalem was the spiritual posture of turning their heart to God. **Thirdly**, it says that he gave thanks to God. Isn’t this incredible? Daniel is being threatened with being eaten alive by lions, and he is praising God. This so instructive. This was where Daniel found strength. He simply thanked God for who God is. He thanked God for what He has done in preserving His people. He thanked God for the way that the Lord dealt faithfully with him. God had never abandoned him through all these years. Dear congregation, that is what gives you grace for the present. As one author said, “the real den of lions was Daniel’s bedroom...the great battle took place there—not in the lion’s den, but at the open window looking to God.”²¹

²⁰ Iain Duguid says here “When prayer becomes fashionable, praying in secret may be a good thing, but when prayer is proscribed, to pray in private becomes an act of cowardice.” Iain M. Duguid, *Reformed Expository Commentary: Daniel*, (Phillipsburg, NJ.,: P & R Publishing, 2008), pg. 95

²¹ See footnote 10 in Dale Ralph Davis, *The Bible Speaks Today: The Message of Daniel, His Kingdom Cannot Fail*, (Downers Grove, IL.,: IVP Academic, 2013), pg.87

The Lordship of Christ in a hundred deaths

Was Daniel scared? I think so. Who wouldn't be? Even Jesus had exceeding sorrow as he faced the cross (**Mark 14:34**). But what could Daniel do? God had captured his heart. God had already prepared him to die a hundred deaths. John Calvin in his commentary prayed this over this section of Daniel:

“Whenever Satan besieges us on every side, and the wicked lay snares for us, and we are attacked by the fierceness of wild beasts, may we remain safe under thy protection, and even if we have to undergo **a hundred deaths**, may we learn to live and die to thee, and may thy name be glorified in us, through Christ our Lord.—Amen.”²²

Daniel found his true happiness not in power, or position, or his personal peace, or comfort and safety. He found his ultimate happiness in the true worship of God. And he would rather undergo a hundred deaths so that God be glorified in his life. That's our **second point**: The Lordship of Christ in a hundred deaths.

III. The Lordship of Christ Over Every Kingdom (v.11-28)

The crime of prayer

In **v.11-15**, these treacherous officials run to Darius and with careful strategy tattle on Daniel for the crime of praying to his God. Now Darius liked Daniel. That is totally clear from the text. He realized that this law—that now cannot be changed according to the law of the Medes and Persians—had put him in a horrible position. The Medes and Persians were different that Babylon. In order counter favoritism and corruption in government, laws once made, were permanent. A king couldn't simply change a law without the consequences

²² John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries, Vol. XII*, (Grand Rapids, MI.: BakerBooks, 2009), pg. 356

of a loss of face and all his future edicts being called into question.²³ So after agonizing on a way to save face and save Daniel, he finally chooses to save face.

Luxury with the lions, pain in the palace

Look at v.16

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!” [17] 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 lords, that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel. [18] Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; no diversions were brought to him, and sleep fled from him.

Now the emphasis in this section is quite peculiar. Daniel is getting thrown into the lion’s den, and Darius goes back to his palace. Yet we hear nothing about the state of Daniel’s soul, and everything about Darius. He fasted from food and entertainment. He was sleepless. And the morning couldn’t come fast enough. In v.19, he ran to the den to see if Daniel is still alive. Meanwhile we’ve heard nothing from Daniel. What does this teach us? True peace doesn’t come from the stuff the world can give you, but only from knowing and loving the true God of heaven. As Iain Duguid says here “It is clear that, contrary to all expectations, Daniel actually spent a far more comfortable night in the stinking pit than Darius did in his royal luxury. We may almost imagine the prophet leaning back on a warm, furry lion, conversing for hours with the angel about heavenly things.”²⁴

Daniel trusted in his God

When Darius finally did make it to the den, he cried out in v.20

²³ Iain M. Duguid, *Reformed Expository Commentary: Daniel*, (Phillipsburg, NJ.: P & R Publishing, 2008), pg. 98

²⁴ *ibid*, pg. 99

“O 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, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm.” [23] 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.

