

THE CONSPIRACY AGAINST DANIEL

Chapter 6



Very little time had passed after the handwriting on the wall (Chapter 5) yet so many changes have taken place. The Babylonian Empire was overpowered by the Medo-Persians who now had their own king. In spite of this change, Daniel again rose to a very high governmental position because of his character and his obedience to God. Jealous of his promotion many of his subordinate administrators and satraps (governors) plotted against him by making his godly practices illegal. Faced with choosing between man's laws and God's laws, Daniel chose the later and God miraculously protected him.

A. WHAT TO WATCH FOR

Notice how man's legal system can be manipulated to produce laws that are in direct conflict with God's laws. Notice how Daniel sets such an amazingly wonderful example for dealing with such conflicts. Watch too at what happens to those who openly oppose God's laws and his obedient servants. Ask yourself, "What would I do in a similar situation today?"



B. BACKGROUND



Daniel was about 80 years old when this event takes place. The combined army of Medes and Persians had conquered the Babylonians and Darius is ruling as king. This transition from a Babylonian kingdom to the Medo-Persian kingdom was prophesied about 64 years earlier (Dan. 2:39) where the head of gold, Babylon, (the first Gentile world kingdom) on God's statue is gone. Medo-Persia (the second Gentile world kingdom), the chest and arms of silver, are now in power.

History records that Cyrus crucified 3,000 Babylonian political enemies. Doubtless all of the lords of Babylon who attended Belshazzar's party were included in this number.

Darius divided his newly-conquered kingdom into 120 divisions or provinces. Over each province Darius appointed satraps (rulers) to protect the interests of the king. Over the 120 satraps Darius appointed three administrators whose job was most likely to watch the satraps for things like corruption, disloyalty, theft, and poor administration. The idea of making Daniel second in command found opposition among the other two administrators and all 120 satraps.

In the Ancient Near East the sport of kings was lion hunting, as works of art from Egypt to Mesopotamia depict. The pit in which lions were kept provided a trouble-free method of disposing of undesirable members of society in Roman as well as Persian times. Upon seeing that Daniel survived the night in the lion's den provides the most important discovery Darius could make—that God rewards those who trust him. In accordance with Persian custom. This cruel punishment was transferred to those who had conspired against the king by provoking him into an unjust action.



C. DANIEL CHAPTER 6 (NAU)

THE PLOT AGAINST DANIEL (6:1-5)

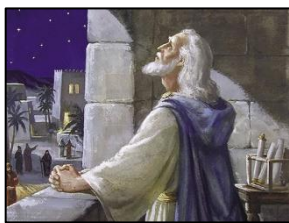
"It seemed good to Darius to appoint 120 satraps over the kingdom, that they would be in charge of the whole kingdom, ² and over them three commissioners (of whom Daniel was one), that these satraps might be accountable to them, and that the king might not suffer loss. ³ Then this Daniel began distinguishing himself among the commissioners and satraps because he possessed an extraordinary spirit, and the king planned to appoint him over the entire kingdom. 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."



THE PROPOSAL TO THE KING (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.

DANIEL ACCUSED OF BREAKING THE LAW (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."

THE KING UNABLE TO SAVE 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."



DANIEL THROWN INTO THE DEN OF LIONS (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.

GOD PROTECTS INNOCENT 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.

DANIEL'S ACCUSORS PUNISHED (6:24)

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.

THE KING PRAISES DANIEL'S GOD (6:25-28)

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. "

D. CHAPTER SUMMARY

Daniel is raised to high office by his royal master Darius the Mede. Daniel's jealous rivals trick Darius into issuing a decree that for thirty days no prayers should be addressed to any god or man but Darius himself; any who break this are to be thrown to the lions. Daniel continues to pray daily to the God of Israel, and the king, although deeply distressed, must condemn Daniel to death, for the edicts of the Medes and Persians cannot be altered. Hoping for Daniel's deliverance, he has him cast into the pit. At daybreak the king hurries to the place and cries out anxiously, asking if God had saved his friend. Daniel replies that his God had sent an angel to close the jaws of the lions, "because I was found blameless before him." The king commands that those who had conspired against Daniel should be thrown to the lions in his place with their wives and children, and that the whole world should tremble and fear before the God of Daniel.

E. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Daniel's trust in God is consistently seen as being incredible, as one of the great heroes of the Old Testament. However, in your opinion are most believers today unable to be like him? Explain your answer in detail.
2. Knowing that he was in serious danger, why did Daniel continue kneeling on his knees three times a day, openly praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously? Was he mocking his enemies by doing this?

3. Why do you suppose Daniel didn't use his amazing reputation to take legal action against his accusers?

4. What similarities do you see with this chapter and Chapter 3? List at least three similarities.

5. If laws in America were passed prohibiting Christians from worshipping God, or in having certain beliefs, should Christians today do like Daniel and just pray or should they take any other actions? Explain your answer.

6. In what ways could you apply this chapter to your own life? Try to be as specific as you can, possibly listing any actions you would like to take.

F. CHAPTER WRAP UP

1. God's gifts may distinguish us before people, but they ultimately _____
"Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Cor. 10:31 NAU)
2. Be a positive example of Christian faith in a world dominated by _____
"Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 Jn. 2:15 NAU)
3. Loving God is the most _____!
"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." (Mk. 12:30 NIV)
4. Our allegiance is to God's kingdom regardless of our _____
"For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;" (Phil. 3:20 NAU)