



Chapter 6

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Darius, the Mede? “Darius” may be an honorable *title*, meaning “holder of the scepter.” Used of five later Persian rulers.

1) Darius may have been another name for Cyrus. Daniel 6:28 may be translated, “So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius, even the reign of Cyrus the Persian.” It was common for ancient rulers to use different names in various parts of their realms. Thus Darius may have been a localized name for Cyrus. (This is the view of D. J. Wiseman, “Some Historical Problems in the Book of Daniel,” in *Notes on Some Problems in the Book of Daniel*, pp. 12-14.)

2) Darius the Mede could be identified with Cambyses, Cyrus’ son, who ruled Persia 530-522 B.C. (This view is held by Charles Boutflower, *In and Around the Book of Daniel*. Reprint. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publishing Co., 1977, pp. 142-55.)

3) Another explanation is that Darius was appointed by Cyrus to rule over Babylon, a comparatively small portion of the vast Medo-Persian Empire. According to Daniel 9:1 Darius “was made ruler over the Babylonian Kingdom.”

4) Another explanation is that Ugbaru, governor of Gutium, conquered Babylon, and that Gubaru, alias Darius, was the man Cyrus appointed to rule over Babylon. (This is the view of John C. Whitcomb, Jr., *Darius the Mede*. Nutley, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1974.)

Ugbaru’s Victory

The historical situation leading to this appointment, based on the *Nabonidus Chronicle*, was that Babylon was conquered by Ugbaru, governor of Gutium, who entered the city of Babylon the night of Belshazzar’s feast. After Ugbaru conquered Babylon on October 12, 539 B.C., Cyrus entered the conquered city on October 29 of that same year. Ugbaru was then appointed by Cyrus to rule on his behalf in Babylon. Eight days after Cyrus’ arrival (Nov. 6) Ugbaru died.

If Darius the Mede is another name for Ugbaru, as is entirely possible, the problem is solved. *Since Darius was 62 years old when he took over Babylon (5:31)*, his death a few weeks later would not be unusual. According to this view (presented by William H. Shea, “Darius the Mede: An Update,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 20. Autumn 1982, pp. 229-47); Gubaru is another spelling for Ugbaru; Gobryas being a Greek form of the same name (Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia* 4. 6. 1-9; 7. 5. 7-34).¹

Darius—GROTEFEND has read it in the cuneiform inscriptions at Persepolis, as *Darheush*, that is, "Lord-King," a name applied to many of the Medo-Persian kings in common. Three of that name occur: Darius Hystaspes, 521 B.C., in whose reign the decree was carried into effect for rebuilding the temple (Ezra 4:5; Haggai 1:1); Darius Codomanus, 336 B.C., whom Alexander overcame, called "the Persian" (Neh. 12:22), an expression used after the rule of Macedon was set up; and Darius Cyaxares II, between Astyages and Cyrus [AESCHYLUS, *The Persians*, 762, 763].²

¹ Chuck Missler, Notes on the Book of Daniel, Koinea House, www.khouse.org

² JFB Commentary

It pleased Darius; (Guzik) Secular history of this period has no record of a ruler named **Darius**. There are three possible explanations for the Darius of Daniel 6.

1. It may be that **Darius** is simply another name for Cyrus, who ruled of the Medo-Persian Empire during this period.
2. It may be that **Darius** was actually Cambyses, son of Cyrus, who served under his father as a ruler of Babylon and later inherited the throne of the entire empire.
3. It may be that **Darius** is an ancient official known as *Gubaru* in ancient documents, whom Cyrus appointed as ruler over Babylon immediately after its capture. It is the opinion of this commentator that this *Gubaru* is the same person as **Darius**. In fact, "Darius" may be an honorific title meaning, "holder of the scepter."

Ancient documents show that the man Gubaru had the power to make appointments, to assemble an army, to levy taxes, and to possess palaces. Gubaru (Darius) was, in a very real sense, the king over Babylon.³

Hocking: After the fall of Babylon (539 BC), a man named Darius the Mede received the kingdom. He was sixty-two years old. I'm always amazed at the little details in the Bible. Why mention that the man was sixty-two years old? The Book doesn't even tell us how old Daniel is although we know he's certainly a senior citizen by this time.

There was a man named Gubaru who, according to history and archaeological evidence, was appointed by Cyrus to be the governor of Babylon in 539 B.C. He was born in 601 BC which makes him exactly sixty-two years old as the Bible says. Darius is probably the title of honor because his father was Mede. Gubaru was a Mede and history tells us that Gubaru was Darius the Mede.⁴

Introduction McGee: Chapter 6 of the Book of Daniel is perhaps one of the most familiar in the Bible and certainly is the most well-known of this book. It is the account of Daniel in the den of lions. Have you ever stopped to think that Daniel spent only one night in the den of lions, but he spent a lifetime—from a boy of seventeen until he was about ninety—in the palace of pagan kings? It was more dangerous to live in that palace than it was to spend a night in the den of lions. The lions could not touch him, but yonder in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar, Nabonidus, Belshazzar, Darius the Median, and Cyrus who were pagan men, Daniel was in constant danger. However, he had the privilege of leading some of these men to a knowledge of the living and true God.

Daniel spent only one night in the den of lions, but we are going to look at it because it has a message for us today. This chapter concludes the strictly historical section of the Book of Daniel, and each historical event has been recorded for us for a purpose. This particular episode in Daniel's life is another illustration of the keeping power of God, and it is another adumbration of the way in which God will protect the remnant during the Great Tribulation Period. This chapter is a counterpart of chapter 3 where God preserved Daniel's three friends in the fiery furnace. As there was a question as to the whereabouts

³ David Guzik's Commentaries on the Bible are reproduced by permission of David Guzik, Germany

⁴ David Hocking, Daniel, Prophecies of the Last Days,

of Daniel in chapter 3, there is also a question as to the whereabouts of the three Hebrew children here in chapter 6. Surely they would have followed Daniel in his obedience to God. Perhaps, since there has been a lapse of time, they are no longer living.