It is this rescue that the author of Hebrews points to when he speaks of the prophet who “who through faith...stopped the mouths of lions” (**Hebrews 11:33**). The object of Daniel’s faith was *not* that God would rescue him from the lion’s den. Maybe he wouldn’t. There were scores of Christians who were fed to the lions by Rome. The object of Daniel’s faith was God. Daniel believed that no matter what God decided to do with 90 year old body, he would be happy, because he would gain God either way. As Paul said “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (**Philippians 1:21**).

The lion of statism in the den of Daniel’s God

Now what happens next shuts the mouth of any naysayer who would claim that the lions simply weren’t hungry when Daniel was present. Darius turned his attention on the corrupt politicians who accused Daniel. We read in **v.24** “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.” The historian “Herodotus informs us that such punishment of entire families was meted out according to Persian law.”²⁵ This is most frightening. And it points to the greater reality that this chapter teaches. On the final day of judgment, when

²⁵ Sinclair Ferguson, *The Preacher’s Commentary, OT Vol. 21: Daniel*, (Nashville, TN.,: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1988), pg. 130

God squares all accounts, it is not the Christian who stands in the lion's den, rather it's all who oppose Christ.

The Lordship of Christ over every kingdom

Darius closes this chapter similar to the way Nebuchadnezzar closed chapter 2, 3, and 4. He makes a new decree proclaiming that God is the living God and that his kingdom shall never be destroyed.²⁶ No matter which state, which army, which dictator, which law, which president, which judge comes against God's kingdom it cannot be overthrown. Every state that opposes Christ today is simply walking right into the lion's den. The Lordship of Christ extends over every kingdom.²⁷

Application

Our Doctrine: (Our Apologetic) Statism is opposed to the rule of Christ on every level

What Darius required here in Daniel 6 was much more subtle than what Nebuchadnezzar required with his golden image in Daniel 3. Here Darius *only* required that you ask the state to be your provider and protector for thirty days. What's wrong with that? The function of government is "punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good" (1 Peter 2:14). A statist government by definition contradicts this mandate. Remember statism is the principle that man's life and work belong to the state. Marxism a species of statism "argues that property belongs to the nation as a whole, represented by the state."²⁸ That

²⁶ I don't believe for a moment this is a confession of conversion. He still calls God, "the God of Daniel" (v.26). He rightly acknowledges God to be supreme, but there's no worship, there's no repudiation of other gods. There is simply an acknowledgment that out of all the gods, this God is supreme.

²⁷ Q. 26. How doth Christ execute the office of a king? A. Christ executeth the office of a king, in subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.

²⁸ John Frame, *The Doctrine of the Christian Life*, (Phillipsburg, NJ.: P & R Publishing, 2008), pg. 826

is a violation of the 8th commandment—“You shall not steal” (**Exodus 20:15**). The 8th commandment presupposes private not-state owned property. Nobody can steal unless private property is a given. Obviously private property is God’s idea. Socialized medicine, or tuition-free college—sound nice but these things aren’t free. The government pays for them by a forced redistribution of wealth through taxes. Therefore statism—whether it be socialism or communism or Marxism, is not just a political theory that you can take up or leave at your own discretion, it is by definition a violation of God’s law.

