

- With the opening of this chapter, we have again moved ahead historically. The kingdom of Babylon, the head of gold, has now disappeared; it has been removed from the number one spot of world power. Instead of Babylon, we have the Medo-Persian Empire, which was represented by the arms of silver in the dream of Nebuchadnezzar.
- **Not a great deal of time has passed since the end of chapter 5**, however, since we see that Darius is still setting up his government.
- Chapter 6 of the Book of Daniel is perhaps one of the **most familiar in the Bible** and certainly is the most well-known of this book. It is the account of Daniel in the den of lions. Our Sunday School lessons of old don't even begin to touch on how important this chapter is, and exactly what is happening here.
- Keep in mind as we study this chapter that Daniel is **at least 80 years old**, most likely between 85 and 90. This is NOT the young man of the Sunday School flannel boards!
- Amazingly, we have another powerful Gentile king giving glory and honor to the Most High God!

¹It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty satraps, to be over the whole kingdom; ²and over these, three governors, of whom Daniel was one, that the satraps might give account to them, so that the king would suffer no loss. ³Then this Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm.

- For all of you historians who may question who this Darius is, there is a great deal of speculation about **the identity of this “Darius the Mede.”** Some so-called scholars believe he is not mentioned in secular history. However, there is also a great deal of evidence that in fact he is **the uncle of Cyrus**, and that his “historical” name was **Cyaxares**. Here's some information that supports this thought:

Darius “was Cyaxares the son of Astyages, and uncle of Cyrus; he is called the Median, to distinguish him from another Darius the Persian, that came after, (Ezra 4:5), the same took the kingdom of Babylon from Cyrus who conquered it; he took it with his consent, being the senior prince and his uncle. Darius reigned not long, but two years;. . .” —Philologos, Bible Prophecy Research, Title: Darius the Mede, Submitted by: research-bpr@philologos.org, Update: April 06, 2001, URL: philologos.org/bpr/files/d003.htm

“The Encyclopedia Britannica informs us that, according to Ctesias, an ancient historian, the wife of Cyrus (mother of Smerdis and Cambyses) was the daughter of the Median king [Cyaxares]. If so, it would seem no more than natural that Cyrus, under moral obligation, should grant to his father-in-law the first place in the united kingdom (Cyrus being king of Persia all the same) till after Darius' death, only two years later (536 b.c.), when Cyrus became head of the empire.” — John Kofal, *Help & Food*, vol. 40, p. 314; www.fool4him.com/articles/darius.htm, October 7, 2000.



Medes and Persians in Battle, bas relief

- We now have Darius, ruler for the new Persian Empire, on the throne in Babylon, in need of trustworthy leaders, and once again, Daniel floats right to the top.
- As with any government or employer, when Darius the Mede was set over Babylon, he needed experienced, trustworthy people to manage the provinces for him. So he selected 120 provincial governors known as **satraps**, which means “protectors of the kingdom.” The phrase *“so that the king would suffer no loss.”* shows the importance of these administrators. They did indeed protect the kingdom. The “satraps” were government overseers, or administrators. Over these Darius placed three governors, including Daniel. Daniel must have proven himself again, as Darius is considering placing him above all the others.
- It was clear that Daniel was not serving the last government in the final days of the Babylonian Empire. He was very old at this point, but still filled with the Spirit of God, and could still have provided valuable input and oversight for any government wise enough to see his abilities. But Belshazzar probably did not value Daniel as Nebuchadnezzar did, and as Darius does here. Daniel may have even been “in retirement” at the end of the Babylonian empire, but he certainly is not now that the Persian Empire has come to power.
- Secular history records show that **Cyrus killed 3,000 Babylonian political prisoners** after taking over Babylon. Most likely all or most of those attending Belshazzar’s party the night they walked under the city walls were among that number. As now “third” in the kingdom, it would have been expected that Daniel would have been included in those killed outright. However, God not only spared his life that night, but also caused him to rise to power again under Darius and Cyrus. All for His purposes. And again the lesson that God honors those who honor Him is evident. God is always in control!
- **Darius must have put great faith in Daniel.** He trusted him explicitly, with good reason. In fact, he was even considering making him ruler over the whole realm – which is exactly what Nebuchadnezzar had done before him. Daniel always distinguishes himself wherever he goes. Aside from our Savior, Jesus, there is no greater role model in all of scripture. Interesting that even at the age of about 85, Daniel is considered the best in the kingdom. That should encourage all “retirees” to remember that we never retire from service to God, and as long as we are alive here we will have work to do for Him.