Chapters 3 and 6, therefore, give two aspects of the preservation of the remnant—both of Israel and of the Gentiles—during the Great Tribulation Period. In chapter 3 the emphasis is upon the pressures which are brought to bear by human hatred and persecution. In this chapter the emphasis is rather upon satanic hatred and persecution. The message for us today is, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet. 5:8). You and I live in a lions’ cage. That cage is the world, and there is a big roaring lion prowling up and down the cage. Peter calls him our adversary, the Devil.⁵

Daniel 6:1

It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom;

[an hundred and twenty princes] Ahasuerus' Provinces Daniel 6:1 speaks of 120 princes, rather than the 127 provinces mentioned here. The number changed continually to suit the requirements of government in the various provinces. Only in Daniel 6:1 do we find 120. Plato says that “when Darius (i.e. the Maintainer—Astyages) came to the throne, being one of seven, he divided the country into seven portions” (De Legibus III). These rulers were the 7 princes of Persia named in Esther 6:13-14. When Babylon fell into the hands of this Ahasuerus, or Darius the Mede, he divided the newly-acquired kingdom into 120 parts (Daniel 9:1; cp. Daniel 6:1). The 127 provinces could have been the previous 7 parts and the newly-formed 120 (Esther 6:1; Esther 9:30). In the days of Darius Hystaspis these were reduced to 23 parts, as stated on the Behistun inscription.⁶

A hundred and twenty princes—A chief or satrap over every province which belonged to the Medo-Persian empire. Afterwards we find it enlarged to one hundred and twenty-seven provinces, by the victories of Cambyses and Darius Hystaspes. See Esther 1:1. Josephus reckons three hundred and sixty satrapies or lordships; but this is most probably an exaggeration or mistake.⁷

⁵McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (3:562). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁶ Dake’s Study Notes, Dake’s Study Bible

⁷ Adam Clarke’s Commentary

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.

McGee: With the opening of this chapter, we have again moved ahead historically. The kingdom of Babylon, the head of gold, has now disappeared; it has been removed from the number one spot of world power. Instead of Babylon, we have the Medo-Persian empire, which was represented by the arms of silver in the dream of Nebuchadnezzar. “Darius” is the Darius Cyaxares II of secular history, and he ruled for only two years. Cyrus, who followed him, was the son of Darius’ sister Mundane and of Cambyses the Persian. This was what brought the empire together into the Medo-Persian Empire which now ruled the world.

Although we have moved into another empire, we still find Daniel in the position of prime minister under Darius the Mede. When we were considering the multimetallic image of gold, silver, brass, iron, and clay (ch. 2), we suggested that it pictured deterioration in a number of ways. There was deterioration in position, in the type of metal, etc. Here we can see that the inferiority of this kingdom to Nebuchadnezzar’s is quite evident. Nebuchadnezzar’s reign was autocratic and absolute—he did not share authority with anyone. Darius had “an hundred and twenty princes” who shared the responsibility and leadership with him. Over this group Darius placed “three presidents” who served as liaison officers between the princes and the king. There was therefore a distribution of responsibility and rulership. We are told that these three presidents (Daniel was one of them) held their position so that “the king should have no damage.” This suggests that the presidents were to prevent the princes from stealing from or undermining the king in any way. Daniel was number one of the three presidents, and I take it that he was a man of about eighty years of age at this time.⁸

Daniel distinguished himself: Daniel was one of three leaders directly under Darius, and he shined above the other two leaders because he had an excellent spirit. Daniel had a good attitude in his work and life and this made him the object of attack.

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 was at least 83 years old, with 66 years in public office and still in a position of honor. Daniel was an exceptional administrator, partly because of his extensive experience under Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 2:48) for about 39 years.

[because an excellent spirit was in him] This gives the reason for the exaltation of Daniel over all the others which caused the jealousy of Daniel 6:4-5.

⁸McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (3:563). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Daniel was preferred—probably because of his having so wonderfully foretold the fall of Babylon. Hence the very expression used by the queen mother on that occasion (Daniel 5:12) is here used, "because *an excellent spirit was in him.*"⁹

At this time, Daniel was over 80 years old and one of Darius's top three administrators. Daniel was working with those who did not believe in his God, but he worked more efficiently and capably than all the rest. Thus, he attracted the attention of the pagan king and earned a place of respect. One of the best ways to influence non-Christian employers is to work diligently and responsibly. How well do you represent God to your employer?¹⁰

Van Impe: Recently, I was telling a friend that I was going to do a major exposition on the Book of Daniel, and he said, "Oh, that's about Daniel in the lion's den." I replied, "Yes, but there's much more to the book than that." It appears that just about everyone knows this story. Unfortunately, for many, that's all they know about this mysterious book that provides information on multiplied end-time events that only now, in our generation, are being unsealed—something we'll investigate in greater depth when analyzing chapters seven through twelve.

But we're getting a bit ahead of our story. First, some background. Daniel had now served under six administrations as a faithful, wise, competent counselor—all the more remarkable since he was a Jew, a member of that reluctant group of captives brought from Jerusalem to Babylon, and one who never really fit into this foreign culture. Daniel was a survivor because God gave him the strength and the courage to stand up for his faith. And now, in chapter six, we're going to see that strength tested once again. For anyone to serve six political administrations is a tremendous feat. That's one of many reasons I admire Dr. Billy Graham and the enormous respect he has earned as counselor and friend to so many United States presidents. That's a long, impressive history of relationships with our nation's top leaders. It was also a long time for Daniel.

For this man of God it had all started with the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, who ultimately lost his kingdom when Babylon was handed over to the Medes and the Persians that fateful night when Belshazzar was preoccupied with wine, women, and song. Then the handwriting began to appear on the wall and the Medo-Persian conquest occurred as the new leaders immediately executed three thousand political prisoners, including all of Babylon's princes and presidents.

