

Daniel Chapter 6

Pastor Mike Wells Study Notes

Chapter 6 Overview - Daniel 6 deals with the famous Daniel in the lion's den episode. It is an event that clearly shows Daniel's remarkable spiritual character. He was a man of not only great righteousness and obedience, but also great faith. (Note - They usually go together.)

Daniel 6 : 1 - *It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom.*

- Babylon was now a part of the Media Persian Empire.
- The new ruler over Babylon was a man by the name of Darius..
- He reorganized the new and expanded empire into 127 provinces each having a prince as ruler.

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.*

- Over all of these provinces were 3 'presidents' and Daniel was the chief of them.
- Apparently, the respective princes over the 127 satrapies answered to one of the three presidents and they in turn answered to Daniel who answered to Darius.
- They certainly had an orderly chain of command.

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.*

- Though he was already a powerful man, the king was about to turn over all the day to day operation of the kingdom to Daniel because there was an 'excellent' spirit in him.
- Daniel was promoted in part because of his attitude and 'spirit.'
- Darius apparently had quickly come to trust Daniel.
- He obviously had heard of his loyal service to Nebuchadnezzar, his confrontation of Belshazzar, and his contact with God.

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.*

- Jealousy is a powerful and destructive sin.
- These other politicians sought for a way to destroy Daniel.
- Yet, because of the integrity, righteousness, honesty, and faithfulness of Daniel, his subordinates could find no fault.
- They could pin nothing on Daniel.
- They could find no skeletons in his closet even though they tried to.

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.*

- Daniel's enemies could find no fault in him, "*for as much as he was faithful.*"

- Do, they tried to trap Daniel through his faithfulness to his God.
- They knew they would have to concoct a scheme where they could accuse him for faithfulness to Jehovah God.

Daniel 6 : 6 - *Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever.*

- These jealous, scheming princes went to see Darius.

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.*

- Daniel's jealous enemies connived and came up with a scheme in which they would have the king sign a decree of which no one could pray to anyone but the king for thirty days.
- If this was violated they would be cast into the den of lions.
- Daniel's foes no doubt knew they could snare Daniel with this one.
- They also figured the king's ego would cause him to agree to this as well.

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.*

- The king was flattered by their scheme and he signed into law the decree.
- Historians tell us that in Media Persia, once a decree had been signed into law, even the king could not alter it or change it.

Daniel 6 : 9 - *Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree.*

- The trap had been set.
- Now all they had to do was to wait for Daniel to pray to his God.
- They knew they had him.

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.*

- In all likelihood, Daniel knew that this was coming.
- Rather than protest or make a scene about it, he left it with the Lord.
- Notice Daniel's reactions.
- First - he went home and opened the windows so there was no secret about what he was doing.
- Second, He kneeled (again very visibly) and prayed three times a day and gave thanks before his God.
- It was already Daniel's practice to go to prayer at least three times a day and he continued that practice. See Psalm 55:17.
- Daniel carefully followed the pattern on Scripture for his life. (Psalms had already long been written and Daniel no doubt knew it well)
- Daniel was in fact doing exactly what God had commanded Israel to do in captivity. (See II Chronicles 6:38-39)

- Hundreds of years earlier, God had commanded Israel to pray towards Jerusalem from the land of their captivity.
- Daniel did exactly as God had commanded him.
- Daniel again was showing great obedience to God.

Daniel 6 : 11 - *Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God.*

- Daniel no doubt knew that he was the target of this new ‘law.’
- And he knew he they were going to come get him.
- Yet, still he prayed anyway!!
- He prayed toward Jerusalem and asked God for help.

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.*

- They immediately reported Daniel’s violation of the law and to the king.
- Note: When there is a conflict between human law and divine law, God’s law takes precedence.
- Daniel was about to pay the consequences for his righteousness.
- There are at times prices that we have to pay for doing what is right.
- We need to take up our cross daily – Jesus said.

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’s accusers made sure King Darius knew that Daniel continued to pray three times a day to Jehovah God and not to the king.
- They also made sure that the king remembered that Daniel was a Jew and as such ignored the king’s ordinance.

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.*

- Darius realized what had been done and how he had been made an unknowing and unwilling part of the plot of Daniel’s enemies.
- He was disgusted with himself.
- He also set in his heart to find a way to deliver Daniel.
- He struggled all that day with the laws of the land trying to find a way to free Daniel.

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.*

- Regardless of his best efforts, Darius had painted himself into a legal corner.

- Daniel’s accusers reminded the king that he could not change the law once enacted.
- The ‘constitution’ of the Medes and Persians was that no decree ratified by the king could be altered.
- Darius was stuck.
- He had no recourse but to execute sentence against Daniel.

