

Daniel Lesson 6 Lecture

Daniel 6

For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. ¹³ Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. Hebrews 4:12-13

- In Daniel 6:1, we read that Darius appointed 120 satraps throughout the kingdom.
- Since Cyrus was the overall ruler of Medo-Persia, we should understand Darius' order to apply to Babylonia, the area he ruled for Cyrus.
- The main administrative division within the Persian empire was a satrapy and in later Persian periods, there were generally only 20 to 29 of them at any given time.
- Remember that Daniel was taken to Babylon in 605 BC, likely at the age of 14 to 21. If Daniel Chapter 6 takes place in 539-538 BC, Daniel would be 81 years old or older.
- Much like Abraham and Moses, Daniel continued to serve his God well into old age without losing his God-given talents.
- Notice in Daniel 6:3 the following phrase, "the king planned to set him [Daniel] over the whole kingdom."
- News of Darius' plan must have leaked out to the other satraps and administrators who were clearly jealous of this old Hebrew man being put into such a position of power. They looked for grounds of his incompetence, neglect, or corruption but found none. They quickly realized the only path to remove Daniel from the administration was trickery. Clearly, they were well aware of Daniel's devotion to God.
- What can we make of the edict issued by Darius in Daniel 6:8 which stated that anyone who prayed to any god or human during the next 30 days, except Darius, should be thrown into the lions' den?
 - There is no evidence that the Persian kings deified themselves.

- The god of the Persians was Ahura Mazda, a spirit-god, and the decree may suggest that the king was the sole representative of Ahura Mazda for that 30-day period.
- All prayers to any god, human, or to Yahweh would then need to be channeled through Darius.
- The satraps may have been pandering to Darius by promoting him as semi-divine.
- What can we say about a Medo-Persian king's decree that could not be altered or appealed?
 - Interestingly, there is also documentation of this concept in the Biblical book of Esther.
 - In his 1927 commentary on Daniel, J. A. Montgomery cites an incident during the reign of Darius III (4th century BC) in which the king was forced to put an innocent man to death because of a ruling which could not be undone by the king's authority.
 - There was a tradition dating back to Hammurabi (18th century BC) which recognized that a judge could not change a decision that had been rendered.
 - We have a similar tradition in the United States. Once the US Supreme Court renders a decision, it cannot be changed unless Congress enacts a new law.
 - Certainly, a Medo-Persian king may have been reluctant to rescind a decree which he had made, if he could even do so. Imagine the humiliation of having to admit one was wrong!
- When confronted with the fact that Daniel has been praying to God, Darius is distressed. Daniel 6:14 says that Darius resolved to rescue Daniel, but by sundown he had not come up with a legal way to rescue him. Daniel must face the punishment of Darius' most recent decree.
- Daniel being placed in the lion's den is "trial by ordeal" in the ancient Near East. The person charged is presumed guilty until a deity intervenes on their behalf. If a deity saved the individual from the ordeal, then the verdict against them is innocent.
- Fast forward to witch trials in England in the 17th century. The charged witches faced a trial by ordeal called "swimming a witch." A suspected witch was tied up and thrown into the water. If the witch sunk to the bottom (and thus, likely drowned),

then the witch was innocent. If the witch floated to the top of the water, then the witch was guilty. England may have borrowed this technique from the ancient Near East!

- There is an instance (the only instance) of Biblical law which is a trial by ordeal. It is in Numbers 5:11-31 and concerns a woman suspected of adultery. Here are some excerpts:
 - The priest shall bring her and have her stand before the LORD. ¹⁷ Then he shall take some holy water in a clay jar and put some dust from the tabernacle floor into the water. ¹⁸ After the priest has had the woman stand before the LORD, he shall loosen her hair and place in her hands the reminder-offering, the grain offering for jealousy, while he himself holds the bitter water that brings a curse.
 - He shall make the woman drink the bitter water that brings a curse, and this water that brings a curse and causes bitter suffering will enter her. ²⁵ If she has made herself impure and been unfaithful to her husband, this will be the result: When she is made to drink the water that brings a curse and causes bitter suffering, it will enter her, her abdomen will swell and her womb will miscarry, and she will become a curse. ²⁸ If, however, the woman has not made herself impure, but is clean, she will be cleared of guilt and will be able to have children.
 - The husband will be innocent of any wrongdoing, but the woman will bear the consequences of her sin.”
 - The consequences for the sin of adultery are documented in Leviticus 20:10:
 - If a man commits adultery with another man’s wife—with the wife of his neighbor—both the adulterer and the adulteress are to be put to death.
- Notice Daniel’s words to the king in Daniel 6:22, “My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, Your Majesty. “
- There are great parallels between Daniel 3 and Daniel 6.
 - In Daniel 3, the 4th man in the furnace is the person who saves Daniel’s 3 friends. In Daniel 6, it is an angel who saves Daniel from the hungry lions.

