

Bible Study – Daniel

Week 8 – Chapter 6

I. Daniel 6:1-3

It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom one hundred twenty satraps, stationed throughout the whole kingdom, ² and over them three presidents, including Daniel; to these the satraps gave account, so that the king might suffer no loss. ³ Soon Daniel distinguished himself above all the other presidents and satraps because an excellent spirit was in him, and the king planned to appoint him over the whole kingdom.

- A. The word Darius is a title. It was used for at least 5 different Persian rulers in archeological history.
- B. Darius could have been Cyrus, the ruler of the entire Persian empire
- C. Darius could have been a governor named Gubaru.
- D. Darius would have to be someone of great power if he was appointing people over the kingdom to rule it in his stead.
- E. Not mentioned here, but in the first year of the rule of Cyrus, he decreed that the Jews could return to their homeland, ending their 70 years of captivity. This occurred between 539-537 BC, right before the lion's den.
- F. Daniel is about 90 years old here.
- G. "Suffer No Loss" – The King didn't want to lose anything because of military revolts, tax evasion, or fraud.
- H. Satrap means "Protector of the Kingdom"
- I. Daniel again excelled in his duties.

II. Daniel 6:4-9

So the presidents and the satraps tried to find grounds for complaint against Daniel in connection with the kingdom. But they could find no grounds for complaint or any corruption, because he was faithful, and no negligence or corruption could be found in him. ⁵ The men said, "We shall not find any ground for complaint against this Daniel unless we find it in connection with the law of his God." ⁶ So the presidents and satraps conspired and came to the king and said to him, "O King Darius, live forever! ⁷ All the presidents of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the counselors and the governors are agreed that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce an interdict, that whoever prays to anyone, divine or human, for thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be thrown into a den of lions. ⁸ Now, O king, establish the interdict and sign the document, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which cannot be revoked." ⁹ Therefore King Darius signed the document and interdict.

- A. After 70~ years of service, the most politically savvy people in Daniel's day could not find any corruption in anything that Daniel ever did. This demonstrates the superior purity and integrity that Daniel possessed.
- B. It is not a foreign idea for rulers in this age to assert that they were gods and be worshipped as such. The pagan gods of this era were viewed as being fallible, just like man. Recall that the Romans worshipped the Caesars as gods.
- C. Laws in the Persian empire were enforced for everyone without exception and could not be changed in order to ensure that no whimsical laws existed.
- D. Daniel's religious beliefs were well known. He was not ashamed to let others know what he believed.
- E. Likely, the conspirators were lying when they said that everyone agreed that the king should be revered as a god. Undoubtedly, Daniel did not agree to this, and most likely the vast majority of the rest of the satraps were not a part of this conspiracy. Most of the satraps were positioned outside of the city of Babylon and may have had no knowledge of these events.

III. Daniel 6: 10-13

Although Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he continued to go to his house, which had windows in its upper room open toward Jerusalem, and to get down on his knees three times a day to pray to his God and praise him, just as he had done previously. ¹¹ The conspirators came and found Daniel praying and seeking mercy before his God. ¹² Then they approached the king and said concerning the interdict, "O king! Did you not sign an interdict, that anyone who prays to anyone, divine or human, within thirty days except to you, O king, shall be thrown into a den of lions?" The king answered, "The thing stands fast, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be revoked." ¹³ Then they responded to the king, "Daniel, one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the interdict you have signed, but he is saying his prayers three times a day."

- A. Daniel knew that the law was signed, but because it was in contradiction with the law of God, he ignored the law and worshipped God.
- B. Houses of this day often had an "Upper Room" as is described here. These rooms were, and still are, common in the East, being used as private apartments to which one retired when wishing to be undisturbed. Since they did not have windows, they instead used shutters made of lattice work that could be opened and closed. This would allow the wind to blow through the house to keep it cool.
- C. Daniel prayed 3 times a day, just like David did. Morning, Noon, and Night.
- D. The practice of praying toward Jerusalem evidently was based on the injunctions of Solomon in 1 Kings 8:35, 38, 44, 48 delivered at the dedication of the temple (ca. 960 B.C.). Jerusalem was the place where Solomon's temple had stood, and this edifice had symbolized the presence of Yahweh God.
- E. As soon as the conspirators saw Daniel praying, like they knew he would, they reported him to the King.
- F. They accused Daniel of not honoring the King because he disobeyed.

