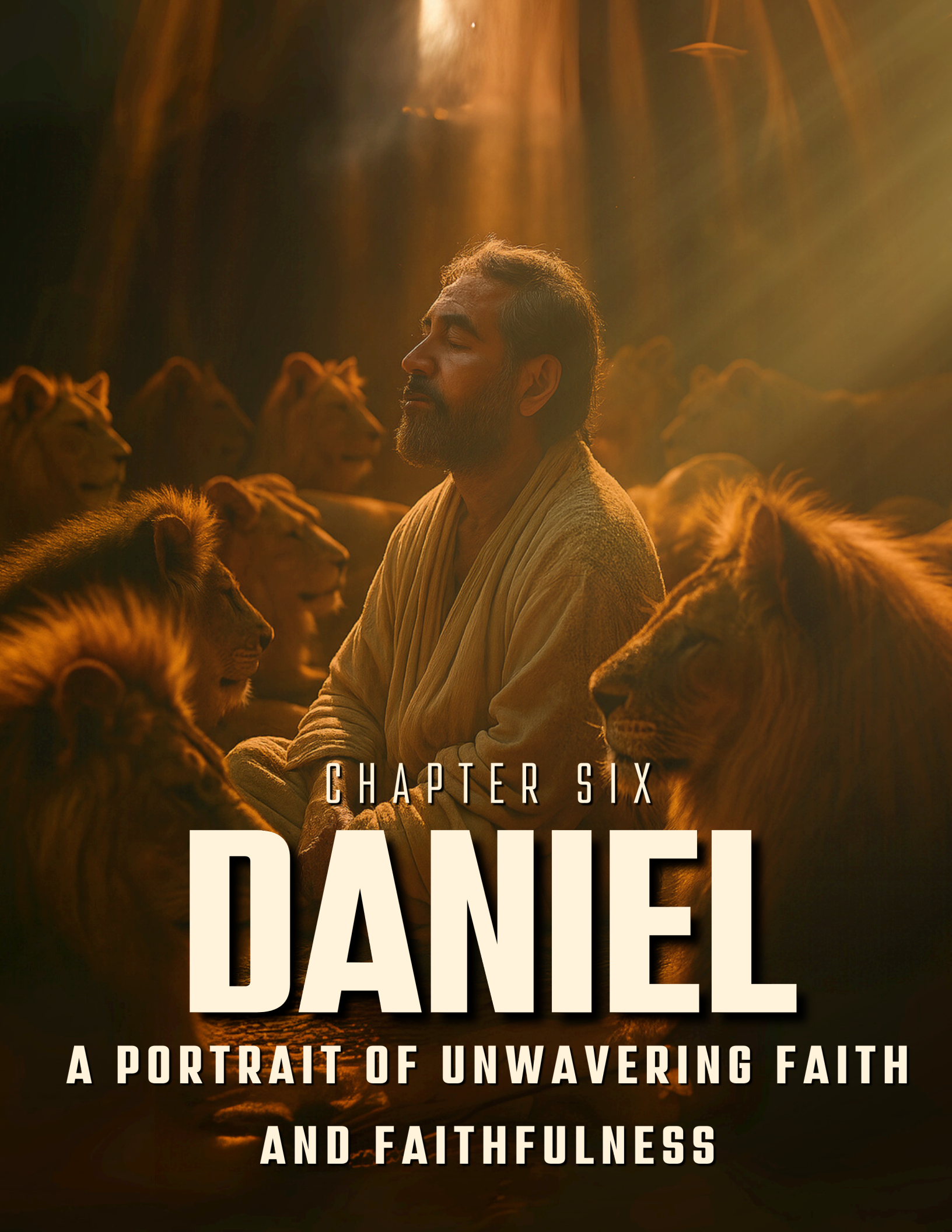




CHAPTER SIX

DANIEL

A PORTRAIT OF UNWAVERING FAITH
AND FAITHFULNESS

The Diligent Service of Daniel (vv. 1-3)



Daniel 6:1-3

1 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.

➡➡ The question immediately arises, WHO is Darius the Mede?

It's disappointing, but not surprising, that liberal scholars who want nothing more than to discredit the book of Daniel, point to Darius the Mede to do so.

There is a lot of debate about this, so let me just summarize some of the most basic positions.

