

## Chapter 6 – Daniel in the Lions’ Den

The lesson of Daniel in the lions’ den is one of the most familiar in the Old Testament. Similar to chapter 5, it focuses on 1 day in the life of Daniel (starting with verse 10). The lions’ den was given the same amount of Scripture as Daniel chapter 7 (28 verses). Daniel 7 is the panoramic view of *world history* – the dream of 4 beasts (kingdoms). From God’s viewpoint, the lions’ den was a *very significant* event, for Daniel and for us. The purpose of this study on chapter 6 is to understand *why* it meant so much to God.

### 6:1-3 – Daniel Appointed by Darius

**Dan.6:1-3** It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom 120 satraps, to be throughout the whole kingdom; and over them three high officials, of whom Daniel was one, to whom these satraps should give account, so that the king might suffer no loss. Then Daniel became distinguished above all the other high officials and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him. And the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom.

Critics claim Darius was fictional; they claim Daniel was written around 150 BC not 530 BC. Cyrus captured Babylon & picked Darius to be king. Historians record that Darius became sick and died within 2 years of becoming king. Then Cyrus became king and ruled until 530 BC.

The Bible says Darius, age 62, became ruler of Babylon at the death of Belshazzar. Dan.5:31 Darius was *made* ruler (appointed). He apparently ruled for at least 1 year. Dan.9:1

Darius was the son of Ahasuerus (his Hebrew name) = Xerxes (his Greek/Persian name).

Esther 1:1 confirms (for a later King Xerxes) that these names are equivalent (KJV vs. NIV).

Darius organized a new government of 120 satraps (princes) under 3 presidents.

Some argue this is too many rulers, but Esther 1:1 confirms there were 127 provinces.

The Septuagint was the first translation of the Old Testament from Hebrew to Greek.

It was written at Alexandria, Egypt starting in 280 BC and completed by 200-150 BC.

The Septuagint translates Daniel 6:28 to say that Cyrus took control *after* Darius died. 537 BC

This implies a Mede kingdom of Darius followed by a Persian kingdom of Cyrus. But sources outside the Bible clearly show this was not true – it was a Medo-Persian empire from the start.

The traditional conservative view about Darius (J. Vernon McGee, Clarence Larkin, etc.) based on the ancient historians Xenophon (Greek, 400 BC), Josephus (70 AD), Jerome (400 AD):

Persian Army General Cyrus conquered Babylonia and appointed Darius to rule over the city.

Cyrus was king of the whole empire, while Darius ruled the province around Babylon. Darius

was Cyaxares II (last king of Media); he ruled for 2 years. He was the uncle of Cyrus (who

followed Darius as king in Babylon). Queen Mundane, mother of Cyrus, was Darius’ sister.

Soon after Chapter 5, Darius set up his government and eliminated political enemies.

Daniel was 3rd highest ruler of Babylon; we would expect Darius to kill him with the others.

Belshazzar was dead. 5:30 Nabonidus was captured. *Daniel was briefly king of Babylon.*

But Daniel again received a place of honor, one of 3 national “chief financial officers”.

This was *even higher* than his position as 3rd ruler on the night that Babylon fell.

Daniel was in a 3-way tie for 2nd highest ruler, and on the verge of being promoted.

Due to his distinguished service, the king intended to make Daniel the “Prime Minister”.

Daniel's promotions prove that believers don't have to compromise to succeed. Matt.6:33

As a *teenager* in Dan.2:48, Daniel's position was comparable to a *Supreme Court justice*. He had not only survived but also *grown* through 66 years of changing administrations. It's as if he served FDR-Truman-Ike-JFK-LBJ-Nixon-Ford-Carter-Reagan-Bush-Clinton. Daniel's career was blessed because he *consistently obeyed God*. A life above reproach.

Daniel's career was no accident. God wanted him in leadership at this crucial time.

The 70-year captivity of the Jews was about to end. God used Daniel to influence Cyrus.

Cyrus is mentioned 23 times in Scripture, mostly in the book of Ezra 1:1-4, 6:3-5.

Cyrus decreed that the exiles could return to rebuild their temple in Jerusalem.

The decree was very favorable to Jews. Daniel must have played a role in designing it.

### **6:4-5 – The Plot to Discredit Daniel**

**Dan.6:4-5** The high officials and satraps sought to find a ground for complaint against Daniel regarding the kingdom. But they could find no ground for complaint or any fault because he was faithful; no error or fault was found in him. Then these men said, "We shall not find any ground for complaint against Daniel unless we find it in connection with the law of his God."

Daniel's integrity and experience as a local administrator were a great benefit to Darius.

But Daniel's younger colleagues scrutinized his work (and probably his personal life).

What motives caused such friction that other officials were intent on eliminating Daniel?

Human sin nature (without God's Spirit in control) reacts to excellence with jealousy.

Daniel did not want what his neighbors had; he wanted *what God wanted for him*.

Also, the conspirators may have felt it was unfair – that Daniel was too old, and a Jew.

He had been a top official in the enemy administration – all the others had been killed.

The greedy & incompetent always hate the trustworthy for exposing them. John 3:19-21

A smart student, a gifted musician or athlete – anyone blessed with talent pays a price.

It was a backhanded compliment: those who knew Daniel best *felt threatened* by his integrity.

Daniel's pure heart, godly character and spotless record stuck out like a flower in pigsty.

At the Last Supper, Jesus asked us to do the same: "Walk in the world for me." John 17:15-18

Eager to advance their own careers, the other leaders searched for ways to trip up Daniel.

The only thing they could find wrong was that he served God – *that's* a good problem to have.

How many of us today could withstand the magnifying glasses of multiple inspectors?

The source of life for Babylon was the river; to win, Cyrus had to cut off the river.

The only hope to defeat Daniel was to attack his source of life: his devotion to God.

The leaders had to set up a *conflict* between the king's law and God's law.

Then Daniel's devotion to God would *force* him to deny Darius and break the new law.

The conspirators knew one thing for sure: Daniel *always* obeyed God. Acts 5:29

Their plot foreshadows the False Prophet and the mark of the Beast during the Tribulation.

At that time, refusing to take the mark will make Christians appear to be subversive.

The mark will create a conflict between one-world government and Christianity. Rev.13:17

Refusal to comply with the law will be used to justify their execution, as it was with Daniel.