⁴So the governors and satraps sought to find some charge against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find no charge or fault, because he was faithful; nor was there any error or fault found in him. ⁵Then these men said, “We shall not find any charge against this Daniel unless we find it against him concerning the law of his God.”

- *“So the governors and satraps sought to find some charge against Daniel concerning the kingdom;...”* Darius is considering making Daniel #2 in his kingdom, over all the other governors and administrators. Daniel’s standing **became the cause of jealousy and envy** among the other governors and satraps eventually leading to the plot to destroy him. Now they are looking for dirt on Daniel. In today’s political campaigns this is still the method of choice to destroy the opponent. Look for dirt, exploit it, and bring down the other guy. This is what these guys are doing at this point.
- *“...but they could find no charge or fault, because he was faithful; nor was there any error or fault found in him. ...”* There was apparently **nothing in Daniel’s past** that these men could use against him. That in itself is extraordinary! Daniel had a very public life, yet nothing could be found to smear him with. Who alive today could say this? Daniel is truly a remarkable example of one who lived in integrity for His God. These “dirt diggers” were totally frustrated in their hunt for dirty laundry.

▪ **COMMENTARY:** Today a child of God ought to live so that the charges which inevitably will be leveled against him will be a lie. You cannot keep people from talking about you, but you can live so as to make them liars when they do talk about you. The apostle Paul enjoins all believers, “That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world” (Phil. 2:15). (McGee)

▪ **Life in the world today is the same.** Those who lack integrity seek to destroy those who have it. Even more those who live their lives for God. And often they will still seek ways to trip you up. This is exactly what happened to Daniel. Daniel had a long record of excellence, faithfulness and integrity in leadership, which is why he advanced again even when the empire changed hands. But the only thing they could find about Daniel is that his life revolved around “his God.”

▪ **COMMENTARY:** One thing is for sure: When you find yourself the number one man in any position—whether it be in church, in politics, in school, or even in the home—you are the one who will be watched by those who have a jealous spirit. If there is a flaw in your life, if you have an Achilles’ heel, they are going to discover that weak spot and may use it against you. (McGee)

- Any **weakness is a chance for the enemy to rush in and do his nasty work.** Even without such a “weak spot” those who faithfully serve God, like Daniel, are still targets. Now these jealous co-workers realize that there is nothing they can dig up on Daniel, and the only thing that might get Daniel on the hot seat must have something to do with his faithfulness to his God. They were going to have to manufacture something, and now they knew how to do it.
- *“We shall not find any charge against this Daniel unless we find it against him concerning the law of his God.”* Daniel was different than everyone else in the kingdom. From the very beginning of this book, when he took a stand about what he would or would not eat, choosing not to defile himself, Daniel has been different, and stood out from everyone else. He openly lived his faith. These plotters knew that whatever concocted charges they came up with would have to be associated with his faith. His prayer life was apparently very well known.
- It is easy to see why **Ezekiel mentioned Daniel in company with both Noah and Job:** *“The word of the LORD came to me: ‘Son of man, if a country sins against me by being unfaithful and I stretch out my hand against it to cut off its food supply and send famine upon it and kill its men and their animals, even if these three men--Noah, Daniel and Job--were in it, they could save only themselves by their righteousness, declares the Sovereign LORD.’”* (Ezekiel 14:12-14) All three of these Godly men were amazing and outstanding examples of those who are sold out to God, and live public lives of integrity and faith. The message in this verse, a little off the subject but still applicable, is also chilling and most likely timely. Something we should ponder!

⁶So these governors and satraps thronged before the king, and said thus to him: “King Darius, live forever!”⁷“All the governors of the kingdom, the administrators and satraps, the counselors and advisors, have consulted together to establish a royal statute and to make a firm decree, that whoever petitions any god or man for thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. ⁸“Now, O king, establish the decree and sign the writing, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter.”⁹Therefore King Darius signed the written decree.

- *“So these governors and satraps thronged before the king,…”* The word used here for “thronged” literally means “gathered tumultuously.” These jealous cheats practically fell all over each other as they rushed before Darius. They believed they had concocted the perfect ruse for the downfall of Daniel, and they couldn’t wait to get the ball rolling.

