

DANIEL IN THE LION'S DEN

TEXT: DANIEL 6:1-28

INTRODUCTION:

1. Daniel 6 begins where Daniel 5 ends, with Babylon, the head of gold, succeeded by the Media-Persia Empire, represented in King Nebuchadnezzar's dream by the breast and arms of silver.
2. Chapter 6 ends the historical section of Daniel. Chapters 7--12 are prophetic.
3. As Daniel 6 begins, Daniel is now living under the rule of the Medes and Persians, and he has been promoted by Darius the king to become one of three "presidents" (governors or administrators). Note "Daniel was first" (6:2).
4. Daniel was a boy when he was brought to Babylon. Now he was an old man, probably in his 80's.
5. "The king thought to set him (Daniel) over the whole realm" (6:3). Naturally this caused resentment and jealousy from the other presidents as well as the 120 princes, and this sets the stage for the events recorded here in this chapter.
6. Daniel had such an excellent testimony that the presidents and princes could find no fault in him.
7. As we study Daniel 6, we see many interesting things about Daniel the prophet.
 - (1) He was a preferred man -- 6:3
 - (2) He was a praying man -- 6:10
 - (3) He was a praising man -- "and gave thanks" (6:10)
 - (4) He was a persecuted man -- 6:16
 - (5) He was a protected man -- 6:21, 22
 - (6) He was a prosperous man -- 6:28
8. Outline:
 - * The Position of Daniel -- the first president (6:2)
 - * The Plot Against Daniel -- by his adversaries (6:4, 5)
 - * The Prayer of Daniel -- he was a great man of prayer (6:10)
 - * The Punishment of Daniel -- he was cast into the lion's den (6:16)
 - * The Protection of Daniel -- he was protected by God (6:22)
9. Another outline:
 - * Daniel was a man of character -- he had an "excellent spirit" (6:3)
 - * Daniel was a man of consistency -- no error or fault in him (6:4)
 - * Daniel was a man of conviction -- he kept praying (6:10)
 - * Daniel was a man of courage -- he was cast into the lion's den (6:16)

* Daniel was a man of conscience -- "have I done no hurt" (6:22b)

I. THE DECREE OF DARIUS

1. In this chapter we see two decrees of Darius (6:9, 25, 26), but first we consider his first decree. Later we will look at the second decree.
2. The presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel, "but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him" (6:4).
3. Daniel's integrity made impossible any corruption, so they realized some other method must be found if Daniel was to be eliminated.
4. The presidents and princes came to the conclusion that the only way they could trip up Daniel was to provide a conflict between official regulations and Daniel's obedience to "the law of his God" (6:5).
5. So a plot was formed, and the presidents and princes approached the king with their scheme (6:6-9).
6. The jealous leaders lied to King Darius when they said, "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..." (6:7), because Daniel was not consulted.

II. THE DEN OF LIONS

1. Although Daniel knew that the decree was signed and that his arrest and execution were inevitable, he nevertheless went to his house where his windows were opened toward Jerusalem (which still lay in ruins) and knelt and prayed (6:10).
2. The custom of praying toward the temple in Jerusalem was adopted by King Solomon (cf. II Chronicles 6:38) and continued until the end of the Old Testament dispensation. The temple was destroyed by the Roman army in AD 70.
3. Our Lord Jesus said to the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).
4. He was explaining to her the location was unimportant.
5. David said in Psalm 55:17, "Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice." Apparently this was Daniel's custom (Daniel 6:10).
6. Daniel's prayerfulness was the secret to his power.
7. Interestingly, Daniel's enemies assumed they would catch him praying, in violation of the new decree. They assembled to

listen to his prayers, thereby giving them a basis for charging Daniel before the king (6:11).

8. John Walvoord wrote, "What a testimony Daniel had that even his enemies knew he would be faithful to God although it would cost him his life" (*Daniel, the Key to Prophetic Revelation*).
9. Daniel's adversaries reported back to King Darius (6:12). Two things should be noted.
 - They derisively referred to Daniel as "of the children of the captivity of Judah" (6:13). That was a rather rude way to describe the chief president (cf. 6:1, 2).
 - Daniel's adversaries lied when they told the king, "Daniel...regardeth not thee" (6:13). Daniel regarded the king but he would not pray to him because that would be dishonoring to God.
10. The king realized he had made a mistake, and he set his heart on delivering Daniel. "He laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him" (6:14).
11. However his efforts were in vain, and the officials reminded the king that the law could not be changed according to their customs and beliefs (6:15).
12. The king, having already signed the decree, was forced to execute the decree (6:16, 17).
13. The king admitted he could not deliver Daniel, but he said to Daniel, "Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee" (6:16). Daniel had a great testimony for the true God!

III. THE DELIVERANCE OF DANIEL

1. Perhaps being unable to see because of the dawn's early light, and the shadows of the lions' den, the king cried out with a lamentable voice to Daniel, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?" (6:20).
2. In response to the king's inquiry, Daniel replied, "O king, live for ever" (6:21). Daniel then informed the king that the lions' mouths had been shut by an angel sent by God so that the lions were not able to hurt him (6:22).
3. Daniel attributed this not only to the power of God but to the fact that Daniel was innocent of any crime either to God or to the king (6:22).

4. The king was "exceedingly glad" for Daniel, and immediately gave order that Daniel should be taken up out of the den of lions (6:23).
5. Referring to Daniel, Hebrews 11:33 says, "Who through faith...stopped the mouths of lions." And Daniel 6:23 says, "So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God."
6. Just as the flames had not been able even to bring the smell of fire upon Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in chapter 3, the lions were not permitted to touch Daniel in chapter 6.
7. Chapter 6 ends with Daniel's accusers and their families being thrown into the lion's den, Daniel's God being honored and exalted, and Daniel prospering throughout the reign of King Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian, who succeeded him (6:24-28).
8. The punishment meted out by King Darius may seem harsh, but it actually conforms to the injunction about the treatment of false witnesses in the law of Moses (cf. Deut. 19:16-21).
9. Furthermore, we see this same principle of divine justice illustrated in the case of Haman. Esther 7:9 and 10 says, "One of the chamberlains, said before the king, Behold also, the gallows fifty cubits high, which Haman had made for Mordecai, who spoken good for the king, standeth in the house of Haman. Then the king said, Hang him thereon. So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king's wrath pacified."
10. Genesis 12:3 says, "And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee."
11. Haman was warned by his wise men and Zeresh his wife. They told him, "If Mordecai be of the seed of the Jews, before whom thou hast begun to fall, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him." And that is precisely what happened.
12. And that is precisely what happened to Daniel's adversaries.

CONCLUSION:

1. We need more Christians like Daniel today. We need some people who have the courage of their convictions.
2. Today people are being forced to bow down to the demands of a wicked, ungodly culture.
3. When that perverted football player kissed his sodomite boyfriend, a defensive back from the Miami Dolphins tweeted "horrible" and was promptly fined (an undisclosed amount) by the Dolphins and suspended from team activities. Now he is

being forced to undergo "educational training" (brainwashing) before he can return to the team.

4. Furthermore, he was forced to apologize. Watching a grown man grovel is almost as horrible as watching two men kissing. But what is even sadder is the fact that many Christians are groveling! They won't take a stand, and our country is going down to hell.
5. Psalm 9:17 says, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."