But statism is also a violation of the 1st commandment—“You shall have no other gods before me” (**Exodus 20:3**). Statism “replaces God as the ultimate owner and controller of the world”²⁹ and therefore it by definition expresses its own deity. A Christian Statist is a contradiction in terms because you can’t acknowledge God *and the state* as Lord at the same time. Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn writes in his book *Leftism* that in a society dominated by statism “religion is then removed from the market place and the school, later from other domains of public life. The state will not tolerate any gods besides itself.”³⁰ You see at the heart of statism is not just this innocent alternative to capitalism. At the heart of statism is the drive to place Man at the center of all things, and make him the measure of all things.³¹

Wherever statism has existed in the history of the world, the price tag has been death. Millions of people have been murdered because they have resisted, or even disagreed with statist doctrine.³² As Francis Schaeffer says in his book *A Christian Manifesto* “It is not too strong to say that we are at war, and there is

²⁹ *ibid*, pg. 826

³⁰ Francis A. Schaeffer, *A Christian Manifesto*, (Westchester, IL.,: Crossway, Revised Edition 1982), pg. 112

³¹ “Humanism is the placing of Man at the center of all things, and making him the measure of all things.” *ibid*, pg. 23

³² John Frame, *The Doctrine of the Christian Life*, (Phillipsburg, NJ.,: P & R Publishing, 2008), pg. 826

no neutral parties in the struggle. One either confesses that God is the final authority, or one confesses that Caesar is Lord.”³³

That’s **our doctrine**: statism is opposed to the rule of Christ on every level

Our Duty: (Our Action) It is our Christian duty to resist statism

Daniel said something very interesting when he came out of the lion’s den. He said in **v.22** “My God sent his angel and shut the lions’ mouths, and they have not harmed me, because I was found *blameless* before him; and also *before you, O king, I have done no harm.*” He’s not boasting in self-righteous. He’s saying that in this thing—namely, disobeying the state—God found him blameless and that he did right by the king. This is important. When Hitler was rising to power he tried to use political passages like Romans 13 and 1 Peter 2 to inform the church that they were bound by God to obey the state. **1 Peter 2:17**³⁴ lays our obligations to the state side by side with our obligation to God. It says “Fear God. Honor the emperor. If the state asks you to honor them with those things which only belong to God, if the state asks you to disobey God in order to obey them, they mutilate this command. This is why Daniel said he was blameless. He was compelled to honor God and neglect the king’s command. He didn’t do any wrong, the king did. Faithfulness to God will at times mean civil disobedience. Schaeffer says “At a certain point there is not only the right, but the duty, to disobey the state...”³⁵ In almost every place where the Reformation

³³ Francis A. Schaeffer, *A Christian Manifesto*, (Westchester, IL.,: Crossway, Revised Edition 1982), pg. 116

³⁴ Calvin comments on **1 Peter 2:17** “Fear God, honor the king.” “The two commands are connected together, and cannot be separated from on another...If any one begins his reverence of an earthly prince by rejecting that of God, he will act preposterously, since this is a complete perversion of the order of nature. Then let God be feared in the first place, and earthly princes will obtain their authority, if only God shines forth. Daniel, therefore, here defends himself with justice, since he had not committed any crime against the king; for he was compelled to obey the command of God, and he neglected what the king had ordered in opposition to it. For earthly princes lay aside all their power when they rise up against God.” John Calvin, *Calvin’s Commentaries, Vol. XII*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: BakerBooks, 2009), pg. 382

³⁵ Francis A. Schaeffer, *A Christian Manifesto*, (Westchester, IL.,: Crossway, Revised Edition 1982), pg. 93

flourished there was not only religious noncompliance; there was civil disobedience as well.”³⁶ William Tyndale (1490-1536)—the Englishman who translated the Bible. That very act was civil disobedience. But he rightly believed that the Scripture held supreme authority over the state, and therefore he disobeyed and lived life as a fugitive until he captured and executed. John Bunyan (1628-1688)—was tried and found guilty of the crime of preaching without a state sanctioned license. He spent twelve years in prison for his civil disobedience. The Reformation only had success because men and women stood up and disobeyed the state and their statist policies. All one has to do is look at the history of the Netherlands, or Sweden, or Denmark, Germany, Switzerland, Geneva, Scotland, England and see that civil disobedience is what kept the state from swallowing up the church. Again the prophetic voice of Schaeffer speaks with clarity. “One of the greatest injustices we do to our young people is to ask them to be conservative. Christianity is not conservative, but revolutionary.”³⁷

Perhaps a practical point here is to pick up a couple of books on this issue. Samuel Rutherford’s *Lex Rex* or Francis Schaeffer’s *A Christian Manifesto*.

