

I. Daniel in the Lion's Den (Daniel 6:1-28)

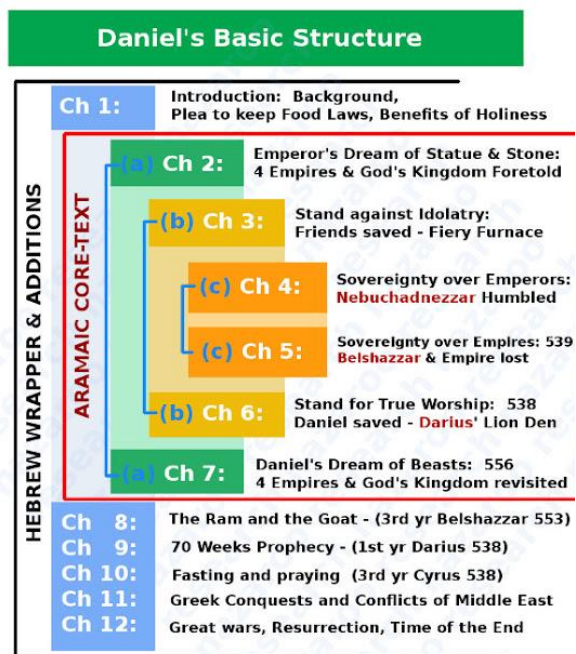
A. Introduction

Daniel 6 contains one of the most familiar and beloved stories in the Bible.

The events of this chapter would have been an encouragement to Israel in exile to remain faithful to God and trust that He is able to deliver them from their exile. This chapter would have reminded them that God rules in history and, even though nations come and go, God's redemptive plan continues to unfold through His people according to His schedule. As such, God's people transcend the rise and fall of nations.

The time the events of this chapter occur is that of the Medo-Persian conquest of Babylon in 539 BC and soon after, likely within the first or second year (539-537 BC). At that time, Daniel was about 80 years old and some of the Jewish exiles had returned to Israel under Zerubbabel.

Daniel lived through the rise and fall of the Babylonian empire and, in Daniel 6, a new regime was in power. Daniel served faithfully under the Babylonian kings and, in Daniel 6, he continued his service under a Medo-Persian ruler, Darius the Mede.



Synthetic Outline

B. Chiasm "Aramaic" (2-7)

1. Gentile History (2)
2. Protection (3)
3. Revelation to a gentile king (4)
3. Revelation to a gentile king (5)
2. Protection (6)
1. Gentile history (7)



B. Expositional Notes

1. The Appointment of Daniel (vs. 1-3)

Daniel 6:1-3 ~ It seemed good to Darius to appoint 120 satraps over the kingdom, that they would be in charge of the whole kingdom 2 and over them three commissioners (of whom Daniel was one), that these

satraps might be accountable to them, and that the king might not suffer loss. 3 Then this Daniel began distinguishing himself among the commissioners and satraps because he possessed an extraordinary spirit, and the king planned to appoint him over the entire kingdom.

- Who was “Darius the Mede” (5:31)?
- After the overthrow of Belshazzar, the first ruler mentioned is “Darius the Mede.”
- But history records that it was Cyrus the Great who ruled the Persians after the downfall of Babylon.
- Furthermore, history mentions no specific individual named “Darius the Mede.”
- There was no “Darius” on the throne until 522 BC, namely Darius the Son of Hystaspes, the third successor after King Cyrus, also known as Darius the Great.
- As a result, critics have long cast doubt on the historicity of Daniel on the basis that “Darius” must be a fictitious figure since no historical evidence outside the Bible exists for the reign of one named Darius the Mede.
- “Who was this ruler? Negative biblical scholarship of our day insists that he was a mere figment of imagination, concocted out of a conglomeration of historical errors in the mind of an unknown writer in the second century BC.”¹³⁹
- Numerous reasonable solutions to the problem of his identification have been offered:
 - a. Darius was another name for Cyrus the Persian himself since the term “Darius” could serve as a title and it was common for ancient rulers to use different names in various parts of their realms. Thus, “Darius the Mede” may have been a localized name for Cyrus the Persian (Walvoord, Baldwin, MacArthur).
 - It may have been a title of honor and significance, similar to “Pharaoh,” “king,” or “Caesar.”
 - The following reasons may substantiate this:
 - i. Cyrus was approximately 62 years old in 539 BC (cf. 5:31).
 - ii. Cyrus was known as “King of the Medes” (cf. 5:31), since he was half Persian (father) and half Median (mother).
 - iii. It is possible to translate 6:28 as “So this Daniel enjoyed success in the reign of Darius, even the reign of Cyrus the Persian.”
 - iv. The title “Darius” was used in inscriptions to refer to at least five Persians rulers.
 - b. Darius was another name for Gubaru, the man whom Cyrus made to be governor over all of Babylonia (Whitcomb, Wood, EBC).
 - This view is supported by the following reasons:

¹³⁹ Whitcomb 1985: 78.

- i. Gubaru is mentioned as governor of Babylon in the Nabonidus Chronicle, having been appointed to that position by Cyrus immediately after Babylon fell.
 - ii. Gubaru is mentioned as governor of Babylon in Babylonian contract tablets.
 - iii. The Nabonidus Chronicle also mentions that Gubaru appointed subgovernors in Babylon, something Darius the Mede is also described as doing in Dan 6:1-2.
 - iv. “[T]hat Cyrus was called ‘King of the Medes’ was fitting, because Media had been the main power in that part of the world for two centuries. When foreigners spoke of the Medes and Persians by a single term it was ‘the Medes’...Any leader of Medo-Persia could be referred to as ‘the Mede.’”¹⁴⁰
 - “Instead of Darius I of Persia, the book of Daniel is speaking of an entirely different person, a subordinate of Cyrus the Great, who ‘was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans’ (9:1, where the verb *homlak*, ‘was made king,’ is passive). This can be none other than *Gubaru*, the man whom Cyrus made to be governor over all of Babylonia, who is said in the ‘Nabonidus Chronicle’ to have ‘installed sub-governors in Babylon.’”¹⁴¹
 - Thus, Darius (aka Gubaru) was appointed by Cyrus to rule over the Babylonian portion of the vast Medo-Persian empire, suggesting that he ruled by appointment rather than by military conquest (cf. 5:31; 9:1).
- c. Darius was another name for Ugbaru, the general who captured Babylon for Cyrus but who died soon after conquering it (BKC).
- As noted in chapter five, it was the Persians who entered the city of Babylon on October 12, 539 BC, the night of Belshazzar’s feast, after diverting the Euphrates River and sneaking into the city on the riverbed.
 - The commander of the Persian forces was Ugbaru, the former governor of Gutium (Media).
 - Cyrus entered the conquered city on October 29, 539 BC and his general (Ugbaru) died 8 days after Cyrus’ arrival (Nov 6, 539 BC).
- d. Darius should be identified with Cambyses, Cyrus’ son, who ruled Persia from 530 – 522 BC (Boutflower).
- “Cambyses reigned in Babylon during his father’s administration and was even called ‘king of Babylon’ according to some ancient texts....A serious problem with this view is the age of Cambyses. Daniel records that Darius the Mede was sixty-two years old when he began to rule over Babylon (5:31), but

¹⁴⁰ Rosscup 2001: 59.

¹⁴¹ Whitcomb 1985: 80.

Cambyes would have been much younger than this in 539 BC. Cambyes also could not be considered of Median descent because both of his parents were Persians.”¹⁴²