- Further, in Daniel 3, the 3 friends don't smell of smoke and their clothes were not burned. In Daniel 6, there is not a scratch on Daniel.
- Per Tremper Longman, "We see that God can deliver his people from the evil intentions of their enemies."
- After Daniel is lifted out of the lion's den, his accusers and their families are thrown to the lions. Remember from Daniel 2 and Nebuchadnezzar's threat to the wise men that we see that punishing the guilty person's family was common in this culture.
- We might ask ourselves why Darius chose to punish the satraps in this manner. We need to look no further than Deuteronomy 19:16-21 for God's directive on this subject:
 - If a malicious witness takes the stand to accuse someone of a crime,¹⁷ the two people involved in the dispute must stand in the presence of the LORD before the priests and the judges who are in office at the time.¹⁸ The judges must make a thorough investigation, and if the witness proves to be a liar, giving false testimony against a fellow Israelite,¹⁹ then do to the false witness as that witness intended to do to the other party. You must purge the evil from among you.²⁰ The rest of the people will hear of this and be afraid, and never again will such an evil thing be done among you.²¹ Show no pity: life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.
- We are also reminded of Proverbs 19:9:
 - A false witness will not go unpunished, and whoever pours out lies will perish.
- The interaction between Daniel and Darius in Chapter 6 is different than all the other interactions between Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar, and Belshazzar.
 - We see this clearly in Daniel 6: 16b:
 - The king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!"
 - This is a clear expression of faith in the power of Daniel's God, even if Darius himself did not become a convert.

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1. Read Daniel 6:1-5.
 - a. Who is ruling Babylon?
 - b. What does the king do and why?
 - c. What role does Daniel play in this story?
 - d. Why were the other administrators and satraps jealous of Daniel?
 - e. What did these men resolve to do?
2. According to Daniel 6:6-10,
 - a. What did the administrators and satraps do next?
 - b. What is your opinion of "have all agreed" in verse 7?
 - c. What decree do the men want Darius to make?

- d. Why do you think Darius signed the decree?
 - e. What impact would this decree have on the Israelites, other foreigners, and ordinary Babylonians?
 - f. What did Daniel do when he heard about the decree?
 - g. Do you think Daniel was openly disobeying the king?
 - h. Read 1 Kings 8:35-51 and Psalm 55:17. What do these verses tell you about Daniel's prayer habit?
 - i. Jerusalem and the Temple had been destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar. Why would Daniel continue with his habit?
3. From Daniel 6:11-16,
- a. What did the administrators and satraps clearly know about Daniel?
 - b. What was their assumption about the nature of Daniel's prayers?
 - c. How do the administrators and satraps describe Daniel?

- d. What does this description say about their attitude towards and opinion of Daniel?
 - e. What additional charge did the men levy against Daniel?
 - f. How does the king react to the charges against Daniel?
 - g. Could the king revoke his decree?
 - h. When the king must enforce his decree, what does he say to Daniel?
4. Read Daniel 6: 17-23.
- a. What was done to ensure that Daniel could not escape?
 - b. How did this situation impact the king?
 - c. Why do you think the king reacted this way?
 - d. What did the king do and say the next morning?
 - e. What do the king's actions tell you about his faith in Daniel's God?

- f. What is Daniel's reply to the king?

 - g. What is the king's reaction to Daniel's words?

 - h. How did Daniel look?
5. Per Daniel 6:24-28,
- a. What happened next?

 - b. Why did the king take this action?

 - c. How do the events of verse 24b lend credibility to Daniel's rescue?

 - d. What did the king decree next?

 - e. How long would this decree last? (Hint: see Daniel 6:8.)

 - f. What does the king state about God?

- g. Do you think Darius became a convert?

 - h. What does the text say next about Daniel's life in Babylon?
6. Looking back at Daniel chapters 1-6, what themes do you note?

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For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. ¹³ Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. Hebrews 4:12-13

1. Read Daniel 6:1-5.
 - a. Who is ruling Babylon?
 - Darius the Mede
 - b. What does the king do and why?
 - It pleased Darius to appoint 120 satraps to rule throughout the kingdom, ² with three administrators over them, one of whom was Daniel. The satraps were made accountable to them so that the king might not suffer loss. Daniel 6:1-2
 - c. What role does Daniel play in this story?
 - Daniel was one of the 3 administrators placed over the satraps.
 - d. Why were the other administrators and satraps jealous of Daniel?
 - Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. Daniel 6:3
 - e. What did these men resolve to do?
 - At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent. ⁵ Finally these men said, "We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God." Daniel 6:4-5
2. According to Daniel 6:6-10,
 - a. What did the administrators and satraps do next?
 - So these administrators and satraps went as a group to the king and said: "May King Darius live forever! ⁷ The royal administrators, prefects, satraps, advisers and governors have all agreed that the king should issue an edict and enforce the decree that anyone who prays to any god or human being during the next

thirty days, except to you, Your Majesty, shall be thrown into the lions' den.
Daniel 6:6-7

- b. What is your opinion of “have all agreed” in verse 7?
- I think it unlikely that all the administrators, prefects, satraps, advisors, and governors agreed to find a way to get rid of Daniel. It was probably a subset of the group who proceeded with this effort, but claimed that everyone had agreed to the approach.
- c. What decree do the men want Darius to make?
- Anyone who prays to any god or human being during the next 30 days, except to Darius, should be thrown into the lion's den. The decree would be put into writing so that it could not be repealed which was in accordance with the law of the Medo-Persians.
- d. Why do you think Darius signed the decree?
- Darius was unaware that Daniel prayed to his God.
 - Darius underestimated the impact of his decree. Perhaps he understood that this decree would only apply to Medo-Persians.
 - It appears that the Medo-Persians around Darius were not worshipping idols.
- e. What impact would this decree have on the Israelites, other foreigners, and ordinary Babylonians?
- This decree impacted everyone who worshipped any god or person during that 30-day period.
- f. What did Daniel do when he heard about the decree?
- Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before. Daniel 6:10
- g. Do you think Daniel was openly disobeying the king?
- Daniel was praying in private. He followed a pattern of prayer which he had been doing for some time.

- h. Read 1 Kings 8:35-51 and Psalm 55:17. What do these verses tell you about Daniel's prayer habit?
- From 1 Kings 3:35-51: God hears the prayers of his people, wherever they are. God even hears the prayers of foreigners. God answers prayers.
 - When they sin against you—for there is no one who does not sin—and you become angry with them **and give them over to their enemies, who take them captive to their own lands, far away or near;** ⁴⁷ **and if they have a change of heart in the land where they are held captive, and repent and plead with you in the land of their captors and say, ‘We have sinned, we have done wrong, we have acted wickedly’;** ⁴⁸ **and if they turn back to you with all their heart and soul in the land of their enemies who took them captive, and pray to you toward the land you gave their ancestors, toward the city you have chosen and the temple I have built for your Name;** ⁴⁹ **then from heaven, your dwelling place, hear their prayer and their plea, and uphold their cause.** ⁵⁰ And forgive your people, who have sinned against you; **forgive all the offenses they have committed against you, and cause their captors to show them mercy;** ⁵¹ for they are your people and your inheritance, whom you brought out of Egypt, out of that iron-smelting furnace. 1 Kings 8:46-51
 - Evening, morning and noon I cry out in distress, and he hears my voice. Psalms 55:17
 - Daniel's prayer habit was established in God's Word. Daniel was faithful in his prayer life.
 - The passage from 1 Kings 8 is from Solomon's prayer of dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem. The Temple is where God's people came to worship Him; it was God's house.
- i. Jerusalem and the Temple had been destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar. Why would Daniel continue with his habit?
- Even though the Temple had been destroyed, Daniel continued to pray for himself, for the Judean exiles, and for his captors to have mercy upon the exiles. He may have also prayed for the Temple to be rebuilt.
 - Daniel knew that the decree would cause problems and he was praying for God's help (Daniel 6:11).
 - God had promised in Jeremiah that the exiles would return to Jerusalem. Daniel held onto that promise.

