

Daniel 6 John Karmelich

1. Daniel 6 is the story of “Daniel in the Lion’s Den”.
 - a) It is a story most Christians learn as children. It is one of the great Bible miracles. In the New Testament, in the Book of Hebrews, the story is mentioned in Chapter 11 along with a list of other great acts of faith by the great men of the Old Testament.
 - i) Yet, I suspect if you ask most American Christian adults *why* Daniel was put in the lion’s den, they can’t remember.
 - a) *That* question, is one of the main reasons to study this chapter!
 - b) Back in Lesson 1 of Daniel, I brought up the topic of “the danger of the familiar”.
 - i) It is easy to skim over this lesson only because many of us are so familiar with the chapter.
 - ii) Yet, I was surprised the insights I got studying this chapter again, that I never picked up earlier. I challenge you to do the same.
 - a) It is yet another reminder that you can *never* exhaust what you can learn from the Word of God.
2. Last week I mentioned that Chapters 4, 5 and 6 could be subtitled “Daniel and the 3 kings”.
 - a) Remember that there are no chapter breaks in the original story.
 - b) In each chapter, we read of Daniel’s encounter with a different king.
 - i) In each story, we learn of how Daniel witnesses to that king.
 - c) One of the great lessons for us is to study the *characters* of the three kings.
 - i) There are elements and personality styles in each of those kings that are common to all humankind.
 - ii) God calls Christians to be *his* witness to the world. The kings can be thought of as different *types* of people, and how we are to be representatives to them.
3. Chapter 6 has 3 main characters: Daniel, the king (Darius) and the head-administrators of the government who are referred to as the “satraps”.
 - a) This chapter has all the great characteristics of a good drama. There is jealousy, intrigue, a dramatic turning point, a rise, fall, and rise again to power by the hero. One can easily turn this one chapter story into a dramatic presentation.
 - b) One of the interesting things to do is to read the chapter from the perspective of each of the 3 characters: Daniel, the king, and the ruling officials who wanted to kill Daniel. Think about what was the motivation of each of these characters at different points of the story?
 - i) By the way, that is what meditating on the Bible means. It simply means to “think about it”. God *encourages* us not only to read the Bible, but to meditate on its meaning.
 - a) God told Joshua, “Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. (Joshua 1:8, NIV)
4. With that brief intro, let’s get rolling! Verse 1: It pleased Darius to appoint 120 satraps to rule throughout the kingdom
 - a) In the last verse of Chapter 5, Darius lead an invasion into Babylon and conquered the city without a battle. History taught us that he diverted the river that flows under the city walls and was able to capture/kill the king without a battle.
 - b) The City of Babylon is now part of the Medo-Persian Empire. This Empire was conquering territory of the Babylonian Empire for years, and now captured the capitol.

- c) So who is King Darius? A “clue is in the last verse of this chapter: “So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.”
 - i) This is a classical historical debate over who is Darius.
 - a) One view is that he is the #2 guy under Cyrus the Persian. Or simply, Darius was in charge of the region that covered Babylon.
 - b) Another view is that Darius and Cyrus are the same person. The word Darius can mean title, like the word “Caesar” is a title. The verse can be translated with that thought in mind.
 - c) Another view is that he was the son of Cyrus.
 - d) The 3rd common view is that “Darius” is an official known as Gubaru in ancient documents, whom Cyrus appointed as ruler over Babylon immediately after its capture (Source: David Guzik)
 - e) For those of who don’t care about historical details, lets just say Darius is in charge. ☺ Here he is setting up the new government.
 - d) For now, the only thing you have to remember is the word “satraps”. It is simply a person in charge of an area of territory that is part of the Empire.
- 5. Verse 2 (the sentence continues): with three administrators over them, one of whom was Daniel. The satraps were made accountable to them so that the king might not suffer loss.
 - a) So here is the chain of command: 1) the king, 2) the three administrators, and 3) was the 120 satraps. Among “the big 3” was Daniel.
 - b) It is amazing to think about Daniel at this point in his life.
 - i) Daniel is now approximately 80 years old.
 - ii) He served most of his adult life as an administrator in the Babylonian Empire under King Nebuchadnezzar. He rose to power to be the #2 man.
 - iii) It is rare, or downright impossible for a top official for a conquered kingdom to *also* be a top official for the *next* kingdom. Any king would be suspicious of Daniel’s loyalty. Daniel spent his whole life serving in the Babylonian kingdom, and now he is trusted enough to serve as a top official in the kingdom that *overthrew* Babylon.
 - a) That alone says a lot for Daniel’s character. Daniel didn’t serve in the Babylonian kingdom because it was a “good place to be”. Daniel served there because it is what God called him to do, period!
 - b) Daniel’s loyalty was to God and God alone. It is *because* of that loyalty and dedication that Daniel had the *character* to be a good servant.
 - (1) That should be something for Christians to learn as well. As Christians, we should be outstanding at *whatever* role or function we are in, assuming you are doing what God called you to do! The secret is our strength and abilities come from God himself. Once we realize and acknowledge that, we *then* have the ability to be an outstanding citizen in the world itself.
 - iv) I had to wonder what the interview process was like for Daniel.
 - a) The king *had* to worry about his age. Daniel was about 80 years old, and the king picked him for a pressure filled job as a top administrator.
 - b) The king probably heard about Daniel’s fatal prediction about King Belshazzar in the last chapter.
 - c) Remember in the last chapter King Belshazzar saw “the writing on the wall”. Daniel interpreted it as saying in effect, “King, you blew it, you disobeyed God, you should have known better, and you are going to die tonight”.
 - d) The text doesn’t say where Daniel was when Belshazzar was killed.