However, as you'll recall, at the last moment of his life, Belshazzar made Daniel the third in command. Imagine this scenario if you were Darius or Cyrus, leaders of the Medes and the Persians: You conquer a nation, rape and pillage virtually everyone and everything in sight, you kill all the country's key leaders—yet despite your best efforts at assuming complete control, there is still this person, Daniel, who is number three in the kingdom—and who seemingly can't be eliminated. Why wasn't he killed with the others? Why was Daniel, of all people, left to survive and to become a nuisance to the new administration?

The only answer I can give is that God always sets up those He wants elevated. God had a plan for Daniel's life, and now even the new kings—Darius and Cyrus—find

⁹ JFB Commentary

¹⁰ Life Application Notes

themselves appreciating Daniel and his administrative abilities, so much so that they make him a president in their kingdom. So, Daniel was one of the three appointed heads of state-at eighty-five years of age.¹¹

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.

[but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him] When enemies cannot find any fault in a man he must be perfect. They turned next to find some fault with his religion. There was none here so they made a scheme to entrap Daniel into disfavor with the king, appealing to Darius to make a law that would exalt himself and involve Daniel in lawbreaking (Daniel 6:6-9).

Sought to find occasion against Daniel—But they found no blemish in his administration, for he was faithful to his king: this was a virtue. But he was also faithful to his God: this they hoped to construe into a crime, and make it the cause of his ruin.

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.

Jealousy leads men to attack a colleague who is more competent than themselves. A man in the Kingdom of God will prompt the kingdom of this world to drive its members to display a more extreme bitterness in their assault.

It is the highest testimony to a godly man's walk, when his most watchful enemies can find no ground of censure save in that he walks according to the law of God even where it opposes the ways of the world.

The jealous officials couldn't find anything about Daniel's life to criticize, so they attacked his religion. If you face jealous critics because of your faith, be glad they're criticizing that part of your life—perhaps they had to focus on your religion as a last resort! Respond by continuing to believe and live as you should. Then remember that God is in control, fighting this battle for you.

Whoever petitions any god or man for thirty days, except you, O king: If the enemies of Daniel knew him, they also knew Darius. They knew they could appeal to his pride and his desire for a unified kingdom.

¹¹ Jack Van Impe, Study Notes on Book of Daniel.

“The suggested mode of compelling every subject in the former Babylonian domain to acknowledge the authority of Persia seemed a statesmanlike measure that would contribute to the unification of the Middle and Near East. The time limit of one month seemed reasonable.” (Archer)

"What pretence could they urge for so silly an ordinance? Probably to *flatter* the ambition of the king, they pretend to make him *a god* for *thirty* days; so that the whole empire should make prayer and supplication to him and pay him Divine honours! This was the bait; but their real object was to destroy Daniel." (Clarke)

All the governors of the kingdom, the administrators and satraps, the counselors and advisors, have consulted together: Daniel's enemies also knew that people can be persuaded to do things they wouldn't normally do if they think everyone else approves of that thing.

Of course, they lied when they said **all the governors**, because Daniel was one of the governors and he was not consulted.¹²

Daniel 6:6

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

[Assembled together] literally means "came with haste and tumult."

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.

Assumed “divinity” of kings derives from ancient legends from Gen 6: demigods. Examples: Babylonian, Persian, Greek, Seleucid, and Roman empires. *We'll see it again.*

[den] = *gob*, from Heb. verb *gub*, “to dig”: a pit or cistern. Saying that they *all agreed* (v. 7) was wrong for they certainly had not discussed this with Daniel.

[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] They knew Daniel prayed 3 times daily, so guessed rightly that any law to stop his praying for 30 days would get him involved with breaking the command (Daniel 6:10).

Whosoever shall ask a petition—What pretense could they urge for so silly an ordinance? Probably to flatter the ambition of the king, they pretend to make him a god

¹² David Guzik's Commentaries on the Bible are reproduced by permission of David Guzik, Germany

for thirty days; so that the whole empire should make prayer and supplication to him, and pay him Divine honors! This was the bait; but their real object was to destroy Daniel.¹³

The Persian king was regarded as representative of the chief god, Ormuzd; the seven princes near him represented the seven Amshaspands before the throne of Ormuzd; hence Mordecai (Esther 3:4) refused such homage to Haman, the king's prime minister, as inconsistent with what is due to God alone. A weak despot, like Darius, much under the control of his princes, might easily be persuaded that such a decree would test the obedience of the Chaldeans just conquered, and tame their proud spirits. So absolute is the king in the East, that he is regarded not merely as the ruler, but the owner, of the people.

All . . . governors . . . counsellors, &c.—Several functionaries are here specified, not mentioned in Daniel 6:4, 6. They evidently exaggerated the case of the weak king, as if *their* request was that of *all* the officers in the empire.

den of lions—an underground cave or pit, covered with a stone. It is an undesigned proof of genuineness, that the "fiery furnace" is not made the means of punishment here, as in Daniel 3:20; for the Persians were *fire-worshippers*, which the Babylonians were not.¹⁴

Chuck Smith: The other two presidents and the princes obviously had not consulted Daniel about this decree. The decree was actually a very foolish one. People couldn't ask each other for help or favors for thirty days, since all requests were to be made to the king. The king apparently succumbed to the flattery of the princes without thinking through the effects of the decree. All the world governments deified their leaders. In the last world government that will come to power during the Tribulation, the Antichrist will put to death those who don't bow down and worship his image (Revelation 13:15).¹⁵

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.

that it be not changed— (Esther 1:19; Esther 8:8). This immutability of the king's commands was peculiar to the Medes and Persians: it was due to their regarding him infallible as the representative of Ormuzd; it was not so among the Babylonians.