- One of Darius’s first responsibilities was to reorganize the newly conquered kingdom of Babylon.
- To assist with the task of overseeing this reorganization, he appointed 120 satraps, or provincial administrators, to rule over his kingdom.
- “Because of the Persian Empire’s vast size (the largest empire the world had known), it was divided into many smaller territories, and the ‘satraps’ spoken of here evidently denote lesser officials who ruled over these smaller areas.”¹⁴³
- These 120 satraps were to report to one of three commissioners, one of whom was Daniel.
- Possibly 40 satraps were assigned to each commissioner.
- These three men would give oversight to the 120 officials, helping them govern and ensuring that they properly collected taxes without any embezzlement or corruption (vs. 2).
- This level of organization shows that Darius was a capable, powerful, intelligent man who was an effective leader and administrator.
- Daniel soon distinguished himself as a gifted leader (vs. 3), obviously due to his extensive experience under Nebuchadnezzar for nearly 40 years and because of God’s blessing upon his life.
- It soon became obvious to Darius that “he possessed an extraordinary spirit,” something frequently noted about Daniel in this book (cf. 4:8; 5:12, 14; 9:23).
- While that probably refers to his ability to interpret dreams and visions, it is also probably a reference to his character.
- He had a good reputation and he was known for his integrity which indicates something about his superior attitude and conduct in the discharge of his daily duties.
- He was a faithful, trustworthy, loyal, wise, and gifted leader with incredible administrative capability who could be trusted.
- It is important to remember that Daniel is around 80 years old at this point.
- He was taken captive in 605 BC at about age 15. Since then, approximately 65 years have passed (539 BC).
- Daniel was still living for the Lord, still faithful, still God’s man, still serving the Lord faithfully late in his life.
- His character, integrity, conviction, and faithfulness to the Lord was as strong in his later years as it was in his teens.

¹⁴² Miller 1994: 171-172.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 178.

- He didn't fade in the stretch. He didn't drift spiritually toward the end of his life.
- "Babylon had collapsed, and its king was dead. But Daniel continued into the new kingdom. In fact, the new administration of Medo-Persia highly honored him, having heard no doubt of his interpretation of the handwriting on the wall, which pronounced doom upon Belshazzar. Thus, even though the last kings of Babylon and most of the Babylonians (and probably many complacent Israelites in the exile as well) had ignored Daniel for many years, God, in His marvelous providence, saw to it that His faithful prophet received the honor that was due him."¹⁴⁴
- Darius obviously favored Daniel (cf. vs. 14, 16, 18, 19, 20).
- As a result of Daniel's "extraordinary spirit," Darius planned to make him responsible for the administration of the entire kingdom (vs. 3).
- This naturally led to a great deal of friction between Daniel and the other administrators and satraps.

2. The Plot Against Daniel (vs. 4-18)

Daniel 6:4-5 ~ Then the commissioners and satraps began trying to find a ground of accusation against Daniel in regard to government affairs; but they could find no ground of accusation or evidence of corruption, inasmuch as he was faithful, and no negligence or corruption was to be found in him. 5 Then these men said, "We will not find any ground of accusation against this Daniel unless we find it against him with regard to the law of his God."

- Likely driven by jealousy, envy, and resentment toward Daniel, the other two commissioners and the satraps plotted against him.
- They sought some basis on which to accuse Daniel in his administrative work.
- However, they found no corruption in his life or work, nothing that would substantiate any accusation against him.
- He was trustworthy and diligent in discharging his responsibilities.
- No "negligence" (referring to something he did not do) or "corruption" (referring to something he did do) was found in Daniel.
- In other words, they could not find anything he did that he should have done (sins of omission) or anything that he should not have done (sins of commission).
- No accusations thrown against him would stick (cf. 1 Tim 3:2 ~ above reproach); he was Teflon man.
- There were no scandals in his life, no skeletons in his closet, no way to indict him because he truly led an exemplary life.
- He lived above reproach whether someone was looking or not.

¹⁴⁴ Whitcomb 1985: 82.

- Despite the dirt-digging attempt that normally takes place whenever someone runs for public office, nothing could be found in Daniel's life.
- As a result, Daniel's detractors resorted to the only tactic they knew which was to attack him for his religious conviction (vs. 5).
- They turned to trying to find fault with him by attacking his total commitment to God.
- These men planned to entrap Daniel by making his strong commitment to God work against him.
- It is clear that they were interested in trapping him so he could be executed.
- Apparently, these men knew about Daniel's commitment to the Lord and they believed his degree of commitment to be great enough to keep him from changing even though faced with death.
- They aimed to show that his religious beliefs were in conflict with loyalty to the king.
- They counted on Daniel to remain true to his God at any cost.
- This was the same tactic used against Daniel's three friends in chapter 3: attack them on the basis of their total dedication to the Lord and make a law that makes that commitment to Him illegal.