- e) I suspect one of the reasons Daniel was picked was Darius found out that Daniel was not loyal to King Belshazzar.
 - c) Daniel himself had to be amazed by all this.
 - i) Chapter 5 implied Daniel was now in retirement.
 - ii) He served his time under King Nebuchadnezzar. After that king, the succeeding kings of Babylonian Empire ignored Nebuchadnezzar's proclamation about Daniel's god including King Belshazzar.
 - iii) Daniel was brought out of retirement to interpret the writing on the wall.
 - a) Daniel probably thought, "I may be killed for this, but I'll just speak the truth to Belshazzar". I just do what God calls me to do, and not worry about the human consequences.
 - iv) So what happens? Daniel gets back in the world of politics and government, once again as a top administrator, same location, but under a different empire.
 - v) That alone must have driven Daniel to praise God for rescuing him again.
 - vi) That of course, is the lesson for us. We need to trust God *no matter what the consequences*. Sometimes God will call us to do something unpopular or can cost us our lives. It is a time like that where God tests our faith and our loyalty.
- 6. Verse 3: Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom.
 - a) Daniel had the advantage of experience. I'm further impressed about Daniel and his ability to get things done as well as the other, probably much younger administrators.
 - b) It is further proof that God was with Daniel and had further plans for him.
 - c) This is also a dangerous time for Daniel, as the text will indicate. I try to make it a life motto to be more cautious when things are going real well, and try to be optimistic when things are not going well.
 - i) Here is Daniel, back on top again. It is usually during times like that that God tests us. It is not only when we are in trouble that we should turn to God, but also turn during the good times, when the luxuries of life can make us less dependant upon Him. We need to remind ourselves that things can always change in a moment, as we'll discover in the next verse.
- 7. Verse 4: At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent.
 - a) As they say in drama, "And now, the plot thickens". ☺
 - b) Jealousy is striking in to the other administrators and satraps. You can almost hear them talking "I can't stand that Jew Daniel. He's not even one of us (Medes and Persians). Mister "goody-two-shoes" over there. He never messes up. He never cheats or takes short cuts. How can we live up to that standard anyway? You know what guys, for the good of all of us, he's got to go. We have to think of something".
 - c) The sad truth is the world hates people who live a righteous life. "Righteous" does not mean perfect. It means those who are disciplined in actively seeking God. Those who develop strong disciplined habits of prayer, study, communion with other Christians, etc.
 - i) You have to suspect that if Daniel cheated a little here and there, or cut corners here and there, the jealousy wouldn't be as bad or wouldn't exist at all. Then Daniel would just be "like everyone else".
 - a) This reminds me of one of the strangest parables in the Bible told by Jesus. It is in Luke, Chapter 16, Verses 1-9. It is nicknamed "the shrewd steward". I call it the "parable of the crooked company bookkeeper".

- b) To paraphrase, this steward was a cheat. When his boss was about to find out, he lowered the debt records of the boss's customers so he could have a job when the boss fired him. When the boss found out, the boss *commended* him for his shrewdness.
 - (1) As a Christian, you have to wonder why Jesus would tell a story *commending* illegal actions. A point to the story is that is the way the world is. They *admire* shrewd cheating, because deep down, the boss would do the same thing! It is a comment about the evil-nature of man.
 - (2) The conclusion of the story for Christians is *not* to be like this guy, but to just "be around" so you can be a witness to them *when* their money fails them.
 - ii) The reason I went off on this long tangent is that is what we are seeing by these administrators. If Daniel would just "cheat a little like everyone else", he would have been admired as being "shrewd" like them.
 - iii) Instead, Daniel was a man of upright character. That is what the world cannot stand. This is why Satan attacks so hard people like Daniel. Satan is well-aware that God uses people to witness to the world. An upstanding role model like Daniel is an outstanding witness for God, and thus, Satan uses whatever forces at his disposal to stop Daniel.
 - d) Speaking of Satanic attacks, there is one more underlying thing to see here.
 - i) Remember that the main plan of Satan is to stop God's redemptive game plan. God was working on sending the Messiah *though* the nation of Israel.
 - ii) At this time the nation of Israel was captured by the Babylonians, and Jerusalem was desolate. The Babylonians were now conquered by the Medo-Persian Empire.
 - iii) With Daniel in charge, Daniel could influence the king to let the people go back to Jerusalem.
 - a) In the Book of Jeremiah, he predicted that the captivity would last *exactly* seventy years:
 - b) "This whole country will become a desolate wasteland, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years." (Jer. 25:11, NIV)
 - c) About this time, the 70 years were almost up.
 - d) Satan was not about to stand by and watch someone like Daniel be the #2 man to the Medo-Persian king with the 70 years almost up. Thus, I suspect there is an underlying-evil element in wanting to kill Daniel.
- 8. Which leads to Verse 5: Finally these men said, "We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God."
 - a) These men couldn't find anything bad about Daniel, so they needed to make a law that was contrary to the Jewish laws.
 - b) They *knew* Daniel's character was to never violate the Jewish laws. Because he was such a man of high character, the only way they could trap him was to make a law contrary to the laws of Daniel's God. In other words, they would make a law that violates one the 10 commandments.
 - c) Isn't that a great reputation to have? They couldn't find anything wrong with Daniel. He has a reputation of *never* violating the laws of his God, and thus they attacked that area of his character.