3. From Daniel 6:11-16,

- a. What did the administrators and satraps clearly know about Daniel?
 - They were aware that Daniel prayed in his room.
- b. What was their assumption about the nature of Daniel's prayers?
 - They assumed that Daniel was not praying to Darius.
- c. How do the administrators and satraps describe Daniel?
 - Then they said to the king, "Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, Your Majesty, or to the decree you put in writing. He still prays three times a day." Daniel 6:13
- d. What does this description say about their attitude towards and opinion of Daniel?
 - They were jealous of Daniel. They resented the fact that this very old exile had risen above them due to his capability, trustworthiness, and lack of corruption.
- e. What additional charge did the men levy against Daniel?
 - Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, Your Majesty Daniel 6:13
- f. How does the king react to the charges against Daniel?
 - When the king heard this, he was greatly distressed; he was determined to rescue Daniel and made every effort until sundown to save him. Daniel 6:14
- g. Could the king revoke his decree?
 - No. According to the law of the Medes and Persians, no decree or edict that the king issued could be changed.
- h. When the king must enforce his decree, what does he say to Daniel?
 - The king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!" Daniel 6:16

4. Read Daniel 6: 17-23.

- a. What was done to ensure that Daniel could not escape?
 - A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles, so that Daniel's situation might not be changed. Daniel 6:17

- b. How did this situation impact the king?
- Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating and without any entertainment being brought to him. And he could not sleep. Daniel 6:18
- c. Why do you think the king reacted this way?
- Darius respected Daniel for his abilities and his commitment to God. He despaired of losing such an able administrator because of the edict he had inadvertently caused to be placed into effect.
 - Darius respected Daniel's age and wisdom.
 - What if he had killed a servant of the living God? What would be the repercussions of doing so?
- d. What did the king do and say the next morning?
- At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lions' den.²⁰ When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?" Daniel 6:19-20
- e. What do the king's actions tell you about his faith in Daniel's God?
- Darius had faith that God would rescue Daniel.
- f. What is Daniel's reply to the king?
- Daniel answered, "May the king live forever!²² My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, Your Majesty." Daniel 6:21-22
- g. What is the king's reaction to Daniel's words?
- The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. Daniel 6:23
- h. How did Daniel look?
- And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God. Daniel 6:23

5. Per Daniel 6:24-28,

- a. What happened next?
 - At the king's command, the men who had falsely accused Daniel were brought in and thrown into the lions' den, along with their wives and children. And before they reached the floor of the den, the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones. Daniel 6:24
- b. Why did the king take this action?
 - The king discerned that the men had falsely accused Daniel out of jealousy. He wanted all to witness the results of their falsehood.
- c. How do the events of verse 24b lend credibility to Daniel's rescue?
 - The lions immediately killed the men, their wives, and their children as soon as they hit the floor of the lions' den.
 - An angel protected Daniel. His accusers and their families had no such protection.
- d. What did the king decree next?
 - Then King Darius wrote to all the nations and peoples of every language in all the earth: "May you prosper greatly!"²⁶ "I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel. Daniel 6:25-26
- e. How long would this decree last? (Hint: see Daniel 6:8.)
 - This was a permanent decree which could not be repealed.
- f. What does the king state about God?
 - For he is the living God and he endures forever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end.²⁷ He rescues and he saves; he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions." Daniel 6:26-27
- g. Do you think Darius became a convert?
 - It's doubtful. He refers to Yahweh as "the God of Daniel" and "the living God." This suggests he does not view Yahweh as his (Darius') god and God above all gods.
 - His decree states that people throughout Darius' kingdom must give fear and reverence to God. This doesn't state that they should worship Him as the one true God.

- h. What does the text say next about Daniel's life in Babylon?
 - So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian. Daniel 6:28

- 6. Looking back at Daniel chapters 1-6, what themes do you note?
 - God's sovereignty

 - The sin of pride

 - God fulfills his promises.

 - God listens to the prayers of his people.

 - God protects, rescues, and saves his people.