First, liberal scholars say that the book of Daniel must be in error since no evidence for a ruler by the name of "Darius the Mede" has ever been found _____ of God's Word—therefore, they say, he must have been a fabrication by the author.

But don't forget that the liberal scholars said the same thing about _____ (ch. 5)—until archeology uncovered his name.

A second possible solution is that Darius the Mede may be referring to a man also called "Gubaru," who served as governor of Babylon under Cyrus the Great.

A third suggested solution is that Darius the Mede is simply another name or designation for Cyrus the Great, who was king over the Medo-Persian Empire.

However, I believe the precise language used in Daniel 6:28, in which _____ their names are used, would indicate otherwise.



The Nabonidus Chronicle, mentioning King Belshazzar's reign



Daniel 6:28

28 So this Daniel enjoyed success in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

The **fourth** position, and the one that I believe seems the most likely, is that Darius the Mede only ruled from 538-536 BC, concurrently with Cyrus the Persian, leading some scholars to believe that he held a position like _____ over the city of Babylon, under the kingdom-wide authority of King Cyrus.

That would fit well with the language used in Daniel 6:28.

BUT, having said all of that, I believe that we must conclude that until more information becomes available, it would be impossible to be dogmatic one way or another; but we **know** that there are no _____ in the historical details God gives us.

Sooner or later, archaeology discovers what God has already _____.

QUOTE:

“It is a sad reflection on the biblical scholarship of the last century that in matters such as these the Bible has been treated as guilty until proven innocent. This attitude stands in marked contrast to the credibility given to other non-biblical texts of the same period. We need constantly to remind ourselves that no one comes to Scripture with a mind free from a faith commitment; one will either have faith in Scripture as God’s Word or one’s attitude will be one of unbelief, rejecting Scripture’s testimony to its own reliability. God’s Word, like God’s kingdom, will remain when all the theories that propose its inaccuracy have crumbled into dust. One is reminded of how a nineteenth-century book that attacked the reliability of Scripture was later pulped and the recycled paper used to print Bibles” (Ferguson)

I gladly approach this passage as a _____ story about a real man, who faced a real life-and-death situation, with real lions, with real(ly) sharp teeth, SO THAT the nations would know that the God of Daniel *“is the living God, and enduring forever, and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed, and His dominion will be forever”* (Daniel 6:26b).

In this passage we’re going to see GOD glorify Himself among the nations by rescuing one of His children in a very dramatic, miraculous way.

We are also going to see that there are times when God’s people have to exercise _____ disobedience.

There are times when Christians simply have to say “_____” to their governing authorities.

Peter and the Apostles did so in Acts 5:29 when they said, *“We must obey God rather than men.”*

For the true disciple of Jesus Christ, _____ and loyalty belongs first and foremost to King Jesus.

Always!



Daniel 6:1

1 It seemed good to Darius to appoint 120 satraps over the kingdom, that they would be in charge of the whole kingdom,

In the last chapter, the queen mother gave an astonishing review of Daniel to her son Belshazzar.



Daniel 5:11

11 “There is a man in your kingdom in whom is a spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of your father, illumination, insight and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods were found in him.”

By the end of the chapter he had been promoted to the number _____ guy in the kingdom. But that promotion didn’t last very long, since Babylon fell to the Medes and the Persians that very night.

However, it appears that Darius shared the queen mother’s opinion about Daniel and immediately appointed him to a position of prominence within this new empire.

It was obviously a wise decision on Darius’ part. Normally, holding a high-ranking position in a kingdom that has just been conquered would have been a death sentence.

But considering Daniel’s recent rebuke of King Belshazzar, his exceptional _____, and his long tenure under Nebuchadnezzar, it made perfect sense for Darius to keep him around.

Upon conquering Babylon, Darius set up his own government which included “120 satraps.”

QUOTE:

“A ‘satrap’ was a Persian official who could rule over a large province or over a small group of people” (Whitcomb)

Then in verse 2 we are told that Darius set _____ individuals (Daniel was one of them) over the 120 “satraps” or administrators, so “that the king might not suffer loss” (v. 2b).

Apparently, government corruption isn’t only a modern phenomenon.

Daniel and his two co-workers were to act as a kind of checks-and-balances system for the 120 satraps.

So, Daniel was one of the _____ figures in the government of the Medes and the Persians.

And as verse 3 begins, we read that Daniel began to stand out even among his contemporaries.



Daniel 6:3

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.

→→ What was the key to Daniel’s success?

