



Daniel 6

Our study of Daniel began with Jehovah giving His people into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon (Daniel 1.1-2). However, God continued to rule over the realm of mankind and brought the Babylonian empire to an end, giving Babylon into the hand of “Darius the Mede” (Daniel 5.30-31). As we noted in our last lesson, this Darius could have been the governor of Babylon or another title for Cyrus. But one thing we can be certain of is that Jehovah was carrying out His plan. Just as the Lord had warned the Israelites that if they disobeyed they would be taken into captivity (Deuteronomy 28.64-7), He also promised to bring them back to their homeland (Deuteronomy 30.1-3). And some 200 years before it occurred, the Lord foretold that Cyrus would be the one to let the captives go free (see Isaiah 44.28-45.1).

Given that Daniel 6 takes place during the reign of Cyrus, it would be helpful to note how he came to power (Quotes from Israel and the Nations by FF Bruce).

- After the death of Nebuchadnezzar the strength of Babylon began to fade. Media was fast becoming the dominant power. “The Medes had begun to encroach on the Babylonian territories in north Syria, so much so that Babylonian control of the usual trade route from the Egyptian frontier to Mesopotamia via Carchemish was in danger.”
- During this time a new king came to power in a small province of Persia called Anshan. This was Cyrus who began ruling in 559 B.C. While he was allied to the Median king through family ties (his mother was the daughter of the Median king) it appears that there was an allegiance between Cyrus and Babylon during the early days of Nabonidus' reign.
- In 550 B.C. Cyrus marched against the Median capital of Ecbatana and defeated it. The balance of power effectively changed at that moment!
- Instead of treating the Medes as a subject people, he made them equals



in his kingdom. "Cyrus immediately displayed the qualities of a statesman as well as those of a military commander. Instead of treating the Medes as defeated enemies and a subject nation, he had himself installed as king of Media and governed Media and Persia as a dual monarchy, each part of which enjoyed equal rights. The only reason for Babylonia's alliance with Persia, namely their common fear of Media, immediately disappeared."

- Shortly after incorporating Media into his kingdom, Cyrus defeated Croesus king of Lydia, 546 B.C. Now Cyrus had control of all of Lydia, and his empire extended all the way to Greece.
- After the conquest of Lydia, Cyrus turned his attention to the fading empire of Babylon.
- Nabonidus was still king of Babylon, but spent most of his time in his second capital of Tema seeking to establish trade routes in the south since Media had taken his in the north. He had left his son Belshazzar to reign in Babylon. Nabonidus' absence from Babylon was not viewed favorably by many, especially since he did not come back to celebrate the New Year in Babylon and worship Marduk.
- In 539 B.C. Cyrus took Babylon (Daniel 5.31).



Outline of chapter 6:

- Daniel's Success (1-3)
 - Darius signs the law (4-10)
 - Daniel's colleagues plan his death (11-15)
 - Darius hopes for deliverance (16-18)
 - Darius sees deliverance (19-23)
 - Daniel's colleagues meet their death. (24)
 - Darius signs the decree (25-27)
- Daniel's success (28)

The Text: Daniel 6 (NASB95)

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

- A satrapy was the main administrative division of the Persian empire (see Esther 1.1).
- If Darius the Mede is Cyrus, then these represented all the governors of the empire. However, if Darius is the governor of Babylon, then these were officials who administered affairs in the region.

2and 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.

3Then 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.

4Then 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.

5Then 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."

6Then 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.

- Persian kings were not inclined toward self-deification.
- However, "the decree makes sense in the context of the struggle in Persia between the advocates of pure Zoroastrianism and the supporters of the traditional Persian religion who advocated a syncretistic form of religion, which the Magi seem to have favored. The decree could be seen as a stand against syncretism, with the king representing Ahura Mazda." (Zondervan Illustrated Bible Background Commentary)

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."

- See Esther 1.19; 8.8.
- "It may be alluded to in Diodorus Siculus's reference to an occasion when

Darius III could not repeal a death sentence he had passed on an innocent man.” (Zondervan Illustrated Bible Background Commentary)

9Therefore King Darius signed the document, that is, the injunction.

10Now 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.

- While praying toward Jerusalem was not commanded, Solomon asked that God would hear His people when they prayed toward His house (1Kings 8.44ff).
- Likewise, praying three times a day was not commanded, but it would seem to be a practice of many faithful Jews (see Psalm 55.17).
- Finally, note that Daniel's prayer also consisted of “giving thanks”. Quite the perspective from a man who could very well lose his life for his faith.

11Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and supplication before his God.

- Significant that these men had no doubt that Daniel would continue to pray to Jehovah.

12Then 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.”

13Then 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.”

14Then, 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.

- Contrast with Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 3.13.

15Then 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.”

16Then 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.”

17A 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.

18Then 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.

- Possible that Daniel slept better than the king!

19Then the king arose at dawn, at the break of day, and went in haste to the lions' den.

20When 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?"

21Then 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."

- Compare with vs. 14. Jehovah accomplishes what the king cannot.

23Then 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.

- Compare with Daniel 3.27.

24The 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.

- "maliciously" is literally "ate the pieces of".
- These men who had tried to "eat the pieces of" Daniel, were eaten by the lions.

25Then 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."

- Compare with similar declarations by Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 3.28-29; 4.34-35).

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

- It could be that this verse shows Darius as reigning during the reign of

Cyrus, and if so then Darius is a governor in Cyrus' empire.

- However, "This can be translated as, 'the reign of Darius, that is, the reign of Cyrus.' Note the similar construction in 1 Chronicles 5:26, 'Pul king of Assyria, that is, Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria.' Kings in the ancient Near East usually had more than one 'throne name.' Since Cyrus took over the Median Empire and had a Median mother, he could be called 'a Mede,' even 'king of the Medes.'" (Zondervan Illustrated Bible Background Commentary)

Takeaways:

1. God can deliver
 - a. King sought to deliver Daniel (vs. 14)
 - b. Your God... will Himself deliver (vs. 16)
 - c. Has your God been able to deliver (vs. 20)
 - d. My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouth (vs. 22)
 - e. Because he trusted in God (vs. 23)
 - f. He delivers, rescues, performs signs, and wonders (vs. 27)
2. When our devotion to God is seen:
 - a. Might be a cause for derision and/or persecution (vss. 4-5; 10-11)
 - b. But helps point the way for others (vs. 16, 25-28).
3. The story of Jesus in Daniel 6...
 - a. His foes moved by envy (vss. 3-4; Matt 27.18)
 - b. Try to find accusation (vs. 4; Luke 6.7; 11.54; 20.20)
 - c. Arrested at the place of prayer (vss. 10-11; Luke 22.39-56)
 - d. Accused before ruler (vss. 12-13; John 18.28-40; Luke 23.1-5)
 - e. The king seeks to let him go (vs. 14; John 19.1-15; Luke 23.1-25)
 - f. The leaders tell ruler cannot be let go (vs. 15; John 19.7-13)
 - g. Stone rolled (vs. 17; Matt 27.60)
 - h. Seal placed on it (vs. 17; Matt 27.66)
 - i. Time of mourning (vs. 19; Mark 16.1)
 - j. Delivered from den (vss. 20-23; Acts 2.22-36)
 - k. Enemies destroyed through these events (vs. 24; Col. 2.14-15).