 - Daniel's faithfulness to God

Daniel 6

Darius and Daniel

- Darius Appointed 120 Satraps Over Babylonia
- Later Persian Rulers Would Have Only 20 to 29 Satrapies
- Daniel Was 81 Years Old or Older at This Time
- Like Abraham and Moses, Daniel Continued to Serve God Into Old Age With His God-Given Talents
- Notice the Language of Daniel 6:3
- Darius' Plan to Put Daniel in Charge Created Jealousy Among the Other Satraps Who Looked For a Way to Remove Daniel

Understanding Daniel 6:8

- There is No Evidence That Persian Kings Deified Themselves
- The God of the Persians Was Ahura-Mazda, a Spirit God
- The Decree May Suggest that the King Was the Sole Representative of Ahura-Mazda for 30 Days
- All Prayers Would Need to Be Channeled Through Darius
- The Satraps May Have Been Pandering to Darius By Promoting Him as Semi-Divine

An Unalterable Decree

- Documentation of This is Also in the Book of Esther
- J. A. Montgomery Cites an Incident of a Similar Nature During the Reign of Darius III (4th Century BC)
- A Tradition Dating Back to Hammurabi (18th Century BC) Regarding Judicial Rulings
- A Similar Tradition Exists in the US Regarding Supreme Court Decisions
- A Medo-Persian King May Have Been Reluctant to Rescind a Decree, Even If He Could Do So; Imagine the Humiliation!

Darius Signs the Decree; Copyright:
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The Ordeal

- When Confronted With the Fact That Daniel Has Been Praying, Darius is Distressed
- Darius Could Find No Legal Way to Rescue Daniel
- This is a Story of “Trial by Ordeal”; Presumed Guilty Unless a Deity Intervenes; If the Individual is Saved, The Verdict is Innocent
- Fast Forward to English Witch Trials in the 17th Century and “Swimming a Witch”
- Numbers 5:11-31 is a Biblical Law Which is Trial by Ordeal
- Note Daniel’s Words in Daniel 6:22



Daniel in the
Lion's Den by
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Parallels in Daniel 3 and Daniel 6

- Daniel 3, the 4th Man in the Furnace Saves Daniel's 3 Friends; Daniel 6, the Angel Saves Daniel From the Hungry Lions
- Daniel 3, the 3 Friends Don't Smell of Smoke and Their Clothes Were Not Burned; Daniel 6, No Scratch on Daniel
- Tremper Longman: "God Can Deliver His People From the Evil Intentions of Their Enemies"

The Fate of the Accusers

- They and Their Families Are Thrown to the Lions
- Punishing the Guilty Person's Family Was Common in This Culture (Daniel 2 and Nebuchadnezzar's Threat)
- Consider Deuteronomy 19:16-21 and Proverbs 19:9

Daniel and Darius

- The Interaction Between Daniel and Darius in Chapter 6 is Different Than All the Other Interactions Daniel Has With Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar
- Daniel 6:16b
- A Clear Expression of Faith in the Power of Daniel's God, Even if Darius Himself Did Not Convert



The Statue from Daniel 2 and the Beasts
From Daniel 7

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The Greek and Roman Interpretations

Statue Part	Greek View	Roman View
Head of Gold	Babylonian Empire	Babylonian Empire
Arm & Chest of Silver	Mede Empire	Medo-Persian Empire
Belly & Thighs of Bronze	Persian Empire	Greek Empire
Legs of Iron	Greek Empire	Roman Empire
Feet of Iron and Clay	Ptolemy/Seleucid Empires	Roman Empire
Stone/Everlasting Kingdom	Kingdom of God	Kingdom of God

Persian Empire: 539 - 333 BC

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THE PERSIAN EMPIRE

- City
- Perimeter boundary of the Persian Empire
- Persian Royal Road
- Heartland of Persia/Persis (when Cyrus ascended the throne)
- Territories gained by Cyrus (550 BC)
- Territories gained by Cyrus (547 BC)
- Territories gained by Cyrus (539 BC)
- Territories gained by Cambyses II
- Territories temporarily gained by Xerxes I



The Persian Empire 539-333 BC
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Map of the Greek Empire at its Height (Alexander the Great)

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Map of the Kingdoms of Ptolemy and Seleucids after Alexander's Death
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