

DANIEL

Picking up our Daniel narrative with the defeat and capture of Belshazzar by Darius and the Medes, we turn our attention to Daniel Chapter 6 and the establishment of the Median government. Known for its story of Daniel in the lions' den, Chapter 6 also provides object lessons about governance, bigotry, and the continued strength of Daniel's faith, as God delivers him from the lions.

Read Daniel Chapter 6, then answer the following:

1. How old was Darius the Mede when he took over the kingdom? (see Daniel 5:31)
 - a. ANSWER: He was sixty-two. We can tell from his age and from his capture of the city of Babylon that he was a seasoned leader capable of leading the new Kingdom.
2. What was the first thing Darius did when he took over the kingdom?
 - a. ANSWER: He organized the kingdom under 120 Satraps, or Governors; and he put them under three leaders, 40 each. At the top of his organization then sat the King, with three rulers directly under him, and the 120 Satraps under them. Given that this is sixth century before Christ, isn't it interesting that even way back then, men knew how to rule and how to organize to ensure stability and accountability within a large organization. This is even more interesting when you consider that he was ruling a vast worldwide empire with three people and 120 Satraps. This made the three administrators very powerful people.
3. How did Daniel respond in his new position, under this new leader and new nation that were now in command?
 - a. ANSWER: He was so exceptional at the job that Darius was planning to put him over the entire kingdom. This is remarkable as well, given that his title under the Babylonian kingdom was Chief of the Magicians. Here again, Daniel accepts God's will for his life and continues to walk as man of honor and faith in serving God while carrying out the secular job given him in this new empire.
4. Once they learned of the King's plan to put Daniel in charge of everything, who turned against Daniel?
 - a. ANSWER: In addition to the other two Administrators, we are told that the "Satraps" also did not like this. All of the leadership under Darius turned against Daniel; he stood alone.
5. What did Daniels accusers actually see in Daniel, i.e., what did they find in his actions that gave them the ability to charge him before Darius?
 - a. ANSWER: Nothing. What a testimony about Daniel's character and great faith! His actions were in the open, and known to them, and no one could find anything in his character, his ethics, or his faith to accuse him of.
6. So what did Daniel do wrong? Did Daniel know he was violating a decree from Darius? What can we learn from this regarding our own lives?
 - a. ANSWER: Daniel 6:10 tells us that after Daniel learned of the decree, he went to his home to pray. Once again, we are provided Daniel's example as someone who turns to God, and not to his own devices. We also see that Daniel did not try to hide the fact that he was praying to God. He remained true to God despite the laws of the land, that were enacted to prevent him from having that relationship.
7. When Darius learned that Daniel had violated his decree, how did Darius react? Was he angry with Daniel?
 - a. ANSWER: He was not angry at all with Daniel. In fact, he and was stressed-out over how to work this out such that Daniel would not be executed. He spent the entire day and night trying to figure out an "out" for Daniel. This speaks volumes about Daniel, his actions, and the high regard that Darius obviously held him in.

8. What did the King say in Daniel 6:16 that gives us insight into Daniel's walk with God and his public testimony?
 - a. ANSWER: Darius said "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!" It was clear to all of the Administrators, the Satraps, and even the King who Daniel served, that Daniel served his God "continually" and fully submitted himself to God's care and protection. What a testimony! Would others say that about us?
 9. What happened to Daniel in the lions' den? How did his experience compare with the experience of his accusers and their families when they were put in the lions' den?
 - a. ANSWER 1: God protected Daniel; and it stood as stark testimony to the King the following morning, when the den was unsealed and, just like Daniel's three friends when they were thrown in the fiery furnace, not one hair was harmed on Daniel.
 - b. ANSWER 2: His accusers and their families were killed the moment they were thrown in the den. No one protected them. Their faith in their lies and their cunning could not save them from destruction. Man cannot save himself.
 10. What happened to Daniel following the lions' den experience?
 - a. ANSWER: Daniel's faith was rewarded, as he "prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus, the Persian". Thus, Daniel served the leaders of three separate world empires, and never once compromised his faith or his walk with God.
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Daniel wasn't just a man of faith with good ethical and work values; he was a man of God who did not let circumstances, or a personal crisis, affect his walk with God or his testimony. Even though he was in a foreign country and working under multiple kings and cultures, he never waived in seeking God first in all that he said and did. What an example he sets for us today.

In the next lesson, we will continue our study by beginning to examine Daniel's own prophetic dreams.

Have a great week everyone!

In Christ,

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