Medes and Persians—The order of the names is an undesigned mark of genuineness. Cyrus the Persian reigned subordinate to Darius the Mede as to dignity, though exercising more real power. After Darius' death, the order is "the Persians and Medes" (Esther 1:14, 19, &c.).¹⁶

¹³ Adam Clarke's Commentary

¹⁴ JFB Commentary

¹⁵ Chuck Smith, Notes on Daniel, Pastor/founder, Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, CA

¹⁶ JFB Commentary

According to the law of the Medes and Persians—I do not think that this is to be understood so as to imply that whatever laws or ordinances the Medes or Persians once enacted, they never changed them. This would argue extreme folly in legislators in any country. Nothing more appears to be meant than that the decree should be enacted, written, and registered, according to the legal forms among the Medes and Persians; and this one to be made absolute for thirty days. The laws were such among this people, that, when once passed with the usual formalities, the king could not change them at his own will. This is the utmost that can be meant by the law of the Medes and Persians that could not be changed.¹⁷

Daniel 6:9

Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree.

In Babylon, the king's word *was* the law. In the Medo-Persian empire, however, when a law was made, even the king couldn't change it. Darius was an effective government administrator, but he had a fatal flaw—pride. By appealing to his vanity, the men talked Darius into signing a law effectively making himself a god for 30 days. This law could not be broken—not even by an important official like Daniel. Another example of the irrevocable nature of the laws of the Medes and Persians appears in Esther 8:8.

(Esther 8:8) *Write ye also for the Jews, as it liketh you, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's ring: for the writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, may no man reverse.*

So the 122 leaders devised a plot. (Daniel was certainly outnumbered!) They suggested to King Darius that he, the king, be made the sole object of worship for 30 days. Either the 122 got others to agree to the plan (including prefects . . . advisers, and governors) or the 122 merely *said* the others agreed. Saying that they all agreed (v. 7) was wrong for they certainly had not discussed this with Daniel. All prayer was to be addressed to the king in recognition of his power in the religious realm. The penalty for rebelling against his religious authority was to be death by being thrown into a den of lions. Darius, no doubt flattered by the adulation he would receive, consented to the plot and signed it into law, which according to Medo-Persian custom was irrevocable.¹⁸

Van Impe: In actions that demonstrated the depth of their anti-Semitism, the Gentile administrators compelled to work with Daniel were determined to find a way to put this man down once and for all. How could they tolerate the presence of a Jew in such a high position—one greater than their own? That was the rub. So they pulled Daniel's file. I can just see them scouring the official records looking for just one act of impropriety, for some minute administrative error.

¹⁷ Adam Clarke's Commentary
v. verse

¹⁸Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (1:1348). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Perhaps they'd find that some unaccounted for, under-the-table money had changed hands. Perhaps Daniel had been derelict in his duties earlier on, but no one had caught the mistake. They searched to the point of exhaustion, only to end their quest unsuccessfully. As much as they hated to admit it, Daniel was apparently as good as everyone said he was.

The only thing they could find wrong with him was that he served God. What a marvelous indictment, and would it not be wonderful if our detractors were to say the same thing about you and me? But it will only be said about us as we remain people of the Book who live on our knees in devoted worship to our heavenly Father. It's what Luke says as he reminds us of the words of Jesus,

"And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1).

That's our choice: We can either pray or faint. It's either one or the other, and Daniel never stopped praying. Because of this, his fellow administrators figured they'd finally discovered the smoking gun they were looking for, and that's when their treachery began. Today we might call it "bootlicking"-cozying up to someone from whom we might want a favor or some special arrangement. This is what Daniel's "friends" did by going to Darius with their newly-hatched scheme to catch Daniel in the act of praying. It's important to realize that it was not just a few who plotted against Daniel.

Remember, there were 120 princes and three presidents-the first of whom was Daniel. That means there were 122 government servants under the Medes and the Persians who had turned against Daniel. The vote was 122 to 1. How could any politician survive those odds? And it all started with a vile, dirty little sin called jealousy. You might say, *Well, I don't go out and get drunk; I don't commit adultery; I don't steal; I have never murdered a person...* but if your heart is filled with envy, that not-so-small sin will remove you from the presence of God eternally unless repentance occurs. Galatians 5:19-21 reads,

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

God's Word is constantly reminding us to check out our hearts, and find out if we are envious of the position, wealth, or appearance of others. Daniel didn't compare himself with the Smiths and the Joneses of his day, and neither should we. Daniel had higher goals, and his message to us is that if we are to truly know God, we, too, must have goals and objectives that reflect our love for the Savior. Meanwhile, Daniel's enemies got their way as they pushed through a decree that promised a den filled with lions for those who worshipped any god other than the king. What a fool-proof idea.

Finally, they would get this Jew who had been elevated to such a lofty position of leadership. Yes, a den of lions. That would surely do it. Not even a praying Daniel could extricate himself from those hungry beasts. Something else: They reminded the king that when a decree is signed, it is an irrevocable law of the Medes and the Persians. The king knew this, but because of the pressure of virtually his entire administrative staff, he complied with their wishes, signing the document on the spot.¹⁹

¹⁹ Jack Van Impe, Notes on the Book of Daniel

Therefore King Darius signed the written decree: "Suppose the law of the land were proclaimed, 'No man shall pray during the remainder of this month, on pain of being cast into a den of lions,' - how many of you would pray? I think there would be rather a scanty number at the prayer-meeting. Not but what the attendance at prayer-meetings is scanty enough now! but if there were the penalty of being cast into a den of lions, I am afraid the prayer-meeting would be postponed for a month, owing to pressing business, and manifold engagements of one kind and another." (Spurgeon)

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.

[knew that the writing was signed] This shows the boldness and faith of Daniel. It was not unwise from any standpoint, for his religion and his God were involved in a challenge (Daniel 6:5,10).

[toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed] He did not look toward the sun, as the fire-worshippers did, but toward Jerusalem, where the temple of Jehovah had stood and where the sacred presence had been in the Oracle. This seems to have been the custom among the Jews when away from the Holy City (1 Kings 8:44,48; 2 Chron. 6:34; Psalm 5:7; Psalm 28:2; Psalm 138:2; Jonah 2:4). Daniel's evening prayer was seemingly at the time of the evening sacrifice (Daniel 9:21). The morning prayer perhaps was at the time of the morning sacrifice. Then halfway between was the one at noon. David speaks of prayer as being in the morning, noon, and night (Psalm 55:17). Precise hours of prayer are mentioned in Acts 2:15; Acts 3:1; Acts 10:9.