In chapter 1, we read that God blessed Daniel and his three friends by giving them: “*knowledge and intelligence in every branch of literature and wisdom*” (v. 17).

The consistent testimony throughout these early chapters is that Daniel possessed “an _____ spirit.”

In Daniel 4:8, Nebuchadnezzar saw in Daniel “*a spirit of the holy gods.*”

Being a hardcore polytheist at the time, that is how he explained what he saw in Daniel.

But we know that what Nebuchadnezzar saw was the Spirit of the Living God—that is, the Holy Spirit—working in and through Daniel.

Nebuchadnezzar repeats the same thing about Daniel in 4:18.

The queen mother repeats it again in 5:12.

And Belshazzar will join in the chorus in chapter 5:14.

Daniel’s _____ and rise to power flowed from his relationship and walk with the living God.

He possessed the spiritual wisdom that comes down from above (James 3:17).

And he did exactly what God told Joshua to do.



Joshua 1:8

8 This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

It’s at this point that the plot thickens—when it became known that the king was planning to _____ Daniel to the number two guy in the kingdom.

This would make Daniel head over the three commissioners, possibly making him the only one with direct _____ to the king.

And this was NOT good news for those other two administrators, who desired power and prominence above all else.

Their jealousy drove them to find a way—ANY way—to get rid of Daniel.

→→ But how?

The king loved him.

The Ugly Face of Jealousy (vv. 4-5)



Daniel 6:4-5

4 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."

Daniel was more than _____ years old at this time, and was most likely was working with men much younger than himself, but they were still no match for this godly, old man.

He showed himself to be much wiser and more competent than any of them.

God hates the sin of jealousy. It's a sin of pure evil, because it not only wishes to take what belongs to someone else, but it desires to destroy the other _____ as well.



Mark 7:20-23

20 And He was saying, "That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man.

21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries,

22 deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness.

23 All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man."

And James says that such sinful attitudes are earthly, unspiritual, and even _____.



James 3:14-16

*14 But if you have **bitter jealousy** and **selfish ambition** in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth.*

*15 This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is **earthly, natural, demonic**.*

16 For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.

Those jealous commissioners embarked on a plan not only to steal Daniel's position, but to destroy him in the process.

Initially they thought that Daniel was corrupt somewhere, just like everyone else, and so they tried to find some dirt on him.

But wherever they looked, they came up empty-handed.

They couldn't find anything that they could _____ pin on Daniel. He was not only free of corruption on every level, but he did his work with excellence.

Daniel was, as the New Testament puts it, "*above reproach*."

This is the same qualification that Paul says must be true of all deacons and elders in the Church (1 Tim. 3; Tit. 1).

Being above reproach means that no one can legitimately point a finger at any unconfessed and unrepented-of sin in a person's life. That is not the same as being _____.

Being "*above reproach*" means that even when a person does sin, he is quick to humble himself, repent, turn away from that sin, and seek forgiveness from all those involved.

This qualification is a mark of _____ or Christlikeness that is supposed to be true of ALL believers.

Even those never called to be a deacon or an elder should live in such a way that they are above reproach.

And Daniel was just such a man.

SO, after not finding any dirt on Daniel, those men came up with a terribly brilliant plan.



Daniel 6:5

*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**."*

Those godless men rightly concluded that if they couldn't attack the man for his faults, then they would have to take him out using his _____.

They knew Daniel was loyal to Darius; but they also knew that as a godly Jew he was even more loyal to his God. God would always come _____, if push ever came to shove.

And so these men schemed. They conspired. They plotted and planned. And they eventually concocted a brilliantly evil plan.

QUOTE:

*"Then they got an idea. An awful idea.
[The governors and satraps] had a wonderful, awful idea." (Tsarfati)*

The Terribly Brilliant Plan of the Officials (vv. 6-9)



Daniel 6:6-9

6 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.

Beloved, Satan has been targeting God’s people ever since _____ chapter 3.

And Genesis 3:15 predicted that there would be continual hostility between God’s people and Satan’s people. We see this play out time and time again, throughout both the Old and New Testaments.

Ungodly men will persecute and entrap those who are godly. Jesus too warned us of this.



Matthew 5:11-12

11 “Blessed are you when people **insult** you and **persecute** you, and **falsely say all kinds of evil** against you because of Me

12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

The Apostle _____ tells us in 2 Timothy chapter 3 that “...all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (v. 12).

And _____, with a possible allusion to the book of Daniel, wrote the following:



1 Peter 4:12-14

12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you;

13 but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.

14 If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.

Those conspirators came together in a united front to the king, and began their address with the usual flattery, “King Darius, live forever!”

Of course, there is one King Who will live forever, BUT His name is not Darius!

The men then proceeded to share their idea to honor the king, shamelessly _____ in the process.



Daniel 6:7

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.

The two commissioners and a group of unnamed satraps came to the king with every intent of coercing him into signing this new legislation into law.

The proposed decree stated that no one would be allowed to make a petition or prayer to anyone—god or man—except to Darius, for a period of thirty days.

Essentially, Darius would be promoted to _____ for a month. Those government officials played on the king's ego. Ancient kings were often worshipped as gods.

The Egyptian _____ was considered a god—the son of the sun god, Re.

And back in chapter 3, King Nebuchadnezzar essentially demanded the same thing, though he directed people to worship his statue (vv. 1-7).

SO, Darius was no doubt flattered at the suggestion.

But notice that NOT everyone was in agreement with the idea to make Darius god for a month.

No doubt Daniel hadn't heard about it, much less agreed to it.

BUT his enemies weren't about to let those pesky little things called "_____" get in the way of their diabolical plan.

And since they lied about having the full support of the three commissioners, it's likely that many of the 120 satraps were also ignorant of this plan.

No doubt the officials had thought through every detail of the decree that they wanted Darius to sign into law, keeping Daniel firmly in their _____.

The written decree needed the royal seal and signature in order to make it an irrevocable law of the Medes and the Persians.

Medo-Persian custom at that time dictated that once legislation was signed into law, it could no longer be revoked or _____.

We find the same concept being mentioned in the book of Esther (1:19; 8:8).

Unfortunately, their terribly brilliant plan worked, and the flattered king signed the decree into law (v. 9).

By appealing to Darius' vanity and _____, those men were able to manipulate the king into signing an irrevocable law that would put his key employee's life in jeopardy.

They knew that Daniel would never compromise his devotion to Yahweh, so the trap was laid.

And without knowing it, King Darius had just set the triggering mechanism. Now, all that was left was for Daniel to step into it. By all indications, the officials' evil plan was well on its way to success.

BUT as we are going to see, they _____ two important details which backfired later.

Remember the inspired words of King David:



Psalm 37:12-15

12 The wicked plots against the righteous and gnashes at him with his teeth.

13 The Lord laughs at him, for He sees his day is coming.

14 The wicked have drawn the sword and bent their bow to cast down the afflicted and the needy, to slay those who are upright in conduct.

15 Their sword will enter their own heart, and their bows will be broken.

And King Solomon said,



Proverbs 26:27

27 He who digs a pit will fall into it,

And he who rolls a stone, it will come back on him.

The narrative now transitions to Daniel.

→→ How would he respond when this bill was signed into law?

The Daring Defiance of Daniel (vv. 10-13)



Daniel 6:10-13

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.**

11 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."

As we consider this situation, we need to ask ourselves what we would do if we were in Daniel's shoes.

➡➡ Would we put our faith on the shelf, reasoning that God would _____ the impossible predicament that we're in?

➡➡ Or would we try to hide our faith, praying inside our secret prayer closet, or in bed at night?

Well, Daniel was no fair-weather worshipper. Just like his three friends who were willing to stand tall and face a fiery furnace, Daniel refused to hide his faith.

He refused to become a _____ disciple out of fear of man.



Daniel 6:10

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.**

Daniel's response was to continue to do what he had always done; he determined to obey God and not man, no matter what the cost.

AND SO, he went to his home, he went upstairs to where he had prayed for years, and with the windows wide _____ toward Jerusalem, he continued to honor his God by praying and giving thanks three times a day, "*just as he had done before*" (v. 10).

This old prophet was in the _____ of praying to God in a manner that had been prescribed by King Solomon at the dedication of the Temple.

Listen to what that great king had prayed many, many years prior to Daniel.



2 Chronicles 6:36-39

36 “When they sin against You (for there is no man who does not sin) and You are angry with them and deliver them to an enemy, so that they take them away captive to a land far off or near,

37 if they take thought in the land where they are taken captive, and repent and make supplication to You in the land of their captivity, saying, ‘We have sinned, we have committed iniquity and have acted wickedly’;

*38 if they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their captivity, where they have been taken captive, and **pray toward their land** which You have given to their fathers **and the city which You have chosen, and toward the house** which I have built for Your name,*

39 then hear from heaven, from Your dwelling place, their prayer and supplications, and maintain their cause and forgive Your people who have sinned against You.”

Daniel was essentially living out the words that King Solomon had prayed more than 400 years before.

This was not a prayer to be prayed in secret, but in public.

Now please don’t think that this was easy for Daniel because he was a _____ of God.

And please don’t think that it was easy because he was _____, so he wasn’t long for this world anyway.

But this is same Daniel who, as a teenager, had refused the king’s food in chapter 1.

Alongside his three young friends, he was willing to risk everything in order to obey and honor his God.

Daniel had _____ God during his whole life, and he was NOT about to stop now—not for a month, not for a moment.

Just like the Apostle _____ in the book of Philippians, Daniel knew that his real citizenship was in Heaven (3:20).

And just like the Apostle _____ in his first epistle, he knew that he was merely an “*alien*” and “*stranger*” in a world that was not his real home (1 Pet. 2:11).

Now, we don’t know the content of Daniel’s prayer. But since he knew His God, we know that he must have known God’s Word *very, very* well.

Thus, he must have known David’s prayer from Psalm 57 when he fled from King Saul and hid in a cave. Though it was David’s prayer, it actually fits perfectly with Daniel’s situation as well.

**Psalm 57:1-11**

1 Be gracious to me, O God, be gracious to me, for my soul takes refuge in You; and in the shadow of Your wings I will take refuge until destruction passes by.

2 I will cry to God Most High, to God Who accomplishes all things for me.

3 He will send from heaven and save me; He reproaches him who tramples upon me. Selah. God will send forth His lovingkindness and His truth.

4 My soul is among lions; I must lie among those who breathe forth fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows and their tongue a sharp sword.

5 Be exalted above the heavens, O God; let Your glory be above all the earth.

6 They have prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down; they dug a pit before me; they themselves have fallen into the midst of it. Selah.

7 My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises!

8 Awake, my glory! Awake, harp and lyre! I will awaken the dawn.

9 I will give thanks to You, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing praises to You among the nations.

10 For Your lovingkindness is great to the heavens and Your truth to the clouds.

11 Be exalted above the heavens, O God; let Your glory be above all the earth.

According to verse 11 of Daniel 6, those wicked men _____ Daniel to be consistent in his worship and devotion to his God.

And the text says that they “*found Daniel making petition and supplication before his God*” (v. 11b).

We don’t know how long into the thirty-day period those men waited before springing their trap.

But on a certain day, they all came together and witnessed Daniel continuing to pray to His God.

And they made a beeline to the king with their “shocking” report.

In their no doubt well-rehearsed speech to the king, they began with a question.

They asked the king about the injunction that he had signed into law...

“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?” (v. 12b)

Before they mentioned Daniel by name, they surreptitiously got the king to verbally _____ with the points that they had just made.

The king fell into their trap once again, by exclaiming,

“The statement is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which may not be revoked” (v. 12c).

Now look at verse 13 where they revealed the man who would dare to _____ this decree.

**Daniel 6:13**

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.”

→→ Now, did you notice the slight anti-semitic jab they made in their accusation? “*Daniel, who is one of the **exiles** from Judah....*”

Those men wanted to paint this faithful servant of the king in the worst possible light. The gist of their accusation was that this foreigner had defied the king not once, not twice, but three times **daily**!

But please notice two things here.

First, Daniel very much DID pay attention to the king. He was the king’s most _____ servant.

And **second**, Daniel never had any intention of harming the king. He even said as much in verse 22.

Now, look at how the king responded to the news.

The Deep Distress of the King (vv. 14-15)

**Daniel 6:14-15**

*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**.*

15 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.”

It didn’t take long for the king to realize that both he and Daniel were in a real pickle.

As soon as he saw what he had done, and how he had been _____ by those wicked men, he did everything he could to find a legal loophole that would allow him to rescue Daniel.

Darius not only had a real fondness for Daniel, but both he and his kingdom had also greatly benefitted from Daniel’s leadership and skills.

King Darius spent the whole day trying to undo the situation. No doubt he consulted with the best and brightest legal minds in the kingdom. But this law had been carefully crafted with the express purpose of _____ Daniel. And the conspirators were careful to shut every possible loophole.

