

## WHEN LIONS HAVE NOTHING MORE TO SAY

by Carter Conlon

*“Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions. And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?”*

*“Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever. My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions’ mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt. Then was the king exceeding 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 manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God” (Daniel 6:19–23).*

Daniel was approximately eighty years old when he had this experience in the lions’ den. He had already faced extreme hardships and trials in his life, yet despite them he had proved himself to be a faithful servant of God.

He was probably no older than fourteen when the armies of Babylon invaded and conquered Israel. The Babylonians then led many of the people away in chains. This systematic deportation of the people was violent and cruel. Daniel, who was a captive, would have had to overcome this trauma of pitiless brutality.

### ■ BABYLONIAN RULE

The Scriptures describe Daniel as a man with an excellent spirit who continued to trust God despite the things he endured. He was chosen to serve in the royal palace. This position required him to become a eunuch, which meant that he would never have a family of his own. This was a tragic loss to any Israelite whose core value was based on his lineage. Everything Daniel held sacred had been taken from him, and instead of becoming bitter and resentful, he remained unrelentingly faithful to God. In turn, God gave him favor and honor with this heathen king.

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Daniel was brought into the inner court of the palace to serve, but there was a price attached to this privilege. Selected eunuchs were required to partake of the king’s menu of wines and all manner of fine meats. This was intended to integrate those of other cultures into the Babylonian lifestyle and also cause them to conform to the king’s ideals. Daniel did not want to defile himself with

specialty foods, so he asked for a simple diet of vegetables. His appeal was granted and he overcame the incredible pressure to conform. Through his commitment to serve God, he was granted tremendous wisdom from heaven.

Later, under the haughty reign of Belshazzar, a descendant of King Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon became debauched. Living in a stupor of drunken arrogance, they were unaware of their own spiritual depravity and ignorance. King Belshazzar took the holy vessels of silver and gold, which had been seized from the temple in Jerusalem, and used them as he partied with his royal court. They had crossed the line and in that moment the judgments of God were pronounced. Out of nowhere a hand appeared writing in an unknown language on the wall, as the trembling king watched. Daniel was suddenly called upon to give the interpretation, *“God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it; thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians” (Daniel 5:26–28).*

Historians tell us that very night the gates opened without resistance to the Medo-Persian army who marched in and conquered the city. King Belshazzar was slain and the great nation once called Babylon fell.

### ■ MEDO-PERSIAN RULE

Under Cyrus, also known as Darius, the new Persian king, Daniel was set in a place of influence over the whole realm. He was now eighty and you

would think at this age it would have been a time of respite and reward for him. Was there not a point where he could just sit back and relax? There certainly would not be anything wrong with this. However, Daniel chose to continue to actively pursue God. Three times a day he went into his prayer closet, opened the windows of his room toward Jerusalem, and prayed.

While Daniel was reading the book of Jeremiah the prophet, he discovered the captivity was to last only seventy years. From what the Word of God was declaring and the Holy Spirit was quickening in his heart, Daniel knew this time had expired, and the people would go free. His faith increased for his people and he stood on God's promises for their deliverance. Little did he know that this revelation was the center of a heavenly battle, because Satan does not want to see anyone go free. God knew this battle required somebody with more than just enthusiasm. He needed a man with a measure of confidence already worked in Him by God, somebody who could stand in faith without wavering. *"[God] sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none"* (Ezekiel 22:30).

There is a time as a young Christian you can go down into the valley and meet Goliath with a slingshot. But there comes a time to mature and know God in such a way that you simply stand in prayer, unmoved by any voices around you. The conspiracies of hell cannot stop you from going into the prayer closet. Many people in our generation who are "standing in the gap" are not in pulpits, but in their secret place of prayer. They are standing in the place that men do not see, but heaven records their faithfulness. Just when you think it might be time for you to put up your feet, relax, and perhaps enjoy the fruits of your labor, another

trial comes. A trial which may be deeper than anything you have faced so far in your life.

Daniel was faced with such a trial. Wicked men had risen to power and had begun writing laws which moved against the people of God. They had a law passed forbidding anyone to pray to any god but Darius the king, for the next thirty days. If evil men are allowed to write laws they become emboldened. If there is nobody standing in the gap to seek God, more and more laws are written on the books which are against His will and ways.

## *There are some battles that are not meant for a novice*

### ■ A TIME FOR INTERCESSORS

If ever we lived in a time for intercessors, this is it. Intercessors who will discover what the Word of God says, and claim the promises for family members, co-workers, city officials, and government leaders. We need men and women who will take people to the throne of God and intercede for them. Daniel knew the time had come for the release of God's people. He was standing in one of the most pivotal gaps of all time and if he capitulated, King Darius would not have known there was a true God in heaven. Evil men would have succeeded and God's people would have remained in bondage. God was about to miraculously move on Darius' heart to have him sign a decree to set the Israelites free, and all hell was fighting against this proclamation. The only person stopping the plans of the enemy was an eighty-year-old man in the prayer closet.

If we were looking for a man to fight, we probably would not choose someone this old. There are some battles that are not meant for a novice and this was one of them. The Lord needed someone with a history, someone who trusted Him. The devil wanted Daniel away from his place of intercession, so he caused him to be thrown into a lions' den. Now think about this for a moment. This den represented a place where Satan walked about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. It is a place where very few, if any, had been known to survive. It is a place where any one of those lions could have killed Daniel, *"And the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den"* (Daniel 6:24). These lions can symbolize things that destroy you: there was the lion of bitterness and the lion of resentment, lions of betrayal, injustice, jealousy, despair, even the lion of anger toward God Himself. Any one of these lions could have taken him down. The devil does not need you to have twelve sins undealt with in your life to destroy you; he needs only one to bring you down.