Daniel 6:6-9 ~ Then these commissioners and satraps came by agreement to the king and spoke to him as follows: "King Darius, live forever! 7 All the commissioners of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the high officials and the governors have consulted together that the king should establish a statute and enforce an injunction that anyone who makes a petition to any god or man besides you, O king, for thirty days, shall be cast into the lions' den. 8 Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document so that it may not be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which may not be revoked." 9 Therefore King Darius signed the document, that is, the injunction.

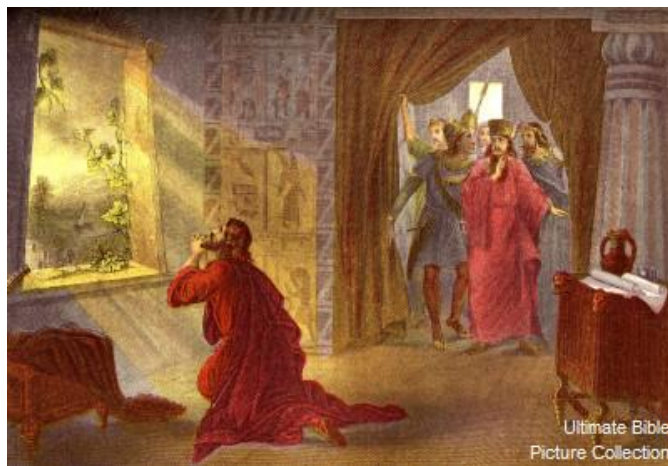
- The other two commissioners united in their opposition to Daniel.
- Daniel's enemies set him up by getting Darius to issue a decree that would make the king supreme and forbid anyone from praying to any god or man except him (vs. 7).
- They suggested to Darius that he be made the sole object of worship for 30 days.
- Ancient kings were frequently worshipped as gods so Daniel's colleagues appealed to Darius to make it law that people pray to him and him alone.
- They sought to institute a "Darius Appreciation Month" in order to eliminate Daniel.
- To implement this plot, they appealed to the king's vanity and flattered him.
- All prayer was to be addressed to the king in recognition of his power in the religious realm.
- The penalty for rebelling against this law was to be death by hungry lions (vs. 7).
- The Persians would never execute people by fire as Nebuchadnezzar had because they were fire worshippers who regarded fire as sacred.
- Because they were Zoroastrians who worshipped Atar the fire-god, it would have been wrong to punish by fire.
- They resorted to other methods, namely the den of hungry lions.

- So intent were they on Daniel's elimination, they urged the king to sign the edict into law at once (vs. 8).
 - They knew that once in place, the Medo-Persian law could not be changed because it was irrevocable (cf. vs. 12, 15).
 - They believed that to change a law once it had been given was to admit that it was a faulty law, which a king would never admit.
 - Likely this was done to prevent whimsical laws from being put in place.
 - The book of Esther refers to the irrevocable nature of Persian law when Mordecai wrote a law in the king's name to protect the Jewish people: Esther 8:8 ~ Now you write to the Jews as you see fit, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's signet ring; for a decree which is written in the name of the king and sealed with the king's signet ring may not be revoked.
 - It was the unchangeableness of the decree which constituted the basis of the plot devised by these men.
 - They knew Daniel would violate if he had to choose between obedience to his God and obedience to the Persian authorities.
 - Loyalty to his God would come first.
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- Darius agreed to go along with the injunction (vs. 9).
 - Perhaps he saw this as a way to unite his kingdom and remind his people that he was really the source of their every blessing.
 - Perhaps he saw this as a way to unite the Babylonian realm under the authority of the new Medo-Persian empire.
 - Perhaps he was feeling insecure about his popularity or his power.
 - Perhaps he saw this act as a pledge of loyalty to himself and a token of their desire to respect his authority.
 - Perhaps he was simply flattered by the adulation he would receive and got swept away in the emotion of the whole deal as his ego was stroked.
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- Little did he know the treacherous plot that was being hatched behind the scenes.
 - Possibly due to self-indulgent pride or inexperience, Darius failed to see the motive behind the outward façade of loyalty to him.
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- "The sixth chapter of Daniel clearly indicates that the decree was not the product of calm and calculating reflection on the part of Darius the Mede. On the contrary, it was foisted upon the unsuspecting monarch by a group of men who would never have conceived of such a fantastic proclamation had they not been overwhelmed by their jealousy of Daniel."¹⁴⁵

Daniel 6:10 ~ Now when Daniel knew that the document was signed, he entered his house (now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem); and he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 83.

