

Daniel Chapter 6

Daniel 6:1 "It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom a hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom;"

This was a very large kingdom, and these men were set up to keep order in the land.

These princes are the "satraps" we had studied about previously. Each is a provincial administrator under the king. Daniel's eminent appointment was to a post as "commissioner", assisting the king as his vice-regent.

Daniel 6:2 "And over these three presidents; of whom Daniel [was] first: that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage."

These three men were of higher rank than the 120, and were closer to the king. It is unusual for a Hebrew to be over these Medes.

These "princes" were responsible to prevent loss from military revolts, tax evasion or fraud.

Perhaps, the word had come to them of Daniel's reading the handwriting on the wall and interpreting it. These three presidents were next in command under the king. It appears that each of them was over 1/3 of the kingdom.

Daniel 6:3 "Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit [was] in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm."

Daniel found favor with the king, and the king was about to make Daniel the only one over all the kingdoms. This was sure to cause jealousy.

We must remember that the spirit in Daniel was of God. All of his answers to problems were right, because they came from God. It is no wonder the king wanted to set him above all the rest.

At this point in his life, Daniel was over 80. He had enjoyed God's blessing throughout his life.

Daniel was a favorite of the king. He had experience, wisdom, a sense of history, leadership, a good reputation, ability, attitude and revelation from the God of heaven. Apparently, God wanted him in the place of influence to encourage and assist in the Jews' return to Judah, since the return was made in Cyrus' first year, right before the lions den incident.

From the record (of Ezra 1 and 6), all the basic elements of the return appear:

- (1) The temple was to be rebuilt with the cost paid from Cyrus' treasury;
- (2) All Jews who visited could return, and those who stayed were urged to assist financially; and

(3) The gold and silver vessels stolen from the temple by Nebuchadnezzar were to be taken back.

To account for such favor toward the Jews, it is easy to think of Daniel not only influencing Cyrus to write such a decree, but even formulating it for him.

Daniel 6:4 "Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he [was] faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him."

It appears, the jealousy of the others set them against Daniel. They tried every way they could to find fault with Daniel, that they might report it to Darius. Daniel had been a faithful servant of king Darius. They could find no fault with his work, or his loyalty to the king. They plotted together to try to get Daniel in trouble.

This plot was not unlike the effort against Daniels's 3 friends (in 3:8), and was also similar to that by Joseph's brothers (in Gen 37:18-24).

Daniel 6:5 "Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find [it] against him concerning the law of his God."

Everyone who knew Daniel knew that he was more loyal to his God than to anyone, or anything else. They decided to trap him, by finding fault with his worship of God.

Daniel 6:6 "Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever."

Notice, they began by flattering the king. They really did not care whether he lived or not, unless it would help them get their way.

Daniel 6:7 "All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions."

The king was proud of his accomplishments, and he thought it nothing but right for his subjects to consult him first. He loved Daniel, and had no idea these presidents and princes were conspiring against Daniel. Notice, in this petition to the king, they appealed to the vanity of the king.

A deceptive stroke of the king's ego secured his injunction, which was designed to benefit Daniels peers. Ancient kings were frequently worshiped as gods. Pagans had such inferior views of their gods that such homage was no problem.

The customs of heathen people, many times, will not be the same as Godly men. These presidents and princes were aware of Daniel's loyalty to his God. They knew this was the only

way to trap him. Notice also, these evil men set the punishment. They thought they would be rid of Daniel.

Daniel 6:8 "Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not."

Once enacted, Medo-Persian law could not be changed, even by the king.

Advice from worldly people can cause much harm. A king should be more careful who he takes council from. Their flattery is what caused the king to listen to them. They remind him that once he has signed this paper, there will be no turning back. The law of the Medes and Persians was carried out when it was signed.

Daniel 6:9 "Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree."

Their persuasion was so great, he just signed the paper.

Daniel 6:10 "Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime."

One thing we must quickly see here, the law of God is above the laws of any land. If the law of the land puts you in a position of sinning against God, you disobey the law of the land and keep God's law. That is the only reason to disobey the law of the land.

Daniel's uncompromising pattern of prayer toward God's temple conformed to Solomon's prayer that the Lord's people would do so. Three times a day was also the pattern established by David (in Psalm 55:16-17).

