

**Dan. 6:1** It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom;

**Dan. 6:2** And over these three presidents; of whom Daniel *was* first: that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage.

Darius evidently didn't want to be bothered with anything but the most important issues, so he delegated authority over his kingdom to 120 princes (governors, lieutenants). Three presidents were placed in authority over the 120 princes, and Daniel held the highest authority level of the three presidents. The purpose of these ruling authorities was to ensure that Darius' kingdom was prosperous and, as the NLT phrased it, "to watch out for the king's interests."

**Dan. 6:3** Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit *was* in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm.

It seems that Daniel always excelled in executing his responsibilities. This scripture states that the reason was "because an excellent spirit was in him." I know that the Holy Spirit didn't regularly indwell believers in the Old Testament, but certain people experienced the presence of the Spirit in their lives. One of the things David feared was for God to take the Spirit from him.

*Psalm 51:11* Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.

I tend to think that Daniel possessed the presence of the Spirit for most of his life.

Darius recognized Daniel's superiority and placed him in the position of authority under the king.

**Dan. 6:4** Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he *was* faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him.

**Dan. 6:5** Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find *it* against him concerning the law of his God.

True to human (the sin) nature, the other presidents and princes were jealous of Daniel and wanted to get him into trouble. They tried their best to find a reason to accuse him before the king, but they couldn't. Why? Because he was faithful (sure, morally true, trustworthy). They finally figured out that the only possibility of finding fault with Daniel would be to figure out something that would require him to break the law of his God—which they knew he would never do.

What a testimony! If only that could be true about me. I can't imagine (well, maybe I can imagine...) living so that others could observe no error or fault in me. That's one of the reasons I'm so looking forward to heaven. Never again will I have to deal with the sin nature. Finally, I will know that I am serving the Lord with a pure heart and won't even be tempted by the flesh.

**Dan. 6:6 Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever.**

**Dan. 6:7 All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions.**

**Dan. 6:8 Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.**

**Dan. 6:9 Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree.**

The presidents and princes represented the best and brightest in the land. They devised a plan that would appeal to King Darius' ego and persuaded him to immediately sign the plan into law. Nebuchadnezzar was bound by no laws; he was the law. Darius, although king, was bound by the laws of the kingdom. (Remember, the statue in chapter two. Each kingdom was represented by more inferior materials going from head to toe.) The decree that the princes had prepared stated that no one in the kingdom could petition any God or man for 30 days other than the king. Anyone who disobeyed this decree would be thrown into a den of lions.

I noticed that verse 7 states that "all" the presidents of the kingdom were in on the plan. Obviously, it was "all" except Daniel, who held the highest position.

**Dan. 6:10 Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.**

Daniel had a daily practice of kneeling down to pray and give thanks to God at his open windows that faced the direction of Jerusalem three times each day. Although Daniel knew about the decree, he did not change his practice. He continued to pray and give thanks to God three times a day as he always had.

We know that God has established authorities over us, and we are to honor those authorities—except when they go against God's law or would cause us to deny Him the position of God in our life. Jesus exemplified this truth during His ministry. An example of this is Jesus' continuing practice of performing miracles of healing on the Sabbath day in direct disobedience to the prevailing directives of the religious ruling authorities of His day.

Guzik records an important observation from John Walvoord, "This was not the act of a person courting martyrdom but the continuation of a faithful ministry in prayer which had characterized his long life."

**Dan. 6:11 Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God.**

**Dan. 6:12** Then they came near, and spake before the king concerning the king's decree; Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask a *petition* of any God or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said, The thing *is* true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.

**Dan. 6:13** Then answered they and said before the king, That Daniel, which *is* of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day.

The other ruling authorities knew Daniel's routine and couldn't wait to catch him breaking the law—as they knew he would. As soon as they witnessed him continuing his daily prayers, they ran back to the king. They didn't immediately blurt out their accusation because they knew that the king favored Daniel. First, they reminded the king of the decree and questioned him for confirmation of the contents of that decree. The king confirmed the truth of their statement and the fact that a king's decree cannot be changed. When the king confirmed the decree, they made their accusation. They told the king that Daniel did not respect either him or his decree; he was still petitioning his God three times a day.

**Dan. 6:14** Then the king, when he heard *these* words, was sore displeased with himself, and set *his* heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him.

Darius was trapped and he knew it. To his credit, he was very displeased with himself. He spent a whole day trying to figure out a way to spare Daniel from the punishment called for in the wording of the decree—but he could not.

**Dan. 6:15** Then these men assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians *is*, That no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed.

**Dan. 6:16** Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast *him* into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee.

The schemers finally came back to the king and again reminded him that the law of the Medes and Persians as established by the king cannot be changed. So, Darius sent for Daniel to carry out the sentence. In an amazing statement of faith—Darius assured Daniel that the God whom he served continually would deliver him.

That is really a quite powerful statement. Darius must have heard of some of the happenings involving this God of the Jews since their captivity in Babylon. Because of Daniel's testimony/example, he had no doubt of the power and ability of Daniel's God.

Then Daniel was thrown into the den of lions.

**Dan. 6:17 And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel.**

The opening to the lions' den was sealed with a stone; then it was marked with the seal of the king's signet ring as well as the signets of his lords. A couple of commentaries indicated that the king's signet guaranteed that no one could kill Daniel if he survived the lions.

**Dan. 6:18 Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of musick brought before him: and his sleep went from him.**

**Dan. 6:19 Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions.**

**Dan. 6:20 And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?**

Darius went back to the palace and spent the night fasting. (I guess that means he missed his evening meal and midnight snacks.) He must have had a practice of listening to soothing music at bedtime, but this night he did not. He just could not go to sleep. Very early the next morning the king rushed out to the den of lions. When he got there, he called out to Daniel in a voice that was obviously worried and grieved. His question was quite interesting—"O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?"

Darius obviously recognized a difference in the God of Daniel and the gods represented by the idols of his own culture. He credited Daniel's God with being the *living God*, which would seem to imply that other gods were not *living*. As the *living God*, He could be expected to have preserved the life of His servant. The question expressed the idea that he wanted to believe, but he just wasn't sure.

**Dan. 6:21 Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever.**

**Dan. 6:22 My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.**

Daniel answers with great respect for the king—the very opposite of what he had been accused. He assures the king that his God had sent His angel and had shut the lions' mouths. He hadn't even been hurt. Daniel assured the king that God had delivered him because he was innocent (pure of heart), neither had he intended offense to the king. He only intended to continue to honor God.

**Dan. 6:23 Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God.**

The king was very happy for Daniel and commanded that he be taken out of the lions' den. Once out of the den, they saw for themselves that Daniel had not been hurt in any way. The record rightly attributes his protection to his faith in his God.

Daniel's statement seems to indicate that he knew he would be delivered. I'm afraid I would have been more like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. I would have faith that God could protect; but I don't think I could say that I would have faith that He would protect. I'm very aware of the fact that I have very little understanding of God and His purposes. Jesus said that if we had faith the size of a mustard seed, we could remove mountains. Because He said it, and the scripture contains examples of men that proved it, I know it is possible. I just wish I could attain that level of faith. "Lord, increase my faith."

**Dan. 6:24 And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast *them* into the den of lions, *them, their children, and their wives*; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den.**

Again, the example is clear—our sin always impacts those we are closest to, those we claim to love. According to JFB, "Among the Persians, all the kindred were involved in the guilt of one culprit." There must have been a lot of lions for the people to have been so completely mauled before ever hitting the bottom of the den.

**Dan. 6:25 Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you.**

**Dan. 6:26 I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he *is* the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion *shall be even* unto the end.**

**Dan. 6:27 He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.**

Although Darius couldn't change the previous decree, he could sign into law a new decree. His kingdom included many nations and languages, and the decree was sent to them all. It commanded that all men in his kingdom were to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. He proclaimed Daniel's God to be the living God who will never change nor will His kingdom ever be destroyed; His dominion/power/authority will last until the end. (How could he include the thought of forever and an ending regarding the same being?) Darius declared Daniel's God's ability to deliver, rescue, and work signs and wonders both in heaven and earth. Darius had witnessed this power himself by seeing Daniel delivered from the lions' den.

I can't help but wonder if Darius became a man of faith. That's a pretty powerful statement.

**Dan. 6:28 So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.**

The chapter ends by stating that Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius as well as in the reign of Cyrus the Persian. According to Easton's Dictionary, Daniel probably died at Susa at around age 85.

David Guzik provides some helpful information regarding the fact that Darius the Mede is not mentioned by name in available historical records.

"It may be that Darius is an ancient official known as *Gubaru* in ancient documents, whom Cyrus appointed as ruler over Babylon immediately after its capture....In fact, "Darius" may be an honorific title meaning, "holder of the scepter. Ancient documents show that the man Gubaru had the power to make appointments, to assemble an army, to levy taxes, and to possess palaces. Gubaru (Darius) was, in a very real sense, the king over Babylon."

Truthnet.org provides the following information.

"According to the Nabonidus Chronicle, as itemized by D.J. Wiseman, the following events occurred.

Babylon was conquered by Ugbaru, the governor of Gutium, who led the army of Cyrus and entered the city of Babylon on the night of Belshazzar's feast. Nabonidus, who was Belshazzar's father, had fled Babylon the day before only to be captured and later die in exile. When Babylon fell to Ugbaru on October 11, 539 B.C., Cyrus himself had remained with other troops at Opis, and not until eighteen day later, October 29, 539 B.C., did he actually arrive in Babylon. A man by the name of Gubaru was appointed by Cyrus to rule in Babylon. Eight days after the arrival of Cyrus, Ugbaru died."