- Somehow the decree signed into law by Darius became public knowledge and Daniel knew about it.
- But he was undeterred and just kept doing what he had been doing all along.
- No law was going to discourage him from his commitment to the Most High God.
- He didn't even try to hide his time of prayer which is evident from the fact that he continued to pray to the Lord in front of the open windows in his roof chamber.
- No mention is made of shutting or concealing the windows to hide his prayers to the Lord.
- The injunction had no effect upon his regular routine of prayer.
- Although Daniel could have followed the easy path and played it safe by stopping his regular prayers for 30 days, he didn't.
- He remained faithful and true to his convictions.
- He made no attempt to hide his devotion to or his dependence on God, even though it meant disobeying a governmental decree.
- He simply continued praying three times a day to the Lord as he had always done.
- He prayed "toward Jerusalem" to fulfill Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple that Israel would pray toward the city (1 Kings 8:41-49).
- On that great occasion, Solomon anticipated the day when God's people would have sinned so greatly against the Lord that they would be deported from the promised Land.
- In his prayer, Solomon asked that when that tragedy occurred and they turned back to the Lord, praying toward the temple, the Lord would hear their prayer and show them favor.
- It is in line with this request that Daniel faced Jerusalem.
- He did so "three times a day" because this was the pattern established by David (cf. Ps 55:16-17).



Daniel 6:11-13 ~ Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and supplication before his God. 12 Then they approached and spoke before the king about the king's injunction, "Did you not sign an injunction that any man who makes a petition to any god or man besides you, O king, for thirty days, is to be cast into the lions' den?" The king replied, "The statement is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which may not be revoked." 13 Then they answered and spoke before the king, "Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the injunction which you signed, but keeps making his petition three times a day."

- So great was Daniel's reputation for spiritual commitment that even his enemies knew that he would obey God rather than the king's edict.
- They "came by agreement" = literally "they rushed as a throng, a multitude."
- Knowing where and when Daniel prayed, his opponents rushed to his room at the appointed time as a charged mob and, as expected, found him praying.
- Having all the evidence they needed, they hurried to the palace to bring the evidence of Daniel's "disobedience" to the king.
- Instead of immediately accusing Daniel, they cunningly first asked the king whether he had signed a new law (vs. 12).
- This was done to remind him that his law could not be revoked and to blindside him with the accusations against Daniel.
- Having done so, they brought their accusations against Daniel before the king (vs. 13).
- They derisively belittled Daniel as "one of the exiles from Judah" (vs. 13) as Arioch (2:25) and Belshazzar (5:13) had done previously.
- In their minds, Daniel was a captive, a foreigner, and therefore one who didn't really belong there.
- They accused him of being hostile to the king: he "pays no attention to you, O king, or to the injunction which you signed" (vs. 13).

Daniel 6:14 ~ Then, as soon as the king heard this statement, he was deeply distressed and set his mind on delivering Daniel; and even until sunset he kept exerting himself to rescue him.

- Hearing their accusations against Daniel, Darius was greatly distressed.
- He came to see that the true purpose of the law was to entrap Daniel and he immediately knew that he had been the victim of a conspiracy.
- He was distressed by the fact that Daniel, whom he respected so highly, was the one being charged with disloyalty.
- And he was distressed by the fact that he had been so shortsighted as to sign a decree that would be used against Daniel.
- Darius knew Daniel to be a man of integrity who was trustworthy and loyal.