[as he did aforetime] No new law could make Daniel quit praying to the God he had served so faithfully 80 to 90 years—the one who had spared his life by revelations being granted (Daniel 2:18), and who had answered him on other occasions of crisis (Daniel 4:8-9; Daniel 5:13).

His windows being open—He would not shut them to conceal himself, but “kneeled down with his face turned toward Jerusalem, and prayed thrice each day, giving thanks to God as usual.” When the Jews were in distant countries, in prayer they turned their faces towards Jerusalem; and when in Jerusalem, they turned their faces towards the temple. Solomon, in his prayer at the dedication of the temple, 1 Kings 8:48, had entreated God to hear the prayers of those who might be in strange lands, or in captivity, when they should turn their faces towards their own land, which God gave unto their fathers; and towards the city which he had chosen, and the house which was dedicated to his name. It was in reference to this that Daniel turned his face towards Jerusalem when he prayed.²⁰

²⁰ Adam Clarke's Commentary

windows . . . open—not in vainglory, but that there might be no obstruction to his view of the direction in which Jerusalem, the earthly seat of Jehovah under the Old Testament, lay; and that the sight of heaven might draw his mind off from earthly thoughts. To Christ in the heavenly temple let us turn our eyes in prayer, from this land of our captivity (1 Kings 8:44, 48; 2 Chron. 6:29, 34, 38; Psalm 5:7).

Such a despotic decree is quite explicable by remembering that the king, as the incarnation of Ormuzd, might demand such an act of religious obedience as a *test of loyalty*. Persecuting laws are always made on false pretenses. Instead of bitter complaints against men, Daniel prays to God. Though having vast business as a ruler of the empire, he finds time to pray thrice a day. Daniel's three companions (Daniel 3:12), are not alluded to here, nor any other Jew who conscientiously may have disregarded the edict, as the conspirators aimed at Daniel alone (Daniel 6:5).²¹

upon his knees—Humble attitudes in prayer become humble suppliants.

three times a day— (Psalm 55:17). The third, sixth, and ninth hour; our nine, twelve, and three o'clock (Acts 2:15; Acts 10:9; Acts 3:1; Acts 10:30; compare Daniel 9:21).

Daniel stood alone. Although he knew about the law against praying to anyone except the king, he continued to pray three times a day as he always had. Daniel had a disciplined prayer life. Our prayers are usually interrupted not by threats, but simply by the pressure of our schedules. Don't let threats or pressures cut into your prayer time. Pray regularly, no matter what, for prayer is your lifeline to God.

Chuck Smith: Daniel was a loyal subject of the government, until the government tried to regulate his relations with God. Then he obeyed the higher law of God (Acts 5:28-29). Daniel probably prayed throughout the day as problems or blessings came up, and he also had an appointed time and place to pray three times a day. Daniel probably faced Jerusalem when he prayed, because of Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple (II Chronicles 6:34-39, 7:14).²²

"Unless you are prepared to be in the minority, and now and then to be called 'narrow,' 'fanatic,' and to be laughed at by men because you will not do what they do, but abstain and resist, then there is little chance of your ever making much of your Christian profession." (Maclaren)

²¹ JFB Commentary

²² Chuck Smith, Notes on Daniel, Pastor/founder, Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, CA

Daniel 6:11

Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God.

Prayer (cf. Ch 2, 6, 9): A habit (Jer 29:1-12); windows habitually open. Solomon said to pray toward their land (2 Chr 6:36-39; 1 Kgs 8:33,35,38,44,48). David (Ps 5:7; 28:2; also 1 Kgs 8:54; Ezra 9:5). New Testament (Jn 4:21-24).

Three times/day? (Ps 55:16,17). Knees? Lord: Lk 22:41 [Honored for *not* kneeling in Chapter 3; also 1 Kgs 8:54; Ezek 9:5.] Other examples: Stephen (Acts 7:60); Peter (Acts 9:40); Paul at Miletus (Acts 20:36); at Tyre (Acts 21:5). Note: Praise not absent, even with pending danger. Our own country was founded by men who knew and believed in the power of prayer.

[assembled, and found Daniel praying] Just as his enemies expected, Daniel was found true to his God and times of prayer, so they reported to Darius, who was very sorry he had made a law that would involve Daniel (Daniel 6:11-22).

The decree signed into law by Darius became public knowledge. But Daniel, knowing of the decree, followed his customary practice (just as he had done before) of going to his own upstairs room. . . . three times each day to pray to . . . God (cf. Ps. 55:17). He prayed toward Jerusalem (cf. Ps. 5:7; 2 Chron. 6:21, 34, 38).

Daniel's prayer was first a prayer of thanksgiving (Dan. 6:10) as he acknowledged God's goodnesses to him. His prayer was also a prayer for guidance and help (v. 11). Doubtless the responsibility of high office rested heavily on Daniel and he sought God's wisdom in the decisions he had to make. Daniel was more than 80 years old at this time (539 B.C.); he was about 16 when he was taken captive 66 years earlier (605 B.C.). So because of his years he may have also sought God for physical strength to carry on his heavy duties. Daniel made no attempt to hide his devotion to or his dependence on God, even though it now meant disobeying a governmental decree (cf. Acts 5:29). Daniel would not and could not look to Darius for the guidance and strength he knew God alone could supply. Apparently his opponents knew where and when he prayed, so they went (lit., rushed) to his room at the time and, as expected, found him praying.²³

He prayed according to Scripture, because in 1 Kings 8 Solomon asked God to give special notice to the prayers of His people when they prayed towards Jerusalem and the temple:

(1 Kings 8:30) *And may You hear the supplication of Your servant and of Your people Israel, when they pray toward this place.*

cf. *confer*, compare

v. verse

lit. literal, literally

²³Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (1:1348). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

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.