What the devil had not bargained for when it came to Daniel was the power of God's Word which Daniel had fully embraced. We see the end result of this kind of faith, *"My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me"* (Daniel 6:22). In the original text, the term angel literally means "the messenger." When the messenger came, Daniel received him, and it was this messenger who closed the mouths of the lions. From that moment those particular lions had nothing more to say to him. When you receive God's messenger, His Word, the devil immediately has nothing more to say to you. *"No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment*

*thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord” (Isaiah 54:17). Hallelujah!*

It is natural that you and I would prefer not go through hardships. We would rather not have to endure the difficult days, the betrayals, and the unavoidable pain which comes from dealing with people. Nonetheless, God uses these times to work out His purposes in you. He has been preparing you for the day when you would stand in the prayer closet, without listening to those accusing and condemning lions. If you understand what God is doing, then you can be mightily used to intercede for this generation.

## ***You grow by having your battles finish their intended purpose.***

King Darius had been friendly to Daniel, yet he ultimately was the one who had him thrown into the den of lions. The following day he came with a mournful voice asking Daniel if his God had been able to deliver him from that awful fate? Daniel could have easily retorted, “You are a foolish man for listening to those voices which came to accuse, when all I had been doing was seeking God.” Daniel could have said a lot of other things, too, if he had not had a right heart. But what came out of his mouth was, “O king, live forever” (Daniel 6:21). This is an amazing response when you stop and consider it. Daniel had just endured the greatest trial of his life and yet his speech remained pure before God and this king.

You know you have come to the place of victory, having an excellent spirit, when you bless the person whom God used in your trial. He used that person and that difficult situation to hammer out things in your character that are unlike Him. My prayer, is for you to comprehend that you do not grow by having your battles and trials simply disappear. You grow by having your battles finish their intended purpose. If you never grasp this vital truth, you will live your whole Christian experience trying to get out of the very things God is using to produce in you a faith in Him. God wants to take you to a place where you can stand in prayer against hell itself. God gives you insight through the life of Daniel, so you can have hope in the midst of your most severe trials. In the end Daniel most likely did not participate in the journey with those who left Babylon for Israel and Jerusalem, but in all probability he was the vessel God used to procure the release of His people.

### ■ THE LAWS CHANGED

Paul says in Romans 8:28, “*We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.*” You know this intellectually, but there must come a time in your life when you fully embrace the Word. When you do, you will be able to stand in faith as Daniel did and laws will change.

Now let me explain this. After Daniel was taken out of the lions’ den, the king issued a decree; in other words, he changed the law. He said, “*Unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed,*

*and his dominion shall be even unto the end. He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions” (Daniel 6:25–27).*

This heathen king received a revelation that many of us could use. He changed the laws that had been written by those who were against the things of God. There is one law I would like to see changed more than any other and it is the law of sin and death that is written over many people’s lives. I want to see it changed and people set free. I want people to know their time of captivity is over, and they can leave their place of bondage forever. You and I must begin where Daniel began, praying daily and believing the promises of God!

You have read this message today, but are you willing to receive it? Are you willing to say this is God’s “messenger” for me? Have you been living in a place where the devil has been roaring at you, and all you have been doing is roaring back? God does not want you in a shouting match with your adversary. If you can hear what God is saying, He wants you to be quiet and confident and full of faith in Him. He will be the one to close the mouth of the roaring lion, just as He did for Daniel. Praise God!

Carter Conlon  
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Dear friend,

What should a Christian do in times of trials and adversity? If you study the Scriptures you are repeatedly shown the answer. In the book of Hebrews a great number of men and women believed the promises of God given to them. They were given supernatural strength to overcome obstacles impossible to ordinary men. Some conquered warriors, some killed lions, and others were empowered by God to endure what the strongest of men could not do.

Jesus told us what to do when everything in this world begins to unravel, because of the weight of sin, we are to, *“lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh”* (Luke 21:28). In a time of adversity King David did this and encouraged himself in the Lord (1 Samuel 30:6). We see the same with Daniel, he looked up to the Lord when he was cast into the den of the lions (Daniel 6:10–11).

If you are burdened and cannot find the power to do this simple act of faith, ask the Holy Spirit to help you right now. Psalms 3:3, describes God as, *“my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.”* Be encouraged, Jesus loves YOU. You will gladden His heart as you allow Him to lift up your countenance; His love for you is the first thing that you will see.

Yours in Christ,



Carter Conlon  
Senior Pastor

This message is an edited version of **“When Lions Have Nothing More to Say,”** a sermon given on **October 19, 2008** in the sanctuary of Times Square Church in New York City. Other sermons are available by visiting our website at [tscnyc.org](http://tscnyc.org). You can also write to: Times Square Church, Sermon Ministry, 1657 Broadway, New York, NY 10019. You are welcome to make additional copies of this sermon for free distribution to friends. However, for all other forms of reproduction or electronic transmission existing copyright laws apply. This sermon cannot be posted on any website or webpage without written permission from Times Square Church. Unless otherwise noted, all scripture references are from the King James Version.

### CARTER CONLON

Carter Conlon is senior pastor of Times Square Church, where he has been on the pastoral staff since 1994.

### TIMES SQUARE CHURCH

Times Square Church was founded in 1987 by Pastor David Wilkerson, author of *“The Cross and the Switchblade.”* It is an interdenominational church located in the heart of New York City.

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### WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday	10:00AM	3:00PM	6:00PM
Tuesday	7:00PM	Church Service	
Thursday	7:00PM	Prayer Meeting	
Friday	7:00PM	Church Service	

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