- “The mighty Darius the Mede was trapped in the snare of his own pride and folly – and he knew it.”¹⁴⁶
- He sought some way to rescue Daniel from the penalty the law demanded.
- By law the execution had to take place before sundown, so he tried until then to find any loophole whereby Daniel could be saved.
- But he was trapped by his own decree and his hands were tied.
- This was probably not the response from the king that Daniel’s enemies expected.
- They likely wanted him to be angry that anyone would dare disregard a decree signed by him.
- “Note what happens at verses 16 and following: The writer fixes all our attention on the king. The whole focus of vs. 16-20 is on the anguish of the king rather than the trauma of Daniel. The writer keeps us in suspense – along with Darius – about Daniel’s fate until verse 21. It is a tad strange: Daniel is thrown to the lions and we only hear about the king and *his* agonizing night.”¹⁴⁷

Daniel 6:15-17 ~ Then these men came by agreement to the king and said to the king, “Recognize, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no injunction or statute which the king establishes may be changed.” 16 Then the king gave orders, and Daniel was brought in and cast into the lions’ den. The king spoke and said to Daniel, “Your God whom you constantly serve will Himself deliver you.” 17 A stone was brought and laid over the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signet rings of his nobles, so that nothing would be changed in regard to Daniel.

- Daniel’s enemies wanted him eliminated and so they reiterated the irrevocability of the law (vs. 15).
- The king knew that he had been backed into a corner and that he was powerless to change the edict.
- The law he had signed into effect was binding and if he chose not to enforce it or if he issued a counterdict admitting that the first edict was wrong it would have resulted in an enormous loss of face.
- Such an act would have made people question the validity and reliability of all his future edicts.
- He had no choice; he had to follow through on the law he had enacted and chose to sacrifice Daniel rather than undermine his rule.
- He, thus, gave the orders to have Daniel cast into the lion’s den (vs. 16).
- The word for “den” is related to the word “dig” which carries the idea of a pit or cistern, implying the den was underground.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 86-87.

¹⁴⁷ Davis 2013: 89.

- This idea fits the description of Daniel being “cast into” (vs. 16) and “taken up out of” the den (vs. 23).
- It also fits the description that his enemies were “cast into” and eaten before they came to the “bottom of the den” (vs. 24).
- An opening was clearly at the top of the den through which Daniel was thrown in.
- In this form of Medo-Persian punishment, the lions were purposefully starved to be used as executioners.
- There were likely numerous lions in this den since, when Daniel’s enemies and families were cast into the den, they were eaten before even hitting the bottom (vs. 24).
- Darius believed that the God whom Daniel served would deliver him (vs. 16).
- It is unclear whether Darius knew about how God had delivered Daniel’s three friends from the fiery furnace.
- If so, it would explain his confidence that Daniel would be spared.
- Notably, Darius was impressed with the fact that Daniel “constantly served” the Lord.
- Daniel had a reputation as one who steadfastly, devoutly, persistently, and unwaveringly served the Lord.
- Darius recognized that there was something different about Daniel.
- “These remarkable words from the lips of Darius the Mede...provide a measurement of the impact of Daniel’s testimony for his God in the midst of a pagan court.”¹⁴⁸
- To make sure that Daniel could not escape, a stone was placed over the den and sealed to inform others that it was not to be tampered with (vs. 17).

Daniel 6:18 ~ Then the king went off to his palace and spent the night fasting, and no entertainment was brought before him; and his sleep fled from him.

- The king was unable to sleep that night because he was so agitated over the fate of Daniel.
- “no entertainment was brought before him” = literally “no diversions;” no food, no wine, no women, no dancing, no music was brought to the king.
- Here “we run into the irony that not only did the king fast (18) but so did the lions (22).”¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ Whitcomb 1985: 87.

¹⁴⁹ Davis 2013: 90.



3. The Deliverance of Daniel (vs. 19-23)

Daniel 6:19-23 ~ Then the king arose at dawn, at the break of day, and went in haste to the lions' den. 20 When he had come near the den to Daniel, he cried out with a troubled voice. The king spoke and said to Daniel, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you constantly serve, been able to deliver you from the lions?" 21 Then Daniel spoke to the king, "O king, live forever! 22 My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths and they have not harmed me, inasmuch as I was found innocent before Him; and also toward you, O king, I have committed no crime." 23 Then the king was very pleased and gave orders for Daniel to be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den and no injury whatever was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.