- *“All the governors of the kingdom,...”* This is a lie. Daniel, who was probably completely unaware of this idea, was the foremost of the three governors. He would never have agreed to such a plan or decree.
- *“...that whoever petitions any god or man for thirty days, except you, O king, ...”* This event, and secular history, indicate that **Darius was probably a good man**. But like most of us, Darius had a “weak spot,” a particular vulnerability – his vanity and ego. Like most everyone, he was subject to flattery. It is true that the higher up we go in position and power, the more likely we are to have our heads turned to praise and flattery. Darius was no exception. The plotters now tell Darius that all the administrators have decided to honor Darius by decreeing that everyone must worship and petition Darius, and no other god. This is to be a thirty day tribute to Darius. In doing so, these men are doing exactly what Nebuchadnezzar tried to do with his golden statue – force a state sponsored religion of sorts, but this one has a twist. It is directed at removing Daniel from the scene.
- *“...shall be cast into the den of lions....”* There is a penalty for refusing to obey such a decree, and it’s a big one. **Whoever does not do this will be executed**. The den of lions was another typical execution method in the ancient world, just like the fiery furnace. Here we see almost the exact same set-up as we saw in chapter 3, with the decree to worship Nebuchadnezzar’s statue. This time it is a temporary “honor” for Darius, but with the same intention, and the same penalty for failure – death.
- This sounded pretty good to Darius, who was probably honored by their suggestion. **He falls to his weakness and agrees with their decree**. He believes their lies, and their flattery, and like Nebuchadnezzar, did not think through this decree, the lies behind it, or the consequences.
- *“...establish the decree and sign the writing, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter.”* These conspirators well knew what the “law of the Medes and Persians” was and what it meant. This was a well-known and practiced tradition that essentially said that the reigning king was a god himself, and as such, anything that came out of his mouth was to be honored and obeyed without question, and could not be retracted, even by the king himself. We see this same law in effect in the story of Esther. The jealous administrators have now hooked Darius, perhaps unwittingly, in to their plot. They are practically dancing with glee inside.
- *“...Therefore King Darius signed the written decree.”* The plot has been sealed. Darius caved into his foolish pride. Many say he was tricked into this decree, but all these guys had to do was devise a clever plan and play to the pride of Darius. It worked. There was no going back, and this decree could not be revoked. This is a reminder that all of us must be careful of our actions, and be aware of the potential consequences of those actions, especially on guard against pride and what that can do. Darius later regretted this stupid act, and sorely wished he had not done it.



¹⁰Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.

- As someone probably near the king most of the time, working in the palace, he had knowledge of what was being presented to the king. He obviously would not agree with it, but he knew of it.

- Now that he knows it has been done, **he goes home and does what he always did – pray and honor his God.** What he knew of the decree, and its penalty, did not keep him from worshipping God. Instead of fearing to seek God, it drove Daniel to him, probably seeking God’s wisdom in this moment. Daniel was not worried, he was sure of His God.
- Daniel apparently had a custom of praying three times each day, on his knees (remember he is in his 80’s at least here!) **facing Jerusalem.** Daniel faced Jerusalem, because his real life was there, in the city of God, not here in exile among pagans. There is nothing in scripture that says that we must pray this way, but it has become a tradition among orthodox Jews to do this. It is also customary to face east when praying, because that is where the sun rises. There are scriptures that relate to this (It is interesting to do a study just on the word “east” in scripture). When Jesus returns, it is said He will come from the east. Jesus Himself said this: *“For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.”* (Matthew 24:27) Zechariah 14:3-4 also references His return in the east: *“Then the LORD will go forth And fight against those nations, As He fights in the day of battle. And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, Which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, From east to west, Making a very large valley; Half of the mountain shall move toward the north And half of it toward the south.”* We have even heard of Jews praying and facing east in airplane aisles (not an easy thing to do thousands of feet in the air)! And that is also why real estate east of the Temple area is so expensive and scarce. Jews want to be buried on the Mount of Olives (east of Jerusalem) to have a front row seat for His return! Daniel faced east because that was where he heart was. And practicing Jews today do the same thing.
- Daniel was not flaunting his worship when he opened his windows. This was his custom for years and everyone knew it. That’s how the conspirators knew what to do to bring Daniel down. Daniel didn’t do anything differently in this moment.
- Also notice that Daniel always *“gave thanks before his God.”* He was seeking to humble himself before God, to be truly thankful always, and to express that thanks in prayer. So often when we approach God it is to read through our laundry list of wants and needs. Daniel probably placed those before the Throne as well, but he was always in thanks. He sought fellowship with God before anything else. He was seeking God’s face, not necessarily His hand. Daniel merely ignored the decree, and did what he always did.
- **The entire book of Daniel can serve as a primer on prayer, and this chapter is no exception.** We see Daniel faithful in prayer through this book. What an incredible role model he provides for us. Even the small portion in this chapter about his prayer life gives us some very valuable lessons. Remember in Chapter 2 we learned the 4 P’s of prayer from Daniel’s prayer for the interpretation to Nebuchadnezzar’s dream: PARTNER (agree together with others) – PRAY (pray earnestly) – PATIENCE (wait and rest in God for the coming answer) – PRAISE (thank Him for the answer). Here’s what characterized Daniel’s obvious and predictable prayer life in this chapter:
 - 1) He prayed **regularly** (daily, 3X)
 - 2) He had a **set time** of prayer (3X a day)
 - 3) He had a **set place** of prayer (upstairs, by the window, facing Jerusalem)