- i) So that is the question for *all* of us. Are we known among our neighbors as those who loyally follow God? Do our neighbors know you can always find us in church on Sunday morning? Do our neighbors know you can find worn out Bibles in our homes? Do our neighbors know that we are people of prayer? Do our neighbors see the joy in our heart?
 - ii) "The world is a very poor critic of my Christianity, but it is a very sufficient one of my conduct." They don't know the intricacies of doctrine, or the intimacies of worship with God; but they can tell a bad temper, selfishness, conceitedness or dishonesty when they see it." (Alexander Maclaren)
- 9. Now the bad guys approach the king with their evil plot; Verse 6: So the administrators and the satraps went as a group to the king and said: "O King Darius, live forever! ⁷ The royal administrators, prefects, satraps, advisers and governors have all agreed that the king should issue an edict and enforce the decree that anyone who prays to any god or man during the next thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be thrown into the lions' den. ⁸ Now, O king, issue the decree and put it in writing so that it cannot be altered--in accordance with the laws of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed." ⁹ So King Darius put the decree in writing.
 - a) If I had to say what is the greatest weakness of mankind, I would argue his ego.
 - i) All though the Bible, God argues against pride. Pride is the elevation of one's own interest over those of God's or others.
 - ii) To fear the LORD is to hate evil; I (God) hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech. (Proverbs 8:13, NIV)
 - iii) The reason I bring this up is that is the method used to appeal to the king.
 - b) Let me paraphrase the thoughts of the administrators: "Oh king Darius, long live the king! You are now in power over this territory of Babylonia. The gods have placed you in this power oh king! Yet, we need to test the loyalty of these people. After all, this is a foreign land, and there may be people still loyal to the old empire. Your highness, we came up with this wonderful idea. For the next 30 days, just 30 days, nobody is allowed to pray to anybody but you, oh king. After all, the great gods placed you in charge! What's the harm in just the next 30 days everybody praying to just you and after that, everybody can go back to praying to whoever they want. No big deal, and this way, we get to see if there is any disloyalty in the kingdom.
 - i) The king, whose ego just grew a notch, fell into the temptation. It sounded reasonable and it had to appeal to his ego.
 - c) I should also comment a little on the evil of these administrators. Not all evil people carry guns and knives. Some use "the fountain pen" to carry out their evil thoughts. History has shown that terrible laws have been past by men with wicked intentions. They let the "enforcers" of the laws do their dirty work for them.
 - i) To me on judgment day, people like this will receive more severe punishment than those who carry out the sins they have enacted.
 - ii) Verse 9 says, "So King Darius put the decree in writing." You can almost see the smiles on the administrators when this happened.
 - d) I should also comment on Verse 8. It says, "put it in writing so that it cannot be altered". In the laws of Medo-Persian Empire, once a king puts an edict in writing he himself cannot overturn it, nor can any succeeding king.
 - i) If you remember the vision of the 4-metal statue by King Nebuchadnezzar back in Chapter 2, each metal represented a different kingdom.
 - ii) The head-was a head-of-pure Gold. Daniel himself said that it represented the Babylonian Empire.

- iii) Daniel further stated that the chest, which was made out of silver, would be an *inferior kingdom* (Daniel 2:39). The Medo-Persian Empire is the fulfillment of the “inferior” kingdom.
 - iv) How is it inferior? Simple. A Medo-Persian king had less power. He couldn’t revoke his own laws or the laws of a previous king.
- 10. Verse 10: Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.
 - a) My favorite part of this verse is the last five words: “just as he had done before”.
 - i) It can also be translated “as he always did”.
 - b) The point is that Daniel heard the decree and did not change his behavior at all.
 - c) Daniel was a man of prayer, before, during and after this event. It was part of his character.
 - i) The point is if Daniel did not have a daily habit of prayer, do you think he would start *now* that a death-decree was issued for prayer?
 - ii) That is the lesson for us. The importance of disciplined Christian habits so that we can be of use for Jesus. It is not a “legalistic” thing. We are not trying to improve our standing with God. We develop these habits so we can be of good use to God.
 - iii) There is a story in Matthew and Mark’s gospel about the disciple’s failure to cast out a demon. They brought the man to Jesus, who cast out the demon. When the disciples asked why, Jesus responded:
 - a) So He said to them, “This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting.” Mark 9:29 (NKJV) (The NIV does not have “and fasting”).
 - b) The natural question I would have is: “*What* kind?” You mean some disciples we can “just” cast out and others require prayer and fasting? How do we know which is which?
 - (1) The answer is we don’t. The point is Jesus wants them to have a continual disciplined lifestyle of prayer and fasting. I’ll discuss fasting another day. I’m running long here.
 - (2) (Credit to this illustration – Alistair Beg).
 - d) I love the fact that Daniel’s window was opened “toward Jerusalem”. I believe Daniel was focused on the hope of the coming Messiah. Even though Jerusalem was in ruins during this time period, Daniel trusted and believed in the literal promises of God and he directed his prayers accordingly. Facing toward Jerusalem was Daniel expressing his faith in that promise.
 - e) Also notice in Verse 10 about the words “(Daniel is) giving thanks to his God”.
 - i) This is a guy who is now violating the Medo-Persian law, punishable by death.
 - ii) He’s not praying, “Oh God, overturn this wicked law.
 - iii) He’s not praying “Oh, God, kill these evil satraps”
 - iv) He’s not praying “Oh, God strike down the king for passing such a stupid and blasphemous law”
 - v) Daniel is giving thanks. Let me speculate: “Thank You Lord, for the wonderful life you have given me. Thank you for the opportunities you have given me to be a witness for you. Thank you for the spiritual gifts you have given me to be a witness to kings of empires. Thank you for the spiritual gifts to live a holy and righteous lifestyle before you. Thank You Lord for the eternal salvation that is mine for worshiping you. Thank you Lord for this wonderful opportunity now presented before me to show my love for you when the world around is praying to other Gods.

- (1) That is the proper attitude of Christians.
 - (2) One of the big-things to notice about Daniel's life is that you never read of him seeking revenge on those around him. I believe that is why Daniel is called "highly esteemed" by God himself. (Daniel 9:23, 10:11 and 10:19).
- b) I believe one of the reasons Daniel was favored over the other leaders to be the king's top man was Daniel's attitude. I suspect Daniel had a positive attitude every day. That comes from having a daily prayer life based on gratitude. (Hey, that's a good slogan: "Gratitude is good for your attitude!" ☺) People *like* to be around positive people.
 - (1) People will even ask, "how can you be so positive all the time?" That is where your best witnessing opportunity for Christ comes in. Everybody has problems. The key is to have the eternal focus like Daniel. The key is to have a thankful prayer life to focus on all the blessings God gives us. Then comes the positive attitude out of our hearts as we have the right focus in mind.
- f) Last thing about this verse. The idea of praying three times a day is a long-standing Jewish tradition. A cross reference is from Psalm 55:
 - i) "But I will call on God, and the LORD will rescue me. ¹Morning, ²noon, and ³night I plead aloud in my distress, and the LORD hears my voice." (Psalm 55: 16-17, NIV)
11. Verse 11: Then these men went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help.
 - a) Daniel, who probably knew it was a setup, was caught by those who spied him out.
12. The only person unaware at this point that it was a setup, was the king. Verse 12: So they went to the king and spoke to him about his royal decree: "Did you not publish a decree that during the next thirty days anyone who prays to any god or man except to you, O king, would be thrown into the lions' den?" The king answered, "The decree stands--in accordance with the laws of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed."
 - a) To paraphrase "your highness, didn't you sign this law into effect? The king answered, "yes, I did do that". Thus the king can't back out when they break the news.
 - b) Remember that the king favored Daniel and was going to make him in charge of all these guys. Thus the necessity on their part for all this formality.
13. Verse 13: Then they said to the king, "Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the decree you put in writing. He still prays three times a day."
 - a) Notice it wasn't "Daniel defied you just this one time to pray to his god." It was "Daniel does, as Daniel always does". The mention of his daily habit.
14. Verse 14 When the king heard this, he was greatly distressed; he was determined to rescue Daniel and made every effort until sundown to save him.
 - a) The king now knew he was setup. Here we read of sorrow and repentance.
 - b) One of the things I pondered in this chapter is whether or not this King is "saved". I believe Nebuchadnezzar is, as I discussed two chapters ago. I believe Belshazzar is not, as I discussed last chapter. The evidence is mixed on this king, Darius.
 - i) On one hand he realized he sinned when he signed the decree.
 - ii) The verse implied he "repented" by trying to think of a way out of this mess.
 - iii) What I'm still not sure about is whether or not he acknowledged Daniel's god as "the" God, as Nebuchadnezzar did.
 - iv) I believe Darius respected Daniel and knew he was a man of integrity. This is why Darius regretted his actions and did what he could to get out of this mess.

15. Verse 15: Then the men went as a group to the king and said to him, "Remember, O king, that according to the law of the Medes and Persians no decree or edict that the king issues can be changed."
 - a) You can almost see the childish whining in this verse as they said, "Remember king, you signed it. You can't change your mind now. It's against the rules."
 - b) You can almost sense the king's preference of Daniel over any of these characters. He probably thought, "Now I know for sure I made the right choice to put Daniel in charge of all these characters." The problem is how do I get out of this mess. What he didn't know of course, is that God already had a plan.
16. Verse 16: So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions' den. The king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!"
 - a) What the king did not realize is that God already has. Compare this with Daniel's 3 friends who got thrown in the fiery furnace in Chapter 3.
 - i) In Chapter 3, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego told King Nebuchadnezzar that God *is able* to rescue them from the furnace, "but if not", we still won't worship false gods. We serve the living God no matter what the circumstance.
 - ii) I suspect that scene, from roughly 50-60 years ago, flashed in Daniel's mind as he was being thrown in the pit.
 - a) I suspect Daniel was a "good witness" going into the pit. Judging by Daniel's personality throughout the book, I suspect he peacefully went in without a struggle or a curse to his captors.
 - b) When the king threw this little blessing at Daniel, I suspect Daniel smiled at the king & said, "Your highness, He already has rescued me!"
17. Verse 17: A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles, so that Daniel's situation might not be changed.
 - a) The "signet ring" is used the same way we use a signature today. A little bit of hot wax is poured at the end of a decree, and the king implants his ring into the wax, thus creating the official signature of the king.
 - b) I can almost see the administrators who cooked up this plot snickering here. They thought, "Good, this goody-two-shoes is out of our hair". Now we can get back to running the kingdom the way it should be run. It's too bad he had to die. He was a nice guy, but it was for the good of the Empire. " This is the way evil men rationalize away their bloody hands to alleviate the guilt.
 - i) As we'll see, these men will suffer the fate they intended for Daniel.
 - ii) There is a Proverb that applies here:
 - a) If a man digs a pit, he will fall into it;
if a man rolls a stone, it will roll back on him. (Proverbs 26:27, NIV)
 - b) I've always nicknamed this proverb the "Willie E. Coyote" proverb ☺ as it describes the actions in many Roadrunner cartoons.
 - c) It refers that God will let the evil plans fall on those who devised it.
 - d) The idea is that God makes the wicked suffer via their plans they set out for others.
18. Verse 18: Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating and without any entertainment being brought to him. And he could not sleep.
 - a) I always suspect that Daniel got a better night's sleep on the floor of the lion's den the king in his royal bed.
 - b) Daniel accepted his fate. Daniel trusts in the true and living God. Daniel figured at this point, "If God wants me to die as his martyr, so be it, if he wants me to live another day to serve him, so be it. I'll just keep on giving thanks to my God.

- c) The king, who is feeling remorse for allowing his ego to have this decree signed.
 - i) The king is feeling guilty for letting an innocent man die.
 - ii) This is what sin does to our lives. It brings on the guilt. We can't eat nor sleep because the guilt of our heart.
 - d) One of the great blessings we have as a Christian is the *assurance* of forgiveness for our sins. That alone, should keep our perspective right before God.
 - e) Jesus taught us *never* to worry. I view worrying as the opposite of faith.
 - i) Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. (Matthew 6:34, NIV)
 - ii) "If you are going to worry, why pray?
If you are going to pray, why worry? (Source unknown)
19. Verse 19: At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lions' den.²⁰ When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?"
- a) The king's guilt kept him up all night. So, like a little child on Christmas morning who can't wait to get started, the king rushes out in his robe and pajamas to see if Daniel is still alive. (OK, I made up the part about the robe and pajamas. ☺)
 - b) Notice the king went out with hope. Possibly the hope of clearing his guilty conscious.
 - c) I suspect the king heard the now-old stories about Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and the furnace. At this point, they were probably "legendry fables" and he wanted to see it for himself. He may have heard about the decree Nebuchadnezzar proclaimed at the end of the seven cow-years how Daniel's God is the "God of gods".
 - i) Daniel himself may have told these stories to the king. Remember that Daniel was one of the top 3 administrators.
 - ii) Notice the king calls Daniel's God "servant of the *living* God". I suspect those words were taught to him by Daniel himself. Daniel probably explained his faith to King Darius upon being asked.
20. Verse 21: Daniel answered, "O king, live forever!"²² My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, O king."
- a) Notice Daniel didn't say, "Yeah, I'm all right, no thanks to you, your highness!"
 - b) Notice Daniel didn't say, "Yes I'm ok. Now go get those guys who plotted this!"
 - c) Daniel explains that God, not Daniel shut the mouth of the lions. Daniel reminds the king of his innocence.
 - i) Daniel doesn't remind the king of his innocence for the sake of his ego, but to remind the king that God is in charge, and it is *through* God that Daniel was able to have the ability to be an upstanding person.
 - d) Daniel's focus was on being a good witness to the king to the very end. He focused on telling the king about the nature of the true and living God. That God *does* rescue us out of trouble. God *goes out of his way* to show his glory to us. We don't know how God works. Sometimes we can't explain the horrible things that happen to believers. We *do* know, we are *assured in fact*, that all things work out for God's glory. All refers to "all", no exceptions (reference: Romans 8:28).
 - e) I'm fascinated by the term "found innocent in his sight" in Verse 22.
 - i) Initially it sounds non-Biblical. The Bible *clearly* teaches that no one is innocent before God. This is taught in the Old and New Testament.
 - a) "All of us are dirty with sin. All the right things we have done are like filthy pieces of cloth. " (Isaiah 64:6, New Century Version)
 - b) Paul said, "As it is written: 'There is no one righteous, not even one'" (Romans 3:10 NIV, {quoting Psalm 53:3}).

- ii) Daniel, like us is not innocent because of his deeds. He is innocent as he looked *forward* to the day of the coming Messiah, just as we are innocent in God's eyes as we look *back* at the day of the Messiah, i.e., Jesus as payment for our sins. Daniel looked at the blood sacrifices as (prophetic) payment for his sins; just we look back at the cross as payment for our sins.
 - iii) Many commentators draw parallels between Jesus being buried in the tomb and coming alive-again, with Daniel being in the lion's den and being miraculously coming alive again.
 - a) Remember that Bible prophecy is not just direct predictions it is also patterns and word-pictures. Both Judaism and Christianity teach this.
 - f) Remember that the miracle wasn't just the lions not eating Daniel. They could have clawed him to death as well.
21. Verse 23: The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God. ²⁴ At the king's command, the men who had falsely accused Daniel were brought in and thrown into the lions' den, along with their wives and children. And before they reached the floor of the den, the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.
- a) God does save the innocent and punish the wicked. These two verses is a beautiful picture of that analogy.
 - b) Those who sought to punish Daniel died by the same fate planned for them.
 - i) For those who argue, maybe the lions weren't hungry when Daniel was there, just read these verses! ☺
 - c) Notice their wives and children also were killed. Some comments:
 - i) It was part of the Medo-Persian custom as capital punishment that their wives and children were also killed. It was designed as a scare tactic for obedience to the laws of the land.
 - ii) Others speculate it was done this way so the wives and children don't take revenge one day upon Daniel.
 - d) I'm reminded of a commentary by God within the giving of the 10 commandments:
 - i) God said, "You shall not bow down to them or worship them (false idols); for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me (Exodus 20:5)
 - ii) This verse does not mean God punishes the innocent for the guilt of their parents. (See Ezekiel 18:17-18). It means that the innocent *suffer because* of the sins of the parents, often to the 3rd and 4th generation.
 - a) An example is the alcoholic's behavior affects their spouses and children.
 - iii) In the end, one has to simply remember that God is perfect. A perfect God will judge people fairly for eternally. The details I'll leave up to God to work out. ☺
22. Verse 25: Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations and men of every language throughout the land: "May you prosper greatly! ²⁶ "I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel.
 "For he is the living God and he endures forever;
 his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end.
²⁷ He rescues and he saves; he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth.
 He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions."
 a) Verses 25 to 27 are what I call "an executive memo". King Darius wrote this decree and sent it out all over the Medo-Persian Empire.
 b) For those of you with a sense of déjà vu, this should be familiar. A generation ago, King Nebuchadnezzar did something similar after God restored his health & kingdom.

- c) I was thinking about this decree from your average-conquered-citizen who lived far away from King Darius's headquarters.
 - i) That person, who was probably under the reign of Nebuchadnezzar as well, remembers the last decree about "The true and living God".
 - ii) Now, under a new empire, another king comes along with a similar decree.
 - iii) So, if you are that person, with no knowledge whatsoever of the Hebrew God, all of a sudden receive the 2nd executive memo in your lifetime to honor the God of the Hebrews that must be impressive.
 - iv) And that is the intention of God. To reach out to an unbelieving and dying world about his presence and who he is.
 - v) God uses people like Daniel, you and me to reach out to world leaders to tell them about the true and living God. Through our actions, our lives, our attitudes, and occasionally, through miracles, God uses us as witnesses about the nature, character and requirements of the God of the universe.
 - d) I mentioned earlier that I'm still a little suspect whether or not King Darius is saved. Reading the decree over and over again, you're not sure if Darius is saying that God is the *only* God, or if Daniel's God is one to be respected, and "it's still ok to have other gods as well. Commentators debate over this.
 - i) I'm not sure if Darius repented or he is just acknowledging Daniel's God as one to be awed and respected. I'll guess we'll find out when we get to heaven.
 - ii) I have found "executive memo's" are usually written by staff members and signed by the king. I suspect Daniel himself, who is now a top administrator again, helped put the wording together. It makes interesting speculation.
23. Last Verse: So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.
- a) Back on page 2, I explained that one theory is that Darius and Cyrus may be the same person. The same verse *can* be translated as to imply they are the same person. The word Darius can be a "title", the same way Caesar is a title.
 - b) Thus, we now come to the end of the narrative section of Daniel.
 - i) The first six chapters tell six stories that occurred during Daniel's life.
 - ii) The last six chapters are six separate prophetic visions that also occurred during Daniel's life. Think of Chapters 7-12 as appendices to the Chapters 1-6.
 - c) I'm sure Daniel, who wrote his this book near the end of his life, sat back in amazement thinking about these events. I'm sure at the time, he just went through them, not seeing the big-picture until years later.
 - i) That is common for us as well. We often can't see the big-picture of how God is working in our lives and the lives of people around us until we stand back afterwards and watch the impact of our actions.
 - d) Daniel's life has been an inspiration to Jews and Christians for centuries. By living a life where Daniel *always* stands up for what is right, by never taking revenge for himself (but allowing God to fight his battles), we see the character of Daniel as a role model for all of us as believers.
24. Let's pray: Oh Sovereign and Great God of the Universe help us to remember that you are perfect and you are in charge of all things. Thank you for the lives you have given us. Thank you for the opportunities you present before us to be witnesses to a corrupt and dying world. May the Spirit of the Living God work through us, and give us a positive outlook so that we may boldly be witnesses for you. For we ask this in Jesus name, Amen.

Bonus Material – Handouts for the class

Notes for Daniel- Chapter 6 (Page 1 of 4)

Daniel in the Lion's Den

Introduction – “The Danger of the Familiar”

- This story is familiar to most Christians.
- This story is mentioned in the New Testament as “one of the great acts of faith” (Hebrews 11:33).
- One can never “over-study” a section of Scripture. There are always new things to learn.
- Meditating on the Bible means to “think about it”. God encourages us not only to read the Bible, but to meditate on its meaning.
- God told Joshua, “Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. (Joshua 1:8, NIV)

History and Background for Chapter 6:

- The City of Babylon is now part of the Medo-Persian Empire.
- The End of Chapter 5 saw the death of the king of the Babylonian Empire and all his sub-leaders.
- The City of Babylon was not destroyed. It is now simply part of a new Empire.
- Chapter 6 opens with King Darius ruling over the City of Babylon.
- Daniel was probably in his early 80's when the events of this chapter took place.

A Summary of Chapter 6:

1. The Government Leaders in Babylon form a Conspiracy Against Daniel (Verses 1-5).
 - a) King Darius sets up the government over Babylon and its surrounding area.
 - b) Darius sets up 3 top administrators, including Daniel, and 120 men (“satraps”) under them.
 - c) Daniel excelled in his job over the other leaders. The “others” form a conspiracy to kill him.
 2. The Government Leaders submit their plans to kill Daniel to King Darius. (Verses 6-9).
 - a) King Darius liked Daniel. The plan was much more subtle and didn't mention killing Daniel.
 - b) The plan was to make a law that only allowed worship of Darius, knowing Daniel won't obey.
 - c) The king, thinking this law was a good idea, and not realizing it would affect Daniel, signed it.
 3. Daniel gets arrested. These verses cover his trial and sentence (Verses: 10-18).
 - a) The conspirators “found” Daniel praying to God, “as he always does”.
 - b) The conspirators' tattletale on Daniel to the king.
 - c) The king realized Daniel had been setup, but there was nothing he can do about it, because Medo-Persian laws can not be changed once they are signed into law.
 - d) The king ordered Daniel to be thrown in the lion's den. He felt remorse over his decision.
 4. Daniel's deliverance and his enemies' punishment (Verses 19-24):
 - a) King Darius goes the next morning to see if Daniel is still alive.
 - b) Daniel cries out from the lion's den that he is alive and “innocent” before God and the king.
 - c) The king orders Daniel to be lifted out from the Lion's Den.
 - d) The king next orders Daniel's conspirators to be thrown in the den, where they are killed.
 5. King Darius writes an “executive memo” to be posted all over the Empire (Verses 25-28).
 - a) It says, “All people under my jurisdiction must fear and respect the God of Daniel”.
 - b) The king praises Daniel's God for rescuing him.
 6. This is the end of the narrative portion of Daniel. Chapters 7-12 are prophetic messages/visions.
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Notes for Daniel- Chapter 6 (Page 2 of 4)

Bible Cross-References and Additional Comments:

Verses 1: Who is King Darius?

- Verse 28 of Daniel Chapter 6 says, “Daniel prospered during reign of Darius and King Cyrus
- Some believe Darius was the son of Cyrus, and Darius was in charge of Babylon.
- Some believe they were one in the same. “Darius” is a title, like “king” or “Caesar” are titles.
- Some believe "Darius" is an ancient official known as Gubaru who in ancient documents, Cyrus appointed as ruler over Babylon immediately after its capture (Source: David Guzik)

Verse 2: Daniel in the new Medo Persian Government

- The Ruling Order: King Darius -> 3 Administrators (including Daniel) -> 120 “satraps”.
- The 120 ran the affairs, collected the taxes, etc. They reported to “big 3”, who reported to Darius.
- It’s amazing to ponder that a Hebrew slave rose to power to be the #2 man in Babylonian Empire.
- It is more amazing to see the same man be in charge by the group who conquered Babylon!

Verse 4: The other administrators, discovering Daniel was going to be promoted, sought to kill him.

- They saw Daniel as “Mister goody-two-shoes”. He won’t cheat a little like everyone else.
- There is a similar concept told by Jesus in Luke Chapter 16: 1-12
- Jesus tells the story of a dishonest bookkeeper who cheated on his boss.
- When his boss was getting wise, the bookkeeper cheated some more by lowering the bills to the boss’s clients. This way, the clients would “owe him favors” when he was fired.
- When the boss found out he “commended” the bookkeeper for his shrewdness.
- Jesus point is not to condone cheating. Jesus point is that is the way the world acts.
- The “world” commends their fellow cheater for being “shrewd”. Jesus says, “be above that”.
- “¹⁰For unless you are honest in small matters, you won’t be in large ones. If you cheat even a little, you won’t be honest with greater responsibilities...¹²And if you are not faithful with other people’s money, why should you be entrusted with money of your own?
(Luke 16:10, 12, The Living Bible)

Verse 4: There are demonic spiritual forces that don’t want to see Daniel in charge.

- The City of Jerusalem was in ruins at this time. God said it would be desolate for 70 years.
- “This whole country will become a desolate wasteland, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years.” (Jeremiah 25:11, NIV)
- Darius is the new “king of Babylon” even though the Babylonian Empire no longer exists.
- Satan was well aware of the fact the 70 years were almost up.
- Satan’s main objective is to stop/slow down God’s redemptive plan for mankind.
- Satan knew the Messiah would come through the Nation of Israel.
- The last thing Satan wanted was a Pro-Israel guy like Daniel being #2 in command!
- Therefore, I believe there were spiritual forces *behind* the attempt to kill Daniel.

Verse 5: The conspirators knew that the only way to get Daniel was “through his God”.

- What a great reputation to have to your enemies!
- Are we known to our neighbors/friends/co-workers as men and women of God?
- "The world is a very poor critic of my Christianity, but it is a very sufficient one of my conduct." They don't know the intricacies of doctrine, or the intimacies of worship with God; but they can tell a bad temper, selfishness, conceitedness or dishonesty when they see it." Alexander Maclaren

Notes for Daniel- Chapter 6 (Page 3 of 4)

Bible Cross-References and Additional Comments:

Verses 6: The conspirators approach the king through “pride”.

- The decree was to worship King Darius only for 30 days.
- The king thought it was a good idea 1) appealed to his ego 2) it gave a chance to check loyalty.
- I would argue the greatest weakness of man is our pride. This is the root of all sin.
- To fear the LORD is to hate evil; I (God) hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech. (Proverbs 8:13, NIV)
- The conspirators made a law with the purpose of condemning innocent people to death.
- Not all evil deeds are done with guns and knives. Some are done with the stroke of a pen.

Verse 10: Daniel, knowing the decree existed, prayed, “as he always did”.

- There is a story in Matthew and Mark’s gospel about the disciple’s failure to cast out a demon. They brought the man to Jesus, who cast out the demon. When the disciples asked why, Jesus responded: “This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting.” Mark 9:29 (NKJV) (The NIV does not have “and fasting”).
- Natural questions would arise:
- There is more than one “kind” of demon?
- How do we know “which kind” we are dealing with?
- That is Jesus’ point: We don’t know. That’s why we must have continual habits of praying and fasting in order to be used by God. It is not “works”; it is matter of being useful to God.

Verse 10: Daniel prays by giving thanks to his God.

- He doesn’t pray for revenge, but prays for gratitude for the life God has given him.
- That should be inspirational to us. To have the prayer of gratitude when facing tough times.
- Daniel is called “highly esteemed” by God himself. (Daniel 9:23, 10:11 and 10:19).
- I believe the reason he is given that title is due to the attitude of his prayer life.

Verse 10: Daniel prays three times a day.

- This is a long-standing tradition in Judaism for praying three times a day.
- “But I will call on God, and the LORD will rescue me. ¹Morning, ²noon, and ³night I plead aloud in my distress, and the LORD hears my voice.” (Psalm 55: 16-17, NIV)

Verse 17: The conspirators who try to kill Daniel will soon suffer the same fate.

- If a man digs a pit, he will fall into it;
if a man rolls a stone, it will roll back on him. (Proverbs 26:27, NIV)
- I’ve nicknamed this proverb the “Willie E. Coyote” proverb. ☺

Verse 18: The king couldn’t sleep out of remorse for what he had done.

- One of the great blessings we have as a Christian is the assurance of forgiveness for our sins. That alone, should keep our perspective right before God.
- Jesus said, “Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.” (Matthew 6:34, NIV)

Notes for Daniel- Chapter 6 (Page 4 of 4)

Bible Cross-References and Additional Comments:

Verse 22: Daniel says, “I was not killed by the lions because I was innocent in God’s sight.

- Is that a contradiction to Scripture?
- “All of us are dirty with sin. All the right things we have done are like filthy pieces of cloth. “ (Isaiah 64:6, New Century Version)
- Paul said, “As it is written: ‘There is no one righteous, not even one’” (Romans 3:10 NIV, {quoting Psalm 53:3}).
- Daniel, like us is not innocent because of his deeds. He is innocent as he looked forward to the day of the coming Messiah, just as we are innocent in God’s eyes as we look back at the day of the Messiah, i.e., Jesus as payment for our sins. Daniel looked at the blood sacrifices as (prophetic) payment for his sins; just we look back at the cross as payment for our sins.

Verse 23: The conspirators were killed along with their wives and children.

- It was part of the Medo-Persian custom as capital punishment that their wives and children were also killed. It was designed as a scare tactic for obedience to the laws of the land.
- Others speculate it was done this way so the wives and children don’t take revenge upon Daniel.
- Notice this commentary from the “10 commandments” passage in Exodus:
- God said, “You shall not bow down to them or worship them (false idols); for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me (Exodus 20:5)
- This verse does not mean God punishes the innocent for the guilt of their parents. (See Ezekiel 18:17-20). It means that the innocent suffer because of the sins of the parents, often to the 3rd and 4th generation.
- The one who sins is the one who dies. The son shall not be punished for his father’s sins, nor the father for his son’s. (Ezekiel 18:19b-20, The Living Bible)
- In the end, one has to simply remember that God is perfect. A perfect God will judge people fairly for eternally.

Epilogue – Ideas to Ponder:

- I’m sure Daniel, who wrote this book near the end of his life, sat back in amazement thinking about the events of his life. I’m sure at the time, he just went through them, not seeing the big-picture until years later.
 - That is common for us as well. We often can’t see the big-picture of how God is working in our lives and the lives of people around us until we stand back afterwards and watch the impact of our actions.
 - Daniel’s life has been an inspiration to Jews and Christians for centuries. By living a life where Daniel always stands up for what is right, by never taking revenge for himself (but allowing God to fight his battles), we see the character of Daniel as a role model for all of us as believers.
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