Good morning. Please turn with me to Daniel Chapter 6.

We come this morning to one of the epic stories of all of Scripture. It’s the story of Daniel and the Lions’ Den. This is one of those stories that is on part with Noah and the Flood and David and Goliath. It’s one that we all know and love.

But while it is one we may be very familiar with, I wonder if we really know it (or know what it is really all about). I know that I’ve been one who has heard the story of Daniel in the Lions’ Den a gazillion times. This was on repeat all through my Sunday school years. I’ve read innumerable children’s Bibles and heard the re-telling of this story. I’ve read the book of Daniel, I’ve read it to my kids, and I’ve even read through it in church services. But I will confess that while I knew the story, I never really knew what God was seeking to say in the story.

I will confess that it’s always just been and intriguing narrative. Let’s just face it: Daniel 6 has a high entertainment value. That’s why we love it. The drama is good for children’s story books.

And so I want to encourage you to come to this passage today and listen anew to it. I want us to try and listen not just to the story, but to what God is trying to communicate in the story. This is God’s Word and it is written for our edification, not just our entertainment.

So let’s look at Daniel 6, starting in verse 1.

There is a sense in which our passage today is a climax and a turning point. There’s something special about it, not just because it’s a good story, but because of where it is placed in the overall book of Daniel.

Chapter 6 is the last of the narrative passages in the book of Daniel. You can divide the book of Daniel right here. The first 6 chapters contain all the historical stories. Chapters 7-12 are different. Those pages contain all the prophetic material. Those of you who are familiar with the book of Daniel know that it starts to get crazy after this. You thought Nebuchadnezzar had some wild dreams; he’s got nothing on the kinds of things that Daniel sees in his visions.

So, there’s a sense in which chapter 6 is a high point. It’s the last of the narrative passages. It’s the climax of what you might call Daniel’s “First Volume.”

And it’s a great story. This is what Vacation Bible schools are made of, right?

This is just one of those stories that excites you. It is exciting. The drama, the action, the big rescue and vindication. It’s a great story. And it should excite us. It should get us fired up. Everything about it was designed to enthrall you. Especially when you consider the fact that this is telling you that Our God is supreme in every way.

Wait, you mean it’s not about Daniel? That’s right. Daniel may play a role in this passage, but what is written here is magnifying the fact that our God is exalted and none can compare with him. And that’s what is really the thing that is exciting. That’s what I think really electrifies the soul. No matter how good the literary features of this passage may be—and no matter what it may say about Daniel, it is the fact that it espouses the supremacy of our God that our souls get aroused.

But the question we should ask is, how is God supreme?

1. **The supremacy of the kingdom of God**

Last time we were together, we looked at chapter 5. And we said the main point of it was that mighty Babylon got deleted. The kingdom of Babylon fell into the hands of the Medes and the Persians.

We see something similar here. We begin the chapter with Darius setting up his kingdom and putting some structural organization in place. Darius has just inherited a vast amount of land and people. So he needs to organize his kingdom.

But then at the end of the chapter we read about how Darius touts the greatness of God’s kingdom. Darius gives an echo of Nebuchadnezzar’s confession. In verse 26 he says, “his kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion shall be to the end.”

And then something amazing happens. Darius dies. We are told that Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus. History testifies that no sooner has Darius come to power over Babylon than and he dies and is replaced.

All in all, it’s already hinting at the fact that the second kingdom (the kingdom of the Medes and the Persians) isn’t going to last.

There’s only one kingdom that will endure. There’s only one kingdom that will never end. You can be assured that God’s kingdom is the superior kingdom because it is a kingdom that will go on and on into eternity.

You may find yourself in the same place the Jews of Daniel’s day were in. 70 years had passed. They had been surrounded by the kingdoms of men. They had seen corruption and oppression and paganism. And it didn’t look like it was going to end. But Daniel reminds them (Daniel reminds us) that the kingdoms of men come and go. But there is one kingdom which we have which is far greater. And this kingdom isn’t going anywhere. It is absolutely indestructible.

What we are seeing here is that kings and kingdoms are being ticked off one by one. Nebuchadnezzar is gone, Belshazzar is gone. Darius is gone. And since we are where we are in history we can hustle on through and tick a few more off. Nero is gone, Domitian is gone, Pol Pot is gone. Putin is not quite gone, but you can rest assured that his time is coming, along with Trump and Biden. But there’s one king who continues to live and one kingdom that has not suffered one bit of decay or decline.

