

Daniel

"Liars, Laws and Lions"

(Daniel 6:1-28)

The Setting/Overview: Darius knew that there was corruption within his new government. He needed to appoint people that he could trust among his own people and the people he had just conquered. Darius soon learned that Daniel could be trusted because he had "an excellent spirit." Daniel was one of three high officials that he placed in charge of the government. Within a short amount of time, Darius wanted to place Daniel over the whole government. Corrupt leaders cannot handle honesty among the ranks. The other officials resented Daniel. He was older (~83), he was a Jewish exile, and most importantly, he was a man of integrity. When the corrupt men initiated an attack on Daniel they were asking for God's Judgment. The significance of Daniel holding such a high office is that he would have been in a place of influence to assist the Jews as they returned to Judah just as he was able to do as a member of the Babylonian government.

The Outline:

- A. Daniel's Position Under Darius (6:1-3)
- B. The Official's Plot (6:4-9)
- C. Daniel's Ensnarement by the Plot (6:10-15)
- D. Daniel's Punishment in the Den (6:16-18)
- E. Daniel's Deliverance from the Den (6:19-23)
- F. The Official's Punishment (6:24)
- G. Darius' New Decree (6:25-28)

The Key Players:

- God
- Darius
- High Officials
- Low officials
- Accusers (& Families)
- Daniel
- Angel

Daniel's Position Under Darius

1	Darius began to construct his government (1).
2	Darius placed three high officials, including Daniel, over 120 Satraps (2).
3	Daniel stood out from the others because of an excellent spirit (3).

The Official's Plot

4	The High Officials and Satraps began to align against Daniel (4).
5	The leaders determined to attack Daniel in connection with his God (5).
6	The leaders schemed against Daniel before Darius without him knowing it (6).
7	The leaders lied to the King about an ordinance/injunction (7).
8	The leaders requested that the King sign the ordinance/injunction (8).
9	The flattered and deceived King signed the ordinance/injunction (9).

Daniel's Ensnarement by the Plot

10	Daniel became aware of the ordinance/injunction (10).
11	Daniel did not change his behavior and thus violated the law (10).
12	Some of the leaders observed Daniel violate the law (11).
13	These leaders remind the King of the ordinance/injunction (12).
14	These leaders accused Daniel of violating the ordinance/injunction (13).
15	The King was distressed and sought to rescue Daniel (14).
16	The leaders remind the King that the law cannot be changed (15).

Daniel's Punishment in the Den

17	The King commanded that Daniel be thrown into the lion's den (16).
18	The King called upon Daniel's God to save him (16).
19	The lion's den was sealed (17).
20	The King fasted and had a sleepless night of worry (18).

Daniel's Deliverance from the Den

21	At daybreak, the King went to the lion's den to investigate (19).
22	The King called out to Daniel (20).
23	Daniel called back giving credit to God and God's verdict (21-22).
24	The gladdened King had Daniel removed from the lion's den (23).

The Official's Punishment

25	The King had Daniel's accusers and families thrown into the lion's den (24).
26	The lions killed all of Daniel's accusers and their families (24).

Darius' New Decree

27	Darius made a decree that all were to tremble and fear Daniel's God (25-27).
28	Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and Cyrus (28).

Was Daniel right in praying during a time when the law prohibited it? The officials of Darius' court, seeing that Daniel was a faithful servant to the King, and not corrupt in any way, decided that the only way to attack Daniel was through the faithfulness that he demonstrated to his God. The officials convinced the King to sign a decree that if anyone petitioned God or man other than the King for thirty days, that they would be thrown into the lion's den. The decree was made for no other reason than to trap Daniel, for the princes knew that Daniel was faithful to his God even more so than he was to the King. The King, caught in a moment of vanity, and without thinking through the consequences of his actions, signed the decree. Now we answer the question "was Daniel right in praying during this time?" The answer to this is yes! And this is demonstrated in that God delivered Daniel when the sentence for his actions was executed against him. By continuing to pray, even though he knew that the decree had been signed, Daniel was essentially saying to God and to man, do what you must to me, but I will continue to honor my God. Peter and John ran into the same situation years later. In Acts Chapter 4 we read that Peter and John were arrested for teaching the Gospel of Christ to the Jews. Upon their release the next day the Jewish authorities told them not to teach in the name of Jesus again. However, the disciples looked at them and told them that they would not stop, and that the authorities needed to judge for themselves whether they should obey God or obey them. These men of faith wanted to obey the civil rules of the land. However, if those rules conflicted with honoring their God, they would not obey, and would gladly suffer the consequences.

Why did the King not rescind the decree? It was a proud claim of Persia that their laws, once established, were irrevocable, even by the King. In his edicts and judgments, the king was thought to be inspired by a pagan god, and therefore believed to be of divine origin. Consequently, laws were viewed as divine will and any infraction of it was an offense against deity. Although the King wanted to nullify the decree, he knew that he could not and decided that the only way that Daniel could be saved was by direct intervention by Daniel's God. In fact, he placed his only hope in this, executed the sentence by throwing Daniel in the lion's den, and then waited out a sleepless night.

Next Week: "Thy Kingdom Come (Daniel 7:1-28)"