

Daniel 6: Daniel Faces the Lion's Den

(February 12, 2024)

A reminder that **Daniel 1-6** are about *historical* facts regarding Daniel and the Babylonian Kingdom. **Daniel 7-12** is *predictive* prophecy. **Daniel 6** deals with Daniel thrown into the lion's den because the other satraps and governors were jealous that Darius wanted to place Daniel over them. As far as they were concerned, they did not want to report to Daniel, an exile and a Jew.

A basic outline of this chapter is:

- Introduction: Daniel's success vv. 1-3
- Darius signs a decree and Daniel takes his stand vv. 4-10
- Daniel's colleagues plan his death vv. 11-15
- Darius hopes for Daniel's deliverance vv. 16-18
- Darius witnesses Daniel's deliverance vv. 19-23
- Daniel's colleagues meet their death v. 24
- Darius signs another decree and takes his stand vv. 25-27
- Conclusion: Daniel's success v. 28

Daniel 6:1-2 highlights the Medo-Persian alliance overthrow of Babylon. Because of this, it gained much territory and became largest empire in the world to that point. It included much of modern Turkey (including the ancient Lydian Empire), Egypt, and parts of India and North Africa, as well as Babylonia.

Daniel 6:1-2 - to control this vast empire, Darius (probably Gobryas of Gutium), appointed 120 satraps to help oversee this vast empire of 127 provinces. These satraps reported to three commissioners – Daniel was one of them. As time passed, Daniel distinguished himself and Darius then wanted to place Daniel over ALL commissioners and satraps at least in the province of Babylonia.

Daniel 6:4-9 likely highlights at least some anti-Semitism as part of the reason the satraps conspired against Daniel, but may have also been due to:

- Daniel's integrity
- Daniel's advanced age (he was in his 80's)
- The accusers' plan was similar to the plan against Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego (**Daniel 3**)
- They knew Daniel was God-fearing and did not worship idols
- The trap was set believing Daniel would remain true to his faith
- A good question to ask ourselves is, would we do the same?

In **Daniel 6:6-9**, Daniel's accusers exaggerated their claim that all rulers agreed with them. Clearly Daniel had not agreed, for one. Unfortunately, Darius believed their claim without even consulting Daniel. The plan catered to the king's own vanity, just like previously with Nebuchadnezzar.

The statute apparently only affected the province of Babylon, not the entire Medo-Persian empire and Darius was ruler of the Babylonian province. Other Medo-Persian rulers dealt with the other provinces.

Ultimately, the satraps/commissioners promoted humanism – the philosophy that puts man in the place of God.

Darius...regarded this act as a pledge of loyalty to himself and a token of their desire to respect his authority to the utmost. (Walvoord)

We see in **Daniel 6:10-15** that this new decree did not stop Daniel from praying. This form of persecution is not God's "wrath" but is inspired by Satan and certainly God allowed it for His purposes. Daniel's prayers seem based on prophecies of **Jeremiah 29:12-14**. While Daniel refused to pray to the human king, he continued to pray to the only God. Praying 3 times a day was the practice of godly Jews dating back to David, if not before then (**Psalms 55:16-17**)

Daniel's colleagues had to see him "violating" the statute before they could report it to the king. The fact that Daniel prayed with his window open signified his prayers were unhindered. Those against Daniel knew he would not alter his behavior and would be "guilty" of disobedience to Darius. Consider the testimony of Daniel to these pagans, yet their hostility toward Daniel kept them blind to spiritual truth. We can expect the world to react to us like this if we are living faithfully before God.

Daniel's hostile colleagues reminded the king of his decree, then informed Darius that Daniel had violated it. They wanted Daniel dead, period, but God had other plans. Darius immediately set out to do what he could to free Daniel from the statute he had decreed. Compare this to Nebuchadnezzar who had become enraged at the three men of **Daniel 3**.

In **Daniel 6:16-18**, Daniel is placed in the lion's den. Darius' final words to Daniel speak of his hope and potential faith in the God Daniel worshiped.

Your God whom you serve continually, He will deliver you.

Darius had tried and failed to save Daniel. God will often help His servants through difficulties though there is no guarantee that our lives will be spared during increasing persecution from people and Satan.

In **Daniel 6:16-18**, we can contrast this reaction to Nebuchadnezzar who showed zero compassion for Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Darius, however, had a very fitful night with no sleep. He may have prayed but we don't know. He was certainly very anxious over his friend's situation and could not wait until morning to see what had occurred.

In **Daniel 6:19-24**, Darius is uncertain about Daniel's fate, so he arrives to the lion's den and calls out to Daniel. Darius wanted to know if Daniel's God had been able to save him. After greeting the king courteously, Daniel explained that his God had sent His angel who had shut the lions' mouths. Even though Daniel had violated the king's edict, he had not done anything that harmed the king. When Darius had Daniel removed from the pit, he marveled that he was completely unscathed.

Daniel 6:19-24 highlights Darius turning the tables on Daniel's accusers. Imagine the potential terror of his accusers when realizing Daniel survived unhurt. At this point, the king applied *lex talionis* (law of

retaliation) onto Daniel's accusers. They were thrown into the same lion's pit and before they reached the bottom, lions tore them to shreds.

In **Daniel 6:25-28**, we see Darius' reaction, who, like Nebuchadnezzar, also offered to praise to Daniel's God. Darius ordered his subjects to do the same. It is as though God was giving two witnesses to His people Israel:

Nebuchadnezzar and Darius. Both monarchs testified to the living and eternal God's unshakable sovereignty, grace, and power in heaven and on earth.

In **Daniel 6:28**, the last verse of the chapter, highlights that Daniel prospered during the reigns of Darius (over the province of Babylon), and Cyrus (over the Persian Empire). If we remain true to our testimony and God, we will have persecution. Jesus has overcome the world regardless of the outcome He chooses for us.

Next time, we will begin **Daniel 7**, which deals with visions of four beasts and reminds us of the contents of **Daniel 2**. **Daniel 7** also goes back to Belshazzar when he was king of Babylon during his first year as ruler.

We will learn what these beasts of **Daniel 7** represent. We will see Daniel's reaction to the Ancient of Days and we will learn the meaning of the visions Daniel receives in this chapter.