And are you not glad that you are part of that kingdom? And does that not excite your soul? I mean we are standing here and we are watching the fall of Western culture. It is Europe has pretty much fallen. America is pretty much the last hold out for Western culture and we might say that that is on its last leg.

Not so with King Jesus. His rule and reign is even greater today than it was yesterday, and it will always be that way. It will always be that way because his dominion is cannot be contested.

And because his kingdom lives on, those of us who are a part of that kingdom will live on too. This is declaring to us the everlasting life we have and the victory we enjoy. God’s kingdom is indestructible and we can rejoice in it because we know that we shall always be a part of it. That is truly exciting.

But not only do we see the supremacy of God’s kingdom, we also see the supremacy of God’s law.

1. **The supremacy of the law of God**

You must understand that there are two laws in play in this text. They are competing with one another. And one comes out looking much better than the other.

First, there is the law of God. In verse 5 we read that the men who conspire against Daniel. And they know that the only way to get Daniel is through “the law of his God.” These men then have Darius create a law that only he should be the recipient of prayer for 30 days. It becomes an unbreakable law of the Medes and the Persians.

The question then becomes “Which law is superior?” Which will win out as the law that is unbreakable and enduring? Is it God’s law or the law of man (i.e. the law of Darius)?

Daniel knows. Daniel doesn’t bat an eye. He knows that God’s law is supreme. As a matter of fact, when he hears that this edict has been made by Darius, he runs home and opens the windows and starts practicing God’s law. He prays to God. That’s the first commandment.

It’s not just that he prays, but he has the windows wide open so that everyone can see that he is all about God's law.

Jesus told us to go into our closet, close the door and pray. What your father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. Daniel does the complete opposite. It’s because he wants to make a statement. He blatantly and publicly defies the law of Darius as a way of showing that the Law of God is primary in his life.

As a matter of fact, he is more committed to the law of God than to his own life. He knows the consequences. He knows what will happen if he’s seen praying to the Lord. And Daniel does not care because he knows that God’s law is greater.

And the rest of the chapter proves this out. As we read on we find just how silly the law of the Medes and Persians is. Even Darius knows how dumb his law is because he works all day to find a loophole so he can save his friend Daniel.

We all know how dumb this law is. I mean, if Daniel’s life wasn’t at stake, it would be downright comical. He signs this law into being, essentially deifying himself, yet it forces him to do what he does not really want to do. And he, the king supreme (supposedly) can’t change his own law. Which brings us back to the main point, if it needs to be changed, then it isn’t a good law.

But all of this is to highlight the supremacy, the greatness, the purity of God’s law. It’s a reminder that we should be just as devoted to God’s law as Daniel was, because it is the rule supreme.

And we need this reminder because we can be tempted to give up on God’s law. We see the laws of men and are surrounded by a culture that promotes those laws. There’s pressure all around us to follow those laws and sometimes we wonder if we should go on adhering to the law of God.

But this is why this chapter is so important. We see just how foolish man’s law can be. It reminds us that sinful man has an uncanny ability to think up the most ridiculous rules. And when you see the two compared, there’s really no contest. God’s law is superior and it is the one that deserves our adherence.

And that’s where we recognize that exile life can be difficult. That’s because the Law of God can often come into conflict with the laws of men. And, as Daniel shows us, there are times where we must defy those man made laws and adhere strictly to the law of God.

And this is where that excitement needs to express itself. The contrast and comparison of these two laws should speak to you. When you see how much greater God’s law is and when you see Daniel’s boldness to cling to that law; this should rouse you to say, “this is my law; this is what I’m going to live by.”

This is why you must understand how God’s laws is superior. So that, when the time comes, you waiver or even think about the consequences. You just obey God.

 God alone is the one we must serve. Our devotion must be to him and to him alone. His law must be supreme because God himself is supreme.

And you understand that Daniel was able to do this because he was already in fellowship with the Lord. Verse 10 tells us that Daniel had already been in the habit of praying to the Lord. He had cultivated this devotion already. So when the time of challenge came, there wasn’t a real struggle here.