We must be like Daniel, and do right at all cost. He was willing to suffer whatever consequence came. He must worship God. Daniel did not hide.

He prayed 3 times a day. How many times have you prayed today? Look, also, at the humbleness of Daniel. He bowed on his knees, before his God. By opening the window toward Jerusalem, he was saying, his loyalty was to the God of Israel.

Daniel 6:11 "Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God."

They knew he would, so they just waited to catch him praying.

Supplication is another way of asking for favor, or asking God to have mercy.

Daniel 6:12 "Then they came near, and spake before the king concerning the king's decree; Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask [a petition] of any God or man within thirty days, save of thee, 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 altereth not."

This had been the purpose of the decree in the first place. They wanted to get rid of Daniel. They are the same thing as a tale-bearer. Children would call them a tattle-tale.

Daniel 6:13 "Then answered they and said before the king, That Daniel, which [is] of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day."

The king would not have accepted this accusation, if it had been from one person. Several came as witness to this thing Daniel had done. They cleverly put in the fact that Daniel was with the captives of Judah, as if that made him a lesser person.

Probably, they used that to say his loyalty lay elsewhere. They are accusing Daniel of ignoring the decree of the king. Not once, but three times a day when he prayed.

At this point, Daniel had lived over 60 years in Babylon. His loyalty to the rulers was well known; in spite of that loyalty, his consistent faithfulness to God brought this threat.

Daniel 6:14 "Then the king, when he heard [these] words, was sore 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."

King Darius loved Daniel. He tried to find some way that he could get out of throwing Daniel into the lion's den. Now, the king knew he had been trapped into signing this decree. He had gone from a self styled god to a fool in one day.

He was angry with himself for signing this into law. He did not immediately do this terrible thing. His hope was there would be some way out of this. Quick decisions get us all in trouble from time to time.

Daniel 6:15 "Then these men assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians [is], That no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed."

These evil, jealous men come to the king again, and tell him he has to carry out the law he has signed. He has no choice. He needed no reminding, but they did anyhow.

Daniel 6:16 "Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast [him] into the den of lions. [Now] the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee."

It is interesting that Darius, the Mede, would tell Daniel that Daniel's God would save him. I believe this was almost like a prayer the king prayed. He did not want to harm Daniel. He was trapped. The king threw Daniel into the lion's den.

The word “den” is related to the Hebrew term meaning “to dig,” so it refers to an underground pit which likely had

- (1) a hole at the top from which to drop food into the pit, and
- (2) a door at the foot of a ramp or on a hillside through which the lions could enter.

Daniel 6:17 "And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel."

The king’s signet was pressed into wax to show his seal. This signet was usually on a ring. We can see a type of the Lord Jesus, when they put the stone on the tomb, here. Daniel is in the den of lions. There is seemingly no way out.

Daniel 6:18 "Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting; neither were instruments of music brought before him: and his sleep went from him."

We see a very troubled king. His thoughtless act of signing this decree has brought this terrible thing about.

He was so troubled, he fasted. Kings usually had fine food and drink at their disposal. This night, Darius wanted none of this. He did not listen to the soft music to put him to sleep, as he usually did. He did not sleep, in fact. He wanted Daniel's God to save Daniel.

Daniel 6:19 "Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions."

We see again, an example of very early in the morning. The women went to the tomb of Jesus very early in the morning. Darius must go and see for himself.

Daniel 6:20 "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?"

Darius believed that Daniel's God could save him, but in the physical he knew it would be impossible. He reminds me of the man who came to Jesus to heal his boy. He said, I believe, but help thou mine unbelief.

This is the way Darius is here. He wants to believe, but it is hard to believe under these circumstances. He cries out to Daniel, hoping Daniel will answer. Darius reaffirms his belief in Daniel's God.

Daniel 6:21 "Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever."

This had to be the sweetest sound Darius had ever heard. Daniel was not angry with Darius.

Daniel 6:22 "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."

Daniel was not guilty of sin against God, or against Darius. God sent His angel to help Daniel. As a side note, this may have been the same angel as the fourth person in the fiery furnace.

Think about this scripture carefully. How many of us would not have been angry at this king for what he did. For us, it could be someone who had done something to hurt us or to cause us pain by what they said.

But Daniel was not guilty of either. He did not sin against God nor did he sin against the person who had done this to him. How many of us can say that as we through every day's problems?