- 4) He had an **attitude of humility** (he kneeled) – our bodies don't necessarily need to be humbled in this way, (nor can they be sometimes!) though it is often helpful to get the rest of us humbled – whatever physical position we take, we MUST approach God with a humble heart.
- 5) He **expressed gratitude** (always thanked God)
- 6) He was **faithful and consistent**.
- 7) **Nothing distracted him** (he was a chief governor in a huge world kingdom with lots of important and pressing responsibilities – he also had a group of corrupt individuals to supervise – but he was never too busy to pray)

I think we can all admit that our prayer lives are not what they should be. **MAY WE ALL LEARN SOMETHING HERE FROM DANIEL.**

¹¹Then these men assembled and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. ¹²And they went before the king, and spoke concerning the king's decree: "Have you not signed a decree that every man who petitions any god or man within thirty days, except you, 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 does not alter." ¹³So they answered and said before the king, "That Daniel, who is one of the captives from Judah, does not show due regard for you, O king, or for the decree that you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day."

- Can you picture these guys hiding and waiting near Daniel's house, ready to **"catch him in the act?"** These slimy characters are so excited because they think their plot is working well. The enemy seeks to find us "tripping up" also. Sometimes obeying the laws of the land may conflict with the laws and expectations of God. Which will we choose?
- It is a **compliment to Daniel that these bad guys are waiting for him**, and do indeed find him disobeying the king's decree. Daniel had a reputation, and probably everyone knew (by his life of constant integrity and faith in his God) that he would not abandon his faith or his God to obey the king's ridiculous decree. They knew Daniel would do what he always did – obey God. What they forgot is that every time Daniel honored God, God honored him. Pray we don't forget that!
- The conspirators now run to the king to report Daniel as a lawbreaker. They act like little children tattling on someone. This is all part of their plan. Notice, however, that they don't rush into it. They have to prepare the scene first. They ask Darius about the decree. *"Didn't you say this....?" "Isn't this the law?"* So slimy. The silent picture films would call this behavior "dastardly." They get Darius right where they want him, and then throw the dirt. They know there is no question or controversy about his guilt. They saw him, and probably so did many others. They believe Daniel is doomed at this point, and they are throwing a party emotionally. Darius has fallen for this ploy, hook, line and now sinker. Daniel had indeed disobeyed the king's decree, and nothing could help him at this point. The law could not be changed, and no pardon was allowed according to Persian law.
- *"That Daniel, who is one of the captives from Judah, does not show due regard for you, O king,..."* Now here comes the whole goal of the plot. Report Daniel and do away with him. In many ways, these are the worst of cowards. They could have assassinated Daniel. This was a common ploy in those days to remove people in office they didn't like, or to advance themselves to positions of power. But, instead, they get the king himself to do it. This is **nothing but cowardice**. Notice also how they refer to Daniel. *"one of the captives from Judah..."* shows utter disdain. They consider Daniel nothing more than an inferior conquered captive, someone who does not belong in the position given to him.

- To them, Daniel was nothing more than an old Jew, worthy only of disdain. Many commentators use this verse to expound upon **the world's anti-semitism**, something that has been in place for millennia, and is growing still today. It is found in every culture, and fuels the world's desire to rid itself of God's people. This is the enemy at work in hearts that do not honor Him, even sadly, in the "Christian" community. Everyone who calls themselves a Christian must search their hearts in this regard. God loves the Jews, has covenanted with them (unconditionally and eