

Daniel

Leon L. Combs, M.A., M.Div., Ph.D.

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Chapter Six

Dan 6:1-3

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.

The strictly historical portion of this book is concluded by this chapter. There is much we can learn from this chapter for we live in a lion's cage with a roaring lion prowling the cage:

1Peter 5:8-10 Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. (9) But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. (10) After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.

We begin this chapter with the same question ending the previous chapter. Who was Darius? It seems best to suppose that this was the word for ruler like "Caesar" became in the Roman Empire and the actual person was General Gubaru who ruled temporarily. Such would also fit with his appointing some other people to help him in ruling the kingdom since his background was the military and its structure was similar to what he established. We also see a difference in the rule of Nebuchadnezzar who ruled autocratically without sharing the rule with anyone. The "satraps" would have been in charge of the smaller subdivisions of the kingdom and over these were the three commissioners that included Daniel. He was not a Mede or a Persian but he had excellent credentials including his years of service to the kingdom so that he was very familiar with the bureaucracy of the Babylonian government. As all of God's children, Daniel was an excellent citizen and leader as he distinguished himself exceptionally among all the other commissioners. He was then becoming the logical choice for prime minister of the kingdom under Darius. The other two commissioners and the satraps became jealous of Daniel and tried to find a way to make accusations against Daniel regarding his work in the government. Paul writes how Christians are to be perceived in the world:

Phil 2:14-16 Do all things without grumbling or disputing; (15) so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, (16) holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.

Dan 6:4-5

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."

At this point, King Cyrus was probably beginning to look favorably on the request by the Jews for release or had already issued the decree cited in (note the date of the first year of Cyrus):

Ezra 1:1-4 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he sent a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying: "Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, 'The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. (3) 'Whoever there is among you of all His people, may his God be with him! Let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah and rebuild the house of the LORD, the God of Israel; He is the God who is in Jerusalem. (4) 'Every survivor, at whatever place he may live, let the men of that place support him with silver and gold, with goods and cattle, together with a freewill offering for the house of God which is in Jerusalem.'"

There would have been considerable reactions against the Jews. This action by the commissioners and satraps was probably a race-conscience effort of the other rulers as they would have resented any of the refugees having such power over them. To have a Jewish captive as prime minister over them was not something they could accept. They then tried to find some shady dealing of Daniel in his current position. However they could find no corruption or devious actions in his work for the Babylonian Empire. Every Christian should have the result of verse five regarding his work in whatever position he holds! They could not find any accusations against him regarding his work so they decided that the only way to condemn Daniel was if they could develop some law that would conflict with his worship of his God. They would have known that Daniel was a strict monotheist and so would make no concession to idolatry. But Persia had no law against monotheist worship so they would have to develop one that they were certain Daniel would not obey.

Dan 6:6-9

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.

The opposition to Daniel had a conference and determined how they could finally put an end to Daniel. Since they could find no errors in his works they determined to have the king establish a

new law that they knew Daniel could not obey. They stated that all the officials had developed this plan for a new law for that would imply that Daniel had agreed with the plan. The king had no reason to suppose that Daniel had not been consulted although he may have wondered why Daniel was not present with the others. The new law seemed like a good way to force unification under a new realm and the thirty days seemed reasonable. After the thirty days the people could worship as they pleased and he could have assumed that Daniel accepted this brief period during which he would not worship God. Under Mede and Persian rules, a new law could not be revoked so it would be permanent unless the king would choose to go against such a rule So King Darius signed the injunction.

Dan 6:10-12

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."

Daniel heard about the document but he knew that such could not keep him from worshipping God so he continued his prayer time as he prayed and gave thanks to God as was his practice before the law had been signed. During the first year of the reign of Darius, Daniel had learned from Jeremiah that the Jewish captivity would end after seventy years so he prayed this promise:

Dan 9:1-2 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent, who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans-- (2) in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was revealed as the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years.

Daniel could have compromised his integrity by not praying during this 30-day period or he could have prayed privately so that nobody could see him. There are probably many Christians today who spend at least a month without spending any devotional time to God. He did not pray defiantly but just prayed like he had always done as he had a place where his windows faced toward Jerusalem. A theologian, P.T. Forsythe said: "You pray as your face is set, towards Jerusalem or Babylon". That does not mean that we have to say our prayers physically toward Jerusalem but mentally looking to God and not the world for insight. Daniel had 80 years practice depending upon God. We have no information about his three friends and probably they were not alive at this time. He was then alone among many hostile enemies.

Praying toward Jerusalem showed that Daniel knew that the city and the temple would be rebuilt. The Shekinah cloud of God had come to reside at Solomon's temple (1 Kings 8:10-11) but then left before the temple was destroyed (Ezek 11:32). But Daniel knew that the Lord had promised to return (Ezek 43:2) and probably the decree from Cyrus to restore the site had already been issued. Daniel prayed as Jonah did: "So I said, 'I have been expelled from Your sight. Nevertheless I will look again toward Your holy temple.'" (Jonah 2:4) Daniel would not

compromise his integrity as he showed that he was not a compartmentalist. His religion influenced all of his life so he would obey God rather than a government that was trying to force idolatry upon him. What would you do?

Apparently the other two commissioners and some of the satraps had determined a way to spy upon Daniel to determine if he kept praying as he had done. After finding Daniel making petition and supplication before God, they went before the king to speak to him about the injunction. They at first just repeated the injunction and the penalty for acting against it to make the king verify that such had been done and could not be revoked. The king replied in the affirmative so they were then ready to accuse Daniel.

Dan 6:13-15

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." (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."

They then played their trump card by telling the king that Daniel disrespected him and that he did not obey the injunction but kept making petitions to his God three times a day. The king was deeply distressed at hearing this probably because he had assumed that Daniel was agreeable to the new injunction. Notice that the accusers also described Daniel as one of the exiles from Judah as they displayed their anti-Semitic attitude. The king greatly respected and liked Daniel so he was in turmoil over this situation. He probably realized that the accusers had manipulated him and he may have been remorse that he had not consulted Daniel before signing the injunction. He wracked his brain trying to determine how he could get Daniel out of this penalty. He probably knew of the delivery of the men from the fiery furnace under Nebuchadnezzar and realized that another miracle was required to save Daniel.

The men then came in agreement to the king and reminded him that it was a law of the Medes and Persians that no injunction or statute established by the king could be changed. This also shows the Darius the Mede was serving under the authority of the Persian Empire since no Median ruler could have been subject to Persian law. Thus there was no Median empire ruling this area before a Persian conquest as some scholars suggest.

Dan 6:16-18

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.

The king had indeed been backed into a corner, and as a new ruler felt he had no choice but to enforce the injunction. He went to the den with Daniel, who must have been about 83 years old at this time. He had Daniel thrown into the lions' den but told Daniel that his God would deliver him from the den. The king made sure that nobody from outside could interfere with the penalty phase by sealing a stone over the mouth of the den. He even had each of the nobles seal the stone with their signet rings. The king then went to his palace where he fasted alone. He then spent a sleepless night in turmoil over this situation.

Dan 6:19-23

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.

At dawn he hurriedly went to the lions' den and cried out to Daniel in a troubled voice. He asked Daniel if he had been saved by his God from the lions devouring him. Notice that he referred to the God of Daniel as the living God rather than some contrived idol. I am sure that he was greatly relieved when he heard Daniel's voice first praise the king and then inform him that God had sent His angel to shut the lions' mouths so that they did not hurt him. We don't know when angels are sent to assist God's children (Heb 13:2) but they are sent at God's time (Heb 1:14). God protected him because He found Daniel innocent before Him and also toward the king as he had not committed any crimes. The king had Daniel taken out of the den and he was carefully examined to show that he had no injury from spending a night in the lions' den because he had trusted God. I am sure that his attitude was the same as that of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego:

Dan 3:17-18 "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. (18) "But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

From the eleventh chapter of Hebrews we read that many servants of God were killed in horrible ways because they would not violate their love and devotion to God. Their deaths do not mean that God failed but that the faith of the men prevailed even through physical death for they were then immediately with the Lord.

Dan 6:24-28

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. (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.

The king responded to the evil men who had accused Daniel by casting them and their families into the lions' den where they were viciously torn apart by the lions. They had contrived to have the king put forward the injunction and they had lied to him when they said that "all agreed" to recommend the decree when Daniel had not been consulted. Ancient despots did not have to obey a provision in the Mosaic law: *"Fathers shall not be put to death for their sons, nor shall sons be put to death for their fathers; everyone shall be put to death for his own sin."* (Deut 24:16). Darius may have executed them all to prevent any revenge against the executioner by the families as well as a statement to any other rulers who might try to do something similar as did these evil men.

King Darius then issued a decree to everyone living in the kingdom regarding the God of Daniel. The meanings of verses 26-27 are similar to that of the previous two statements about God by Nebuchadnezzar:

- Dan 3:28-29 *Nebuchadnezzar responded and said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, who has sent His angel and delivered His servants who put their trust in Him, violating the king's command, and yielded up their bodies so as not to serve or worship any god except their own God. (29) "Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation or tongue that speaks anything offensive against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego shall be torn limb from limb and their houses reduced to a rubbish heap, inasmuch as there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way."*
- Dan 4:34-35 *"But at the end of that period, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever; For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom endures from generation to generation. (35) "All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, 'What have You done?'"*

Daniel then enjoyed success under the rule of Darius (Gubaru) over Babylon and Cyrus the Persian. It seems that after this event Daniel devoted himself to prayer and study of God's Word. He received his revelations as recorded in chapters 10-12 in the third year of the reign of Cyrus (10:1). During his retirement he revised his memoirs with an accepted date of 532 B.C. for its publication. King Cyrus ruled the Persian Empire from 539-530 B.C. when he was succeeded by Cambyses (530-522). The strictly historical section of the book is now concluded and the remainder consists of Daniel's writing of some visions and prophecies that were given to him over the long time he spent in captivity.