Had the king exercised a little more _____, he never would have gotten himself into such a mess.

And it's right here that we can all learn a powerful life lesson.

Before making any big decisions in life, we should always evaluate all possible consequences.

The book of Proverbs warns us over and over again about making _____ decisions (19:2; 21:5; 29:20).

In verse 15, we are told that these scoundrels came once again “*by agreement*” to the king and reminded him of the decree that he had signed into law. No doubt they had observed the king doing his best to rescue Daniel from their deadly web, but they were not about to let the king off the hook. And so, they reminded him that what he had signed was the “*law of the Medes and Persians*” and could not “*be changed.*”

It's as if those officials said smugly, “O king, you've tried your best all day to save your little pet. But it simply cannot be done. And now, it's time to go feed the lions!”

The Long Night of the Lions' Den (vv. 16-18)



Daniel 6:16-18

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.

*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.***

Helplessly _____ by his own law, Darius gave the fateful order, and Daniel was thrown down into the lions' den.

This would have been more of a pit than a cage.

The Aramaic word translated “den” carries the idea “to dig.” Dens were subterranean pits. Such pits often had two entrances. There was an opening at the top for the feeding of the animals. People could also be thrown in through this opening. The lions would have entered through a second door, most likely located on the side of a hill, which would have led into the underground pit. Daniel was apparently lowered down into the pit from the first opening.

But just before he was dropped in, the king said something astonishing to Daniel.

He said, “*Your God whom you constantly serve will Himself deliver you*” (16b).

This wasn't a question. Rather, it was a statement of _____—perhaps even of a beginning faith—on behalf of the king.

Darius was clearly impressed with Daniel.

And it's very possible that he had heard reports about the power of his God, including the handwriting on the wall (ch. 5) and the incident with the fiery furnace (ch. 3).

So the last interaction the king had with Daniel was with that hopeful statement that his God would deliver him.

Then Daniel was dropped in, and after he hit bottom, a stone was placed over the mouth of the den and sealed with the king's seal, as well as the seals of the various nobles. The seals were placed there to ensure that no one would try to rescue Daniel—not even the _____ himself.

Now, even though the text doesn't mention a party that night, we can easily imagine the delight those nobles had in seeing their evil plan come together so smoothly.

However, King Darius did NOT share their delight.



Daniel 6:18

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.

In comparison to his conspiring officials, the king had a _____ night.

The text tells us that he spent the night fasting.

No diversions or entertainment were brought before him.

And to top it all off, he couldn't even sleep.

No doubt he was terribly upset about how all this had unfolded.

First, he was angry because this faithful, _____ man was most likely going to lose his life.

And ***second***, he was angry that he had been so thoroughly duped by his own officials. They had pretended to honor him. But in reality they'd _____ his ego to advance their selfish, jealous agenda.

And ***finally***, Darius was upset because, even though he was the king, he was _____ to do anything about it.

So it's no surprise that the king could neither eat nor sleep that evening.

Mercifully, even the longest of nights eventually comes to an end; sunrise dawned the next day, and King Darius gave up trying to sleep and hurried outside to the lions' den.

The Sovereign Protection of God (vv. 19-23)



Daniel 6:19-23

19 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**.

Picture the king, his eyes red and tired from his sleepless night, rushing to the lions' den in the cool of the early morning. And as he approaches the den, he cries out, "*Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you constantly serve, been able to deliver you from the lions?*" (v. 20).

In spite of his _____ statement the evening before—"your God will deliver you"—Darius's words that morning are somewhat doubt-filled. He's still hoping for the best, but he fears the worst.

We are reminded here of the words of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego who, after being threatened with being thrown into the fiery furnace, said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "... *our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king*" (Dan. 3:17).

The same God Who delivered those _____ brave young men from the fiery furnace was also easily able to save this _____ old man from a pack of hungry lions.

Suddenly, and no doubt to Darius's great surprise, Daniel answers the king from inside the lions' den.

This is the only time in this entire chapter that Daniel's actual words are recorded.

Daniel spoke to the king and said, "*O king, live forever! 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*" (vv. 21-22).

Now, Daniel doesn't specifically say that it was "*the Angel of the Lord*" (the pre-incarnate _____) Who rescued him that night, but I believe that it very likely could have been.

I also believe that it was the Angel of the Lord Who rescued Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah from the fiery furnace (Dan. 3:25; Psa. 91:11; Heb. 1:14).

**Psalm 34:7**

7 The Angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him, and rescues them.

God could have rescued Daniel any way that He wanted to. But we are specifically told that God rescued him by sending His angel. What a night that would have been for this faithful old prophet!

We can't be dogmatic, but it's possible that Daniel spent the whole night in the presence of the pre-incarnate Christ. What a joy! What a privilege that would have been! And what a conversation they would have had!

And so, instead of this being the worst and most fearful night of Daniel's life, it was no doubt the BEST, most WONDERFUL night he ever had.

One thing that I love about Daniel is that he was always quick to give God all the _____.

He said, *"My God sent His angel."* Daniel consistently exalted his God.

And he goes on to give the king the reason **why** God had delivered him.

First, he said that he was *"innocent before Him."* During this whole ordeal, Daniel had not _____ against his God.

And **second**, he said that he was *"innocent...also toward you, O king."* God rescued Daniel, because he had *"committed no crime"* against the king. The other men were guilty, NOT Daniel.

King Darius was no doubt elated to hear the old prophet's voice coming from the lion's den.

He must have been so excited to hear what God had miraculously done for Daniel all night!

After sweating bullets and not being able to get a wink of sleep, Darius was now full of joy, hearing that the _____ God had rescued His servant.

Naturally, the king gave orders for Daniel to be *"taken up out of the den."* And just as Daniel's three friends had come out of the furnace unscathed, Daniel also came out of the lion's den without a _____.

Both events made it into the "Hall of Faith" mentioned in Hebrews chapter 11.

**Hebrews 11:33-34a**

*33 who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions,
34 quenched the power of fire, ...*

But as the king peered down into the den early that Persian morning, Daniel didn't shout up that it was because of his great faith that he was still alive.

No, he called up to the king how his GOD had been _____ and protected him from the legitimately hungry lions.

And King Darius begins to praise God too!

The Exaltation of the God of Daniel (vv. 24-28)



Daniel 6:24-28

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.

25 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.

In all of their scheming, plotting, and planning, those wicked officials forgot two very basic, but important details.

First, they had not factored into their plans a completely _____ God. He can do anything or save anyone that He wants.

And second, they did not factor in an _____ king. No king likes to be conned. And kings especially don't like it when it's rubbed in their face.

Even though Darius hadn't reacted immediately to the mocking words of his officials the previous evening, he didn't forget them either.

King Darius had been keeping tabs of all the ways that his royal officials had wronged him and his most faithful servant, Daniel, over the past couple of days. And so now that Daniel was safely out of the lion's den, it was time for them to pay the piper.

The wicked fate that those men had planned for Daniel would now come upon them.

And folks, please understand that that IS a _____ principle found in the Mosaic Law (Deuteronomy 19:15-21).

It was right that those men be thrown to the lions.

However, having said that, please understand that the Bible does NOT condone one person being punished for the sins of _____ (Ezekiel 18:19-23).

It was not right that their innocent families were also thrown to the lions.

But remember, King Darius was not a believer, at least not yet.

The fact that his officials had committed a great evil was clear. And now, they would suffer a catastrophically greater fate, in that they themselves, their wives, and their children would pay the ultimate price.

This reminds us of the Biblical principle found in the book of Hosea, which says:



Hosea 8:7a

7 For they sow the wind and they reap the whirlwind.

The only good news was that death came _____ for all of them.

Unlike our own modern-day justice system, the rulers of ancient times often carried out judgment immediately.

That is most definitely a _____ to crime.



Ecclesiastes 8:11

*11 Because the sentence against an evil deed is **not executed quickly**, therefore the hearts of the sons of men among them are given fully to do evil.*

The king had clearly been duly impressed by God's miraculous deliverance of Daniel.

So Darius issued a new decree, much like Nebuchadnezzar had done in chapter 4.



Daniel 6:25-27

25 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.**"*

Darius commanded all his subjects to have the utmost respect for Daniel's God.

First, Darius recognized that the God of Daniel was an _____ God AND that His authority and His Kingdom would endure forever.

Second, Darius wanted his people to know that this God has the ability to _____.

After all, Daniel had just walked out of the lions' den, miraculously unscathed.

Third, this same God performs signs and wonders in heaven and on earth.