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.*

- The sentence was executed against Daniel and he was cast into the den of lions.
- However, take note of what Darius said to Daniel as he was about to be face his execution. “*Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee.*”
- Darius knew that Daniel was so faithful in his devotion to Jehovah that God certainly would deliver him.
- Notice also the testimony which Daniel had: even the King had noticed that he served God continually.
- What a testimony!!

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.*

- The greater story of the den of lions seems to indicate that the den was a pit or ‘basement’ in which the lions were confined.
- Many believe that the lions were kept underfed and the den of lions was a prepared place for executing prisoners.
- The mouth of the den was closed with a great stone.

Daniel 6 : 18 - *Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of musick brought before him: and his sleep went from him.*

- Darius obviously was distraught.
- He went home and spent the night fasting.
- The thought is that did not allow himself the pleasure of his concubines.
- He sent his royal musicians home and laid awake all night.
- He was distressed for what he had done to Daniel and fretted that he could not save him.

Daniel 6 : 19 - *Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions.*

- At the crack of dawn, Darius got up and rushed over to the den of lions.

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?*

- Upon arriving at the den, Darius called out with a sorrowful voice to Daniel.
- Once again, he addressed Daniel as “*the servant of the living God.*”

- Though not a believer in Jehovah altogether, Darius clearly had been influenced by the testimony of Daniel.
- He then asked if Daniel's God— whom he served continually—was able to deliver him from the lions.
- To us as God's people, the answer should be obvious.
- Darius hoped that the God of Israel was able to deliver his trusted subordinate Daniel.
- God was not going to disappoint!!

Daniel 6 : 21 - *Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever.*

- The excellent spirit in Daniel remained.
- Though having been sentenced to an otherwise sure death, Daniel still proclaimed homage to his earthly king.

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.*

- Daniel had the happy report that God had sent an angel who had shut the lion's mouths.
- They did not hurt Daniel.
- Someone once said that the lions could not eat Daniel because he was all backbone.
- I like that!!
- Daniel also pled his case of being innocent of any genuine wrong against the king.
- He had been persecuted for righteousness' sake. (See Matthew 5:10-12)
- God had supernaturally delivered Daniel. (See Psalms 34:7-10 especially 34:10)
- Notice that Daniel not only obeyed God, but he also trusted him

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.*

- The king was relieved and glad.
- He then ordered Daniel taken up out of the den of lions.
- Upon bring him out of the den, they found that he had not been injured in anyway.
- The reason was apparent: he had trusted his God.

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.*

- The king had the plotters arrested and cast them along with their families into the lion's den.
- As the plotters and their families were cast therein, the lions had caught them, broke their bones in their powerful jaws, and tore them apart
- Those that had laid a trap for Daniel, were now caught in it themselves. (See Proverbs 26:27)

Daniel 6 : 25-26 - Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. 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.

- Darius was so impressed by the testimony of Daniel and the God of Daniel that he wrote a decree to every region and nationality of his empire.
- Darius ordered that throughout his empire, all men were ordered to fear Jehovah, the God of Daniel.
- Though a pagan gentile king, Darius quickly perceived that the God of Israel was the true, living God and endured forever.
- Furthermore, he said that the kingdom of God will never be destroyed and He will rule forever and ever.
- That is a remarkable proclamation from a gentile king and 100% accurate also.

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.

- Darius continued to praise God, noting that He delivers and rescues his people.
- He worked great miracles in heaven and in the earth.
- Most recently and notably, God had delivered Daniel from the otherwise certain death of the lion's den.
- Again, this a remarkable testimony of a man who had until just recently been an idolater and a pagan.
- But the testimony and witness of Daniel had convinced Darius of the truth of God.

Daniel 6 : 28 - So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

- Daniel had the remarkable experience to be a powerful testimony to Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Darius—the most powerful men in the world of that era.
- With perhaps the exception of Belshazzar, the others clearly became believers at least to some degree in the God of Israel.
- Accordingly, God blessed Daniel.
- His ministry continued not only in the days of Darius, but also his co-regent Cyrus who succeeded him when he died.
- Some historians says that Cyrus was in fact the son-in-law of Darius.
- Others believe Cyrus and Darius to be one and the same person.
- Either way, God used Daniel to influence the most powerful rulers of his day.
- He had a bold testimony while maintaining an excellent spirit.
- Though a mortal man, there is no record of sin or failing in Daniel.
- He surely did sin, for all have.
- Yet, his testimony surely was that of a righteous man.
- Even Ezekiel, a contemporary, bore witness to the righteousness of Daniel. (Ezekiel 14:14, 20)