And that’s where we might need to start. We might need to start with making God and his law supreme in the little ways of our lives.

So we have the supremacy of God’s kingdom and the supremacy of God’s law. We also see in this passage the supremacy of God’s power.

1. **The supremacy of the power of God**

We read in this passage about how the mouths of the lions were shut. Daniel says that the Lord sent his angel into the pit and kept Daniel from being harmed. Then what happens next is a real shock. The Bible story books that you get for your kids don’t include what happens next. I don’t ever remember this part on the old flannel graph in my Sunday School days.

Just in case you think it is all a fluke and that these lions are rejects, the men who conspired against Daniel are thrown into the pit. And it says the lions pounce on them and devour them BEFORE they even reach the floor. They don’t even get to bounce one time.

Of course, all this stands in contrast to the power of Darius. Darius doesn’t have any power, does he? He has the power to make this law, but he’s shown to be powerless to change it. What’s more, he’s powerless to save Daniel.

Darius even states the case. As Daniel is being lowered into the lions’ den he says, “May your God deliver you.” And the next morning he runs out and asks in verse 20, “Has your God been able to deliver you?”

And the answer comes back as a definitive yes.

You know, this is the testimony of Scripture. God can (and does) deliver his people. And that’s the message that Israel wanted to know. Could God deliver them from the fangs of those evil powers which were seeking to devour them? Would God be able to deliver them from the pit of exile? And in Daniel we have an affirmation that God would do just that. The Lord is the deliverer of his people. And what’s more, all the evil ones who act like lions and would see us devoured, they will be devoured in the end. They will come into judgment for their unbelief and rejection of God’s kingdom and law.

The message for us is the same. This is a message of hope for us. It’s a reminder that the Lord will deliver us. He will deliver us from our exile; he will deliver us from our enemies.

Satan roams around like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. But we have the good hope that he will not succeed. The Lord will preserve us. The Lord will protect us. And one day he will come again and save us. And all our enemies will be cast into the pit of hell where they will be devoured for all eternity in the judgment they deserve.

And we will have a new life, a joyous resurrection. That’s essentially what we see in Daniel right? He came up out of the pit of death to enjoy something of a new life. It’s very much resurrection-esc. There’s a sense in which this is revealing the hope we have for the resurrection. It’s telling us that God has the power to bring us up from the ultimate pit: the grave. And we know that God has the power to grant us that new and full life in the eternal world. God’s power doesn’t just shut lion’s mouths, its power over the fangs of death and grant us deliverance from the grave itself.

Which brings us to the last point of our passage. This passage reminds us of the supremacy of God’s kingdom, law, power. But we also are reminded of the supremacy of God’s Son.

1. **The supremacy of the Son of God**

Many commentators are quick to note how many similarities there are between Daniel in this chapter and Jesus.

* + - 1. Both Daniel and Jesus were faithful to the law of God.
			2. Both were conspired against and sentenced to death.
			3. Both were seen as innocent by the ruling powers (Darius and Pilate).
			4. Both rulers made some futile effort to release them, but then capitulated to the crowds who desired them put to death.
			5. Both Daniel and Jesus had a rock rolled over them and sealed in their tombs.
			6. Both Jesus and Daniel came forth from the pit alive.

Perhaps the only way that the two differ is that Jesus really did die and come back to live. Daniel was delivered from death, but he never really felt the full sting of it like Christ did.

And this is why we can say that Christ is superior. He was not just delivered, but he is the Deliverer. It is his death that brings about and guarantees the deliverance of God’s people. He makes life in God’s kingdom possible because he removes the sin that keeps us from being a part of that kingdom.

This whole chapter is beautiful because everything gets turned on its head. The very plan that these satraps and jealous men plot is the very plan that brings about their own demise, isn’t it? Had they not put this plan into motion, they would have never been cast into the lions’ den and died.

And is that not what happens in the Cross of Christ. Satan sought to destroy Christ, but in putting Him to death, he brought about his own defeat. Christ died and became the sacrifice for sin. He then rose again and, in doing so, crushed all hopes Satan had for any kind of victory.

The story of Daniel is great; but the story of God’s Son is greater. His victory is greater.

And that is what is truly exciting. This story is thrilling because it gives us an understanding of the greater story of the Bible; the greater story of God’s deliverance of those of us who are his people.