This was a remarkable decree from a pagan king. And who knows—perhaps we will see Darius in Heaven one day.

Verse 28 closes with the recognition of Daniel's _____ during the reigns of Darius and Cyrus.

The point that I want you to see in this verse is that God prospers those who walk in obedient faith to Him.

Daniel was a Psalm 1 kind of man. Are YOU???



Psalm 1:1-3

*1 How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked,
Nor stand in the path of sinners,
Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!*

2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night.

3 He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers.

Life Lessons

Life Lesson #1—God loves faithful stewardship.



1 Corinthians 4:1-2

1 Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

2 In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.

Daniel was consistently a _____ steward, through the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, and now during the reign of Darius.

My dear brothers and sisters, God calls us to that same type of stewardship.



Colossians 3:23-24

*23 Whatever you do, **do your work heartily**, as for the Lord rather than for men,*

24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

Life Lesson #2—God blesses faultless living.

Even though we don't read about any specific sin in Daniel's life, we know that he was a sinful man who needed God's mercy and grace just like we do.

But God greatly blessed Daniel because he lived in a _____ way.



Psalms 119:1-3

1 How blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord.

2 How blessed are those who observe His testimonies, who seek Him with all their heart.

3 They also do no unrighteousness; they walk in His ways.

Life Lesson #3—God blesses a faithful prayer life.

There is no doubt that Daniel was a man of great prayer.

He prayed _____ and regularly. He prayed in good times and bad.

Sometimes when our problems are severe, we focus on doing everything BUT praying. But God calls on us to call on Him, and to trust Him.

**Psalm 50:15**

15 Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I shall rescue you, and you will honor Me.”

**Psalm 62:5-8**

5 My soul, wait in silence for God only, for my hope is from Him.

6 He only is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold; I shall not be shaken.

7 On God my salvation and my glory rest; the rock of my strength, my refuge is in God.

8 Trust in Him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us. Selah.

We don't know what tomorrow will bring; but we know the One Who does!

And that same One holds every single detail of our lives in His *loving, merciful*, _____ hands.

Life Lesson #4—We are ALL servants of God.

When Darius came to Daniel early that morning, he called out, “*Daniel, servant of the living God*” (v. 20).

Many in the Bible are called God's servants.

There was _____ (Psa. 105:6, 42) and Moses (Deut. 34:5, Josh. 1:1, 13, 15).

The prophets were designated as servants (Ezra 9:11; Jer. 7:25; Amos 3:7).

The _____ were called bond-servants (Rom. 1:1; Titus 1:1; James 1:1; 2 Pet. 1:1; Jude 1; Rev. 1:1).

And IF we are disciples of Jesus Christ, then we are His servants as well (1 Pet. 2:16).

Life Lesson #5—God is a God of justice.

King Darius was aware that his officials had severely wronged both him and Daniel.

Therefore he brought about _____ justice upon them.

They suffered the fate that they had plotted for Daniel.

This brings to mind some of the Proverbs.



Proverbs 11:8

8 The righteous is delivered from trouble, but the wicked takes his place.



Proverbs 26:27

27 He who digs a pit will fall into it, and he who rolls a stone, it will come back on him.

We see this quite often in Scripture.

Pharaoh ordered the death of all the Jewish baby boys (Ex. 1:16); but ultimately the _____ firstborn males all died in the Tenth Plague (Ex. 12:29).

Pharaoh also gave the command that the baby boys be drowned in the Nile (Ex. 1:22); but later it was his own _____ that drowned in the Red Sea (Ex. 14:28).

Then there was evil Haman who built a gallows for godly Mordecai (Est. 5:14).

Mordecai was spared, but _____ was hung on the very gallows that he had built (Est. 7:9-10).

Life Lesson #6—God does not always rescue His servants in the same manner.

As we have worked our way through some spectacular chapters of the Bible, it's important for us to remember that God does not always _____ His servants in such miraculous ways.

Hebrews 11:33 speaks of those who "*shut the mouths of lions,*" which is a clear reference to Daniel.

But beginning in verse 36 of that same chapter, the author of Hebrews mentions those who "*... experienced mocking and scourging, yes, also chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword;...*" (vv. 36-37b).

God calls some of us to win by _____ righteously.

And He calls others of us to win by _____ righteously.

But God is sovereign in both.

Our world desperately needs to see those who truly love their God and who truly trust their God, both in life and when facing death.