- The king had been up all night, pacing the floor, distraught, and beside himself over the fate of Daniel (vs. 19).
- He arose "at dawn" = literally "at the brightness of the dawning" = at first light, as soon as the sun was visible.
- Wasting no time, he "went in haste."
- Darius hoped against hope that Daniel might have been rescued by the "living God" (vs. 20).
- Daniel's response indicated that a tremendous miracle had taken place (vs. 21-22).
- Notably, these are the only words spoken by Daniel in the entire narrative.
- God's angel shut all the lion's mouths...an incredible display of power over the natural realm
- Although the text doesn't say, it is possible that the angel who delivered Daniel was the angel of the Lord, the preincarnate Christ, the same as the fourth person in the fiery furnace.
- Discovering that Daniel was still alive, Darius was overjoyed and had him lifted from the den (vs. 23).

- There was not a scratch on him just as the fire had no effect on Daniel's friends (cf. Dan 3:27).



4. The Vindication of Daniel (vs. 24)

Daniel 6:24 ~ The king then gave orders, and they brought those men who had maliciously accused Daniel, and they cast them, their children and their wives into the lions' den; and they had not reached the bottom of the den before the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.

- “maliciously accused” = literally “who had eaten his pieces,” referring to hateful, false accusations.
- Daniel's enemies' trap cost them their lives and their family's lives.
- Their attempt to exterminate Daniel boomeranged much as Haman's did in Esther 7:9-10.
- “Execution of the men's families with them seems cruel. But observe the following: 1) Such was the thinking in ancient times in certain cases, and even the Jews did this in Joshua 7 and Esther 9:10 (Jews demanded that Ahasuerus of Persia have it done to the ten sons of Haman); 2) It was a more intense judgment on a man, designed to hurt him even more, for even his chance for a posterity was blotted out!; 3) Perhaps this would prevent children growing up and seeking to avenge their fathers' deaths; 4) A further possibility is that children were thought of as being in complicity with the men; and 5) This would stand as a far more severe warning to others lest they create trouble for the administration.”¹⁵⁰

¹⁵⁰ Rosscup 2001: 63.

- “In Israel wives and children would have been spared the punishment of the head of the household (Deut. 24:16; unless, of course, they were accomplices, cf. Josh. 7:24-25). But this was Persia, and all of them were given to the lions.”¹⁵¹

5. The Decree of Darius (vs. 25-28)

Daniel 6:25-28 ~ Then Darius the king wrote to all the peoples, nations and men of every language who were living in all the land: “May your peace abound! 26 “I make a decree that in all the dominion of my kingdom men are to fear and tremble before the God of Daniel; For He is the living God and enduring forever, And His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed, And His dominion will be forever. 27 He delivers and rescues and performs signs and wonders In heaven and on earth, Who has also delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.” 28 So this Daniel enjoyed success in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

- The one who was revered for 30 days as a god made the proclamation that all those in his kingdom must worship and serve Daniel’s God.
- The miraculous deliverance of Daniel convinced him that such a God is to be worshipped and revered.
- Darius came to the same conclusion that Nebuchadnezzar did (cf. 4:1-3, 34-37).
- His decree substantiates the theme of God’s sovereignty repeated throughout the book of Daniel.
- “Verses 25-27 re-establish a pattern in the Daniel narratives. We missed this kind of ending in chapter 5...But we recall the ‘confessions’ or proclamations of the Nebuchadnezzar chapters (2:47; 3:28-29; 4:34-37); now with Darius we meet one of these again (6:25-27). All of these come at the end of their respective narratives and have a climactic air about them. Their recurrence and placement imply the weight they pack.”¹⁵²

C. Theological Notes

1. The Godly Will Always Face Opposition and Persecution from the World

- It is a biblical reality that a life of integrity, lived for the glory of God, will always have its detractors.
- A life lived in loyalty to Him will always arouse the hatred of the masses.
- A righteous life is always an affront to the world because it serves as an indictment on their sinful, depraved lifestyle.
- Ever since Cain killed Abel, there has been hostility between God’s people and those around them.
- The truth is that believers live in a hostile world and they need to be prepared for that reality.

¹⁵¹ Davis 2013: 91.

¹⁵² Ibid., 91.