That’s **our duty**: It is our Christian duty to resist statism

Our Delight: (Our Alleluia) Jesus faced the Ultimate Lion

Daniel 6 is *not* ultimately about how God saves us from statism. Nor is Daniel 6 about what many of us heard in our childhood—‘Dare to be a Daniel’ be brave, be godly, and God will rescue you. That’s *not* the moral of the story. Be faithful to God, and God will show Himself faithful to you is not the moral of the story. That’s the anti-gospel. You are not inherently brave. You are not inherently godly. You are not inherently faithful. You are not Daniel. Even

³⁶ *ibid*, pg. 99

³⁷ Source: <https://www.tricityshelp.com/francis-schaeffer> accessed June 30, 2018

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 “Archbishop Henry Orombi of Uganda warned that one of the most dangerous things to the American church is that we have ceased to believe in evil—and therefore have become blind to its real threats.” Bryan Chapell in *The Gospel According To Daniel*, (Grand Rapids, MI.: BakerBooks, 2014), pg. 120

Daniel in this story is not the real Daniel. You see there was One man who was more godly and more brave than Daniel and God *did not* rescue Him from the lion's den. Every detail in this story carefully tells His story.

Daniel was falsely accused of breaking the law before Darius
 Jesus was falsely accused of breaking the law before Pontius Pilate

Daniel was condemned to die
 Jesus was condemned to die

Daniel was put in a den and a stone with Persian seals was placed over its mouth
 Jesus was entombed and a stone with Roman seals was placed over its mouth

But there were differences between Daniel and Jesus.

An angel comforted Daniel in the night.
 No angel comforted Jesus — He was abandoned by man, angel, and God

Daniel 6:23 says “no kind of harm was found on him” — that's Daniel
 But Jesus was harmed beyond human semblance (**Isaiah 52:14**).

Daniel was delivered from the lion
 Jesus was not. He faced the Ultimate Lion — the wrath of God, and was devoured

Why?

Because, just as the law of the Medes and the Persians could not be revoked or changed, so God's law can never be altered.³⁸ “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them” (**Gal. 3:10**).

³⁸ “The person who does the commandments shall live by them” (Romans 10:5; Lev. 18:5)

You and I are cursed, because we have not abided by God's law.

If the message of Daniel 6 is “Be faithful to God and He will rescue you”—you will not be rescued. You haven't even be faithful as a believer. If that is the message of Daniel 6, then it contradicts the life of Jesus because there was no one more faithful than He, yet He was abandoned by God. But it also contradicts the message of Jesus because He said “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners” (**Mark 2:17**). Do you hear what he's saying? He saying ‘I didn't come for good people, for faithful people, for brave godly people. I came for bad, unfaithful, cowardly, wicked people. I came for people who are under the curse of God. God's law cannot change—“Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law”—so I will take that curse on Myself. I will go into the lion's den for you. I will suffer the curse you deserve from breaking God's law.” That's what Jesus did on the cross. All who believe that message will be saved. Not be faithful and God will rescue you. But look to Christ the only faithful one, and He will save even one as ungodly and unlovable as you.

That message frees you from a billion lion dens down here. Now you can face the lion disease because you know that the ultimate disease of death has already been remedied for you in Christ. Now you can face the lion of debt because you know that your ultimate debt of sin has already been paid in full. Now you can face the lion of depression and loneliness because Jesus was the man of sorrows for you, and was abandoned on the cross for you. Now you can face all of life because the Lion of sin has already been defeated in the den of the cross.³⁹

³⁹ Tim Keller, *The Lions of God*