[the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not] It was customary among Medes and Persians when a law was duly passed and sealed by the king's seal that even he himself would not change it (Daniel 6:15). In the case of Ahasuerus making a decree for the slaughter of the Jews (Esther 3:13), he would not reverse it, even at the request of his queen (Esther 8:5), but he issued another edict which neutralized the first one (Esther 8:11). Thus one irreversible edict was completely neutralized by another just as irreversible; and the king continued to act his part of being infallible and free from the weakness of repentance.

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.

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 laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him.

They “bugged his apartment.” Daniel was derisively belittled as one of the exiles from Judah (as Arioch and Belshazzar had done; cf. 2:25; 5:13), The king knew Daniel for more than a year. Aramaic word order places Daniel first in the sentence, the stressed position: “And as for Daniel, he set his mind to deliver him.”

[sore displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him] Note the contrast between this king and Nebuchadnezzar when his law was disobeyed (Daniel 3:13,19). Darius was displeased with himself because he had been tricked into making such a law. He sought to deliver Daniel, laboring to do so all day, but the enemies of Daniel held the king to his law as one which could not be altered (Daniel 6:14-15).

displeased with himself—for having suffered himself to be entrapped into such a hasty decree (Proverbs 29:20). On the one hand he was pressed by the immutability of the law, fear that the princes might conspire against him, and desire to consult for his own reputation, not to seem fickle; on the other, by regard for Daniel, and a desire to save him from the effects of his own rash decree.²⁴

²⁴ JFB Commentary

till . . . going down of . . . sun—The king took this time to deliberate, thinking that after sunset Daniel would be spared till morning, and that meanwhile some way of escape would turn up. But (Daniel 6:15) the conspirators "assembled tumultuously" (literally) to prevent this delay in the execution, lest the king should meantime change his decree.

And the king, when he heard these words, was greatly displeased with himself: There is a lot to like about King Darius, and one of the admirable things about him is that he is displeased with himself. Instead of blaming others, he knew that he was at fault. We can be sure that he wasn't happy with Daniel's enemies, but he knew that ultimately he was responsible.

Like Darius, our foolish decisions often haunt us. Often all we can do is pray and ask God to mercifully and miraculously intervene when we make foolish decisions.²⁵

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.

For the third time, the wicked princes came before the king with "haste and tumult."

Van Impe: These verses are a mini-treatise of what true friendship is all about, even though it may seem to be expressed in a context we might not expect. Here is a powerful king, Darius, who has signed a decree under considerable duress, now only to be made aware that his friend, counselor, and confidant, Daniel, has been "caught in the act" of praying to the God of the Hebrews. I've seen some Christians "scratch their eyebrows" as they bowed their heads and intoned a quick prayer in a restaurant, hoping that no one would see them praying before eating their food. Not Daniel. No secretive scratching of Jewish eyebrows for this saint of God.

Daniel knew the decree had been signed, and that his life was on the line. Yet, he continued to pray three times a day, as was the Jewish custom, and not just pray, but pray before an open window! He wanted everyone to know what he was doing and to whom he gave his allegiance as he bowed his head humbly toward Jerusalem, not toward, the headquarters of the Medes and the Persians.

Matthew 10:32-33 reminds us that,

"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."

It was true in Daniel's day, and it is true in ours. God doesn't put much stock in would-be believers who quietly "scratch their eyebrows" for fear of being caught in the act of praying.

Later, Jesus added,

²⁵ David Guzik Commentaries

"Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38).

While the first six chapters of Daniel are more historical and devotional, do not forget that the essential content of Daniel- seen more graphically in the last six chapters-is about the return of Messiah, the coming again of Christ, a moment in time when Jesus will remind us that if we have been ashamed of Him, He will be ashamed of us. It cuts both ways.

The crown hangs forever heavy on the head of any ruler, and this night the head of Darius was heavy indeed. He realized he'd been tricked by his own staff just so they could get their man. The problem was that their man was also Darius's man- but for completely different reasons. Darius loved Daniel. It didn't matter that Daniel was a Jew in exile, that he was well up in years, or that he continued to worship the God of Father Abraham. Daniel was his friend, and Darius loved him.

But now his friend was about to be thrown into a den of lions-and it was all his fault. Love-real love-seeks to overrule even the strictest, most binding decree. But, in this case, not even Darius's friendship with Daniel would be enough to save the day or the man. He had signed the proclamation. He had bowed to the pressure of putting himself in a position to be worshipped. Now, he would pay the consequence by losing his dear friend. That evening, the kingly head tossed and turned, unable to sleep. Darius wished he could undo his terrible decree, but it was a law that could not be altered. An eighty-five-year-old saint and friend was about to be devoured by hungry lions, and that's all Darius could think about throughout the long, painful night.²⁶

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.

Monarchy not absolute. Diodorus Siculus records a similar paradox with King Darius III. Also a key issue in Esther (1:19; 8:8).

“...whom you serve continually”: what a witness!

[continually] Daniel had literally served God continually for 80 to 90 years and had experienced many demonstrations of his union with God. The king had absolute faith in the ability of God and in Daniel's power with God to deliver him from the lions. Daniel now had the same opportunity of showing his faith in God as did the Jews of Daniel 3. The lions were no less terrible than the fiery furnace. God had power over both and His own chosen ones were delivered (Daniel 3:27; Daniel 6:22).

Then the king commanded—With a heavy heart he was obliged to warrant this murderous conspiracy. But when passing sentence his last words were affecting: “Thy

²⁶ Jack Van Impe, Notes on Book of Daniel

God, whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee.” He is thy God; thou servest him, not occasionally, but continually; therefore “he will deliver thee.” Daniel had now the same kind of opportunity of showing his fidelity to God, as his three Hebrew companions before. The lions were not less terrible than the fiery furnace.²⁷

Thy God . . . will deliver thee—The heathen believed in the interposition of the gods at times in favor of their worshippers. Darius recognized Daniel's God as a god, but not *the only true* God. He had heard of the deliverance of the three youths in Daniel 3:26-27 and hence augurs Daniel's deliverance. I am not my own master, and cannot deliver thee, however much I wish it. "Thy God will." Kings are the slaves of their flatterers. Men admire piety to God in others, however disregarding Him themselves.²⁸

Hearing their accusation against Daniel, whom they derisively belittled as one of the exiles from Judah (as Arioch and Belshazzar had done; cf. 2:25; 5:13), Darius was greatly distressed. Interestingly three kings in the Book of Daniel were distressed (cf. 2:1; 3:13; 5:6, 9).

Though Darius knew he was bound by the law he had made, he sought some way to rescue Daniel from the penalty the law incurred. But finding it impossible to do so, he gave the order that Daniel be thrown into the lions' den.

As he was thrown in—to what seemed to be certain death—the king said . . . May your God, whom you serve continually (cf. 6:20; 3:17), rescue you. Whether Darius knew about God's deliverance of Daniel's three friends from the fiery furnace in Nebuchadnezzar's day is not known. Yet Darius' statement expressed a desire that Daniel be spared. He certainly *wanted* him spared, for he obviously appreciated his administrative abilities (cf. 6:2-3). Perhaps he had been impressed with Daniel's confidence in God.²⁹

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.

[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] All this precaution served to prove to Darius and his lords that it was the power of God which delivered Daniel. There could be no trick played that would deliver Daniel from such a place. The same precaution was used in the case of Christ in the tomb, but this only served to prove the certainty of the resurrection (Matthew 27:63-66; Matthew 28:12-15).

²⁷ Adam Clarke's Commentary

²⁸ JFB Commentary

cf. *confer*, compare

²⁹ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (1:1348). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

A stone was brought—All this precaution served the purposes of the Divine Providence. There could be no trick nor collusion here; if Daniel be preserved, it must be by the power of the Supreme God. The same precaution was taken by the Jews, in the case of the burial of our blessed Lord; and this very thing has served as one of the strongest proofs of the certainty of his resurrection and their unmixed wickedness.³⁰

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.

Both rings would be needed to remove the stone. Parallels with Christ: “By law to die,” John 19:7. “Stone, sealed,” Mt 27:62-66. “Power of resurrection,” Phil 3:10. Also Acts 5:17-22; 12:5-10, 18.

Sleepless in the palace...

So that Daniel could not escape from the lions’ den, a stone was . . . placed over the mouth of the den, which was then sealed with a royal seal. Besides the side opening to the den (perhaps an underground cave) there may have been an opening at the top (cf. vv. 23-24). The seal, an impression made in clay by an image on a ring, would inform others that the stone was not to be tampered with in an effort to free Daniel. Reluctantly the king confined Daniel to the den.

The king was deeply agitated that he had been tricked by his administrators and satraps and that he was subject to his own laws. So he spent a sleepless night (cf. Xerxes’ sleepless night, Es. 6:1)³¹

Van Impe: Darius found himself between a rock and a hard place. He had to do the deed, and Daniel was brought to what all assumed would be his imminent death. But note what the king said in verse 16, "*Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee.*" What a vote of confidence for Daniel. Darius was rooting for his friend Daniel and was praying that his God would see him through the disastrous ordeal. But would it be enough to spare Daniel the pain and physical destruction of his body?

Many people have asked me, "Why did Darius use a lion's den when the fiery furnace was still in existence?" This is because the Babylonians-the former rulers-made it their practice to use a furnace as the primary vehicle to execute dissidents and enemies, as they'd attempted to do with the three Hebrew children. But now, under a new administration-the Medes and the Persians-this was not the appropriate means of execution. Here's the reason.

The Medes and the Persians gave their allegiance to a religion called Zoroastrianism, and they worshipped the fire god, Atar. For them to use fire to execute their enemies

³⁰ Adam Clarke’s Commentary
cf. *confer*, compare
vv. verses

³¹Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (1:1349). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

would be to desecrate their teachings, putting them on the verge of religious sacrilege. Their alternative to fire was a large den of ravenously hungry lions, not the cage of sleepy beasts we might see lying about when we visit the lion section of a local zoo. This lion's den was an immense square cavern carved out of the ground to about the size of a large home. In the middle of the cavern was a partition with doors.

From above, the workers could manipulate the doors to make them open and close. When they wanted to clean the den, they would jump down on the one side in safety because the lions were held back by the partition. When they wanted to throw raw meat- or their screaming enemies- to the hungry beasts, they would do just the opposite. Now, it was Daniel's turn to be lowered to the floor of the cavern below. The lions were hungry, pawing at the partition, ready to eat whatever would be placed on the other side of the door. We can only surmise what was in Daniel's mind as he waited for the panel to open. With the stone on the den now firmly in place-sealed by the king and then again by his officials-the drama was ready to unfold. Apparently Darius did not choose to see what he feared might be the inevitable. Instead, he returned to his palace where he spent yet another sleepless night. The usual dancing girls, animated orchestra, rich foods, and night of revelry were canceled. Instead, Darius fasted-praying, in his own way, for the God of the Hebrews to put His cloak of protection around his friend.³²

His sleep went from him: Undoubtedly, Daniel had a better night's rest than Darius. We can be sure that Daniel prayed in the lions' den, because it was simply his habit to pray. He did not need to *start praying* on this remarkable occasion because the *habit of prayer* was well ingrained in his life.

"When our lives are centred in God, we can ever afford to leave circumstances to the compulsion of the One in Whom we trust. The occasional is always affected by the habitual." (Morgan)

Perhaps Daniel prayed Psalm 22:21-22: *Save Me from the lion's mouth . . . I will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will praise You.*

"In any case he must have had a glorious night. What with the lions, and with angels all night to keep him company, he was spending the night-watches in grander style than Darius." (Spurgeon)³³

Daniel 6:19

Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions.

³² Jack Van Impe, Notes on the Book of Danile

³³ David Guzik Commentaries

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?

Daniel was not kept from his *hour of trial!*

Chuck Smith: The king was still hoping Daniel had survived when he went to the lion's den in the morning. He had probably heard the story of the three Hebrew men in the fiery furnace and believed that Daniel's God was a powerful God. He asked Daniel if his God was able to deliver him from the lions ([Jeremiah 32:27](#), [Romans 4:20-21](#), [Ephesians 3:20](#)).³⁴

Daniel 6:21

Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever.

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.

[**shut the lions' mouths**] This is referred to by Paul as being a result of faith (Hebrews 11:33).

(Heb 11:32-34) ³²*And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: ³³Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, ³⁴Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.*

because he believed—"Faith" is stated in Hebrews 11:33 to have been his actuating principle: a prelude to the Gospel. His belief was not with a view to a miraculous deliverance. He shut his eyes to the event, committing the keeping of his soul to God, in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator (1 Peter 4:19), sure of deliverance in a better life, if not in this.³⁵

³⁴ Chuck Smith, Notes on Daniel, Pastor/founder, Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, CA

³⁵ JFB Commentary

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.

[Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den] The king had power to save Daniel from being put in the den of lions and to change his law, but how could he save face by doing so? Now that Daniel was delivered by such a miracle, he could act boldly and decisively to free him and punish Daniel's enemies without being accused of changing his law through personal weakness and fallibility.

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.

Kindred also: Ammianus Marcellinus confirms this Persian custom (cf. Haman's similar fate, Est 7:9-10). Dathan, Abiram, Korah (Num 16).

Mosaic law more lenient (Deut 24:16).

Principle of *lex talionis*: False witnesses (Deut 19:16-21). Aramaic, and other early languages, have a singularly strong idiom for "slander": "eat the pieces of a man." (Found in the Assyrian and Amarna letters.)

When Daniel came out the next morning, he was the gainer: The king approved him, admired him, loved him. Everybody heard of it; what awe he must have inspired. The king was not regarded as half as much a "god" as Daniel. The counselors never troubled him again. The lions had taken care of them.

Such quick destruction of others put into the den only proved more fully that Daniel was miraculously delivered, and illustrated the power of faith in God (Hebrews 11:33).

accused—literally, "devoured the bones and flesh." It was just that they who had torn Daniel's character, and sought the tearing of his person, should be themselves given to be torn in pieces (Proverbs 11:8).

their children—Among the Persians, all the kindred were involved in the guilt of one culprit. The Mosaic law expressly forbade this (Deut. 24:16; 2 Kings 14:6).

or ever—that is, "before ever." The lions sparing Daniel could not have been because they were full, as they showed the keenness of their hunger on the accusers.³⁶

In accordance with Persian custom, this cruel punishment was transferred to those who had conspired against the king by provoking him into an unjust action (see also Esther

³⁶ JFB Commentary

7:9-10). The king's great anger resulted in the execution of the evil officials and their families. Evil deeds often backfire on those who plan cruelty.

(Esther 7:9-10) ⁹And Harbonah, one of the chamberlains, said before the king, Behold also, the gallows fifty cubits high, which Haman had made for Mordecai, who had spoken good for the king, standeth in the house of Haman. Then the king said, Hang him thereon. ¹⁰So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king's wrath pacified.

Daniel 6:25

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

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 stedfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end.

Sevenfold Decree of Darius (Dake)

1. All people must tremble before the God of Daniel and fear Him (Daniel 6:26).
2. He is the living God (Daniel 6:26).
3. He is steadfast forever (Daniel 6:26).
4. His kingdom is eternal (Daniel 6:26; Daniel 2:44-45; Daniel 7:13-14,18,27; Rev. 11:15; Rev. 22:4-5).
5. He delivers from danger (Daniel 6:27).
6. He works signs and wonders (Daniel 6:27).
7. He has delivered Daniel from lions (Daniel 6:27; Hebrews 11:33).

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.

Nebuchadnezzar had come to believe that Israel's God was real because of the faithfulness of Daniel and his friends. Here Darius was also convinced of God's power because Daniel was faithful and God rescued him. Although Daniel was captive in a strange land, his devotion to God was a testimony to powerful rulers. If you find yourself in new surroundings, take the opportunity to testify about God's power in your life. Be faithful to God so he can use you to make an impact on others.

Daniel 6:28

So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

[So this Daniel prospered] The second time the length of Daniel's prosperity in Babylon and Medo-Persia is mentioned (Daniel 6:28; Daniel 1:21).

[reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian] Two different reigns are referred to here, proving that this Cyrus was not the same as Darius of Daniel 5:31; Daniel 6:1; Daniel 9:1, the Artaxerxes of Neh. 2:1, or the Ahasuerus of Esther 1, as some scholars claim.

So this Daniel prospered—He had served five kings: Nebuchadnezzar, Evil-merodach, Belshazzar, Darius, and Cyrus. Few courtiers have had so long a reign, served so many masters without flattering any, been more successful in their management of public affairs, been so useful to the states where they were in office, or have been more owned of God, or have left such an example to posterity.

Where shall we find ministers like Samuel and Daniel? None so wise, so holy, so disinterested, so useful, have ever since appeared in the nations of the earth.³⁷

CHART: KINGS DANIEL SERVED

| <i>Name/ Empire</i> | <i>Story told in</i> | <i>Memorable event</i> |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Nebuchadnezzar/ Babylonia | Daniel 1-4 | Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego thrown into fiery furnace; Nebuchadnezzar went mad for 7 years |
| Belshazzar/ Babylonia | Daniel 5; Daniel 7-8 | Daniel read the writing on the wall, which signaled the end of the Babylonian empire |
| Darius/ Medo-Persia | Daniel 6; Daniel 9 | Daniel thrown into a lions' den |
| Cyrus/ Medo-Persia | Daniel 10-12 | The exiles return to their homeland in Judah and their capital city, Jerusalem |

³⁷ Adam Clarke's Commentary