IV. Daniel 6: 14-15

When the king heard the charge, he was very much distressed. He was determined to save Daniel, and until the sun went down he made every effort to rescue him.¹⁵ Then the conspirators came to the king and said to him, “Know, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no interdict or ordinance that the king establishes can be changed.”

- A. The King was tricked. In his vanity to be worshipped as a god, he was fooled as the conspirator’s real motives were to eliminate Daniel. It is clear that Daniel was well liked by Darius.
- B. The King searched the law books for any loop hole that he could use to save Daniel. Evidently, the sentence was mandated to be carried out the same day as the King only had until sundown.
- C. The conspirators came at sundown and reminded the King that he had to follow the law. How do you think the King felt about this?

V. Daniel 6:16-18

Then the king gave the command, and Daniel was brought and thrown into the den of lions. The king said to Daniel, “May your God, whom you faithfully serve, deliver you!”¹⁷ A stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet and with the signet of his lords, so that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel.¹⁸ Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; no food was brought to him, and sleep fled from him.

- A. The King was actually there when Daniel was thrown into the pit and called down to Daniel saying, “May your God, whom you faithfully serve, deliver you!” – Darius was a pagan king, so how did the King know who Daniel served?
- B. The den was actually an underground pit. There was a hole in the roof of the structure to drop food in, and a door in the side of the cave so the lions could get in and out.
- C. Soft clay was attached to the chains surrounding the rock, and the signet ring of the King and the officials present were imprinted in the clay. If someone tried to free Daniel, the seal of the clay and the impression of the rings would be shattered.
- D. The King liked Daniel so much that he fasted the entire night and went without sleep.

VI. Daniel 6:19-24

Then, at break of day, the king got up and hurried to the den of lions.²⁰ When he came near the den where Daniel was, he cried out anxiously to Daniel, “O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God whom you faithfully serve been able to deliver you from the lions?”²¹ Daniel then said to the king, “O king, live forever!²² My God sent his angel and shut the lions’ mouths so that they would not hurt me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I

have done no wrong.”²³ Then the king was exceedingly glad and commanded that Daniel be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no kind of harm was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.²⁴ The king gave a command, and those who had accused Daniel were brought and thrown into the den of lions—they, their children, and their wives. Before they reached the bottom of the den the lions overpowered them and broke all their bones in pieces.

- A. The Kings hasty return to the turn can be attributed to Babylonian customs at that time. If a prisoner had been tortured and survived to the next day, they were pardoned.
- B. We can infer from the statement “shut the lions’ mouths” that God kept the lions completely docile, as Daniel didn’t even have a scratch. Some commentaries indicate that the lions must have just been old or not hungry, but this cannot be the case. This was a common form of execution for both the Persians and Assyrians. Further, when Daniel’s accusers and their families were thrown in later, they were instantly overwhelmed by the lions.
- C. It was common in the Persian Kingdom for the family of any offender to suffer the same punishment. This was to prevent retribution from living family members.
- D. Daniel was found blameless before God. How good of a man must Daniel had been for him to receive such praise?
- E. “Falsely accused” is literally “who had eaten his pieces”. This speaks of the malicious way that the conspirators spoke of Daniel.

VII. Daniel 6:25-28

Then King Darius wrote to all peoples and nations of every language throughout the whole world: “May you have abundant prosperity!”²⁶ I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion people should tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: For he is the living God, enduring forever. His kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion has no end.²⁷ He delivers and rescues, he works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth; for he has saved Daniel from the power of the lions.”²⁸ So this Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.¹

- A. Darius made a decree for his entire Kingdom to honor God. It is not clear whether Darius was converted or not.
- B. God does not perform miracles to “show off” but rather to demonstrate that He alone is God.
- C. Daniel was likely elevated to a position of power right below that of Darius.

VIII. Application

- A. 2 Timothy 4:1-8

¹ *The Holy Bible : New Revised Standard Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989), Da 6:1–28.