I have said this so many times before, but we must take note here again. God did not save Daniel from the lion's den. He saved him in the lion's den. God will not remove all trouble from you either, but He will be there to help you through those problems.

Daniel 6:23 "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."

The most important statement in the verse above is why Daniel was not hurt. He believed in his God. Faith in God saved Daniel from the mouth of the lion. The greatest trials of life require the greatest faith in God.

The king's joy was overwhelming. His faith was helped on this day, as well. He has them release Daniel from the den. God protected Daniel in the lion's den.

God openly honored Daniel's faith for the purpose of showing His glory. That is not always the case, as God may choose to be glorified by permitting a trusted servant to be martyred with others, as were the faithful servants (in Hebrews 11:33-38).

Daniel 6:24 "And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast [them] into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; 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."

This is a sad scene for those who accused Daniel. They were eaten of the lions, even before their bodies hit the ground in the den. Their families were destroyed also. This seems cruel, but perhaps it was so this would never happen in their families again.

They had spoken their own punishment on Daniel. The king just gave them the same opportunity as Daniel. They had no God to call on, and they were eaten. Those who accused Daniel unjustly have brought about their own ruin.

Like the sin of Achan (in Joshua 7:20-26), this sin against God, Darius, and Daniel and had cost the men and their families their lives. This judgment of God was also an important detail in the miracle, lest some critic suggest the lions were tame or toothless or not hungry.

Daniel 6:25 "Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you."

This had a tremendous effect on Darius. Now, we see that he wants peace with all the people of the earth.

Daniel 6:26 "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 steadfast for ever, and his kingdom [that] which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion [shall be even] unto the end."

This is the statement of peace that Darius sent to all the people. This is a statement that Daniel's God is God. Belief in God cannot be legislated, but that is what Darius wants here. He believes, and he wants all of his subjects to believe in the one true God.

He probably, does not know Him personally, so he speaks of Him as Daniel's God. Darius has fulfilled the Scripture (in Romans chapter 10).

Romans 10:9. "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

Impacted by Daniel and by the Lord, he expressed himself as if he had come to a point of personal trust in God for his salvation such as Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel illustrated the evangelistic potency of a godly, uncompromising life.

He has believed in his heart, and confessed with his mouth the God of Daniel. He is aware that this is the Eternal God.

Daniel 6:27 "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."

Darius is very impressed with Daniel's God, because He did the seemingly impossible, by saving Daniel from the lions.

Psalms 46:1 "God [is] our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

Daniel 6:28 "So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian."

Something intended for bad had turned into something really great. Darius elevated Daniel to the very highest position next to himself. Daniel prospered greatly under his rule.

It appears that Cyrus saw great potential in Daniel as well. Daniel prospered in his reign too. You remember the Medes and the Persians were the conquerors here.

Daniel 6 Chapter Questions

1. How many princes did Darius set over the kingdom?
2. How many presidents did he set up?
3. Which of these categories did Daniel fit into?
4. What was unusual about Daniel receiving this honor?
5. Why was Daniel preferred above them all?
6. What set the others against Daniel?
7. What did they try to do, to no avail?
8. They decided the only way to find anything against Daniel was how?
9. How did these evil men approach the king?
10. What decree did they ask the king for?
11. They appealed to the _____ of the king to get him to listen.
12. The law of the _____ and _____ would be carried out once it was signed.
13. The law of _____ is above the _____ of the land.
14. How often did Daniel pray?
15. Did he hide to pray?
16. What showed Daniel's humbleness before God?
17. What is "supplication" in verse 11?
18. What was the punishment to be for one who broke the decree?
19. Who was Darius displeased with, when he heard what Daniel did?
20. What did Darius do to Daniel?
21. What statement of faith did Darius give in front of Daniel?

22. Why could the king just not punish Daniel?
23. How did they make sure Daniel could not get out of the lion's den?
24. What did the king do the night of Daniel's imprisonment in the lion's den?
25. What did the king do very early the next morning?
26. How did Daniel answer Darius?
27. Why was Daniel safe?
28. What happened to Daniel's accusers?
29. What was the decree that Darius made to all people under his rule?
30. What happened to Daniel?
31. Who was the other ruler, besides Darius, that accepted Daniel?