- Believers should not be surprised when they are hated by the world and when the world turns on them.
 - Jesus promised this would happen (John 15:18-25; Matt 5:10-12).
 - “So Daniel 6 admonishes God’s people: Don’t think that Daniel’s is an exceptional situation; it is rather an exemplary one; this is the way it is with God’s servants in this world.”¹⁵³
2. Believers Should not be Surprised if Laws are Made Specifically Targeting Them in an Attempt to Silence Them
- This has always been the case and will always be true until Christ returns.
 - It should be no surprise when bills like SB1146 (CA) and others attacking a Christian view of marriage are proposed.
3. Believers Must Always Obey God Rather Than Men
- Acts 4:19 and 5:29 indicate that when the government requires believers to act contrary to God’s Word, God must be obeyed above the government.
 - “Daniel deliberately defied a law of the land. How can this action be reconciled with the biblical admonition to obey civil authorities (e.g., Rom 13:1-2)? Scripture does indeed instruct believers to obey the government, but the Bible also teaches that there is a higher law – the law of God... There may be times when the law of the land and the law of God come into conflict.”¹⁵⁴
4. Daniel Models the Kind of Prayer that Honors the Lord
- His prayer manifests certain characteristics which believers should emulate (vs. 10):
 - Defiant (“when he knew the document was signed”) – Despite the injunction against praying to the Lord, Daniel did anyway, knowing that the worship of God was more important than his own safety.
 - Continual (“he continued kneeling...three times a day...as he had been doing previously”) – “Daniel’s ongoing practice of prayer does not seem to have been a difficult decision for him (Veldkamp). We read of no inner turmoil or anguish. Indeed, his enemies didn’t expect him to flinch at all about continuing his usual practice (5)! But that’s just it, isn’t it? It was his *usual* practice and sometimes that can grease the gears for a crisis... So we see with Daniel: consistency assists courage, and discipline feeds faithfulness. In the crisis Daniel’s habit set him free to be faithful.”¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ Ibid., 85.

¹⁵⁴ Miller 1994: 182-183.

¹⁵⁵ Davis 2013: 87-88.

- Reverent (“kneeling on his knees”) – Such posture is indicative of an attitude of submission and humility. “Kneeling in prayer is not a matter of indifference – it reminds you of your *true position*.”¹⁵⁶
- Balanced (“praying and giving thanks”) – Prayer should reflect a healthy blend of asking God and thanking God.

5. Although God Can Prevent Believers from Going Through Trials, He Often Allows Them

- In Daniel’s case, God’s purpose was not to save Daniel FROM the trials but to save Daniel THROUGH the trials (cf. the similar incident in chapter three).
- Often God has a greater purpose in allowing the trial than in preventing it.
- Often He intends to prove His faithfulness in the midst of the trial rather than keeping believers from the trial.
- God is not committed to making believer’s lives comfortable; rather, He is committed to their sanctification and spiritual growth which often occurs in times of hardship.

6. God Always Blesses Those Who Trust in Him

- God is able to preserve and protect all those who trust in Him (cf. Jer 17:5-8).
- He is trustworthy, dependable, and faithful to His people.
- No matter the troubles and trials the believer encounters in this life, God is a rock who can be trusted.

7. God Overrides Nature, Including Animals, to Accomplish His Purposes

- There are numerous examples of this in Scripture:
 - God directed animals to Noah prior to the flood.
 - God used a donkey to speak to Balaam (Num 22:22-33).
 - God caused a lion to slay an old prophet who disobeyed the Lord (1 Kings 13:24).
 - God caused bears to come when Elisha summoned them to slay the young men who disrespected him (2 Kings 2:23-24).
 - Christ caused a fish to come to Peter to provide money to pay the Roman tax (Matt 17:27).
 - Christ caused a school of fish to come into the nets (John 21:4-6).
 - In the Millennial kingdom, the Lord will subdue the destructive nature of animals such that “the wolf will dwell with the lamb” and “the lion will eat straw like the ox” (Is 11:6-7).

8. Was Darius Converted?

- Some suggest that verses 16 and 20 may suggest that he was a believer before Daniel’s deliverance.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 88.

- And they believe that verses 26-27 corroborate that.
- While that may be a possibility, the nature of any conversion is unclear.

D. Preaching Helps

- Todd's Outline

The Distrust (vs. 1-5)
The Decree (vs. 6-9)
The "Disobedience" (vs. 10-13)
The Distress (vs. 14-15)
The Den (vs. 16-18)
The Deliverance (vs. 19-24)
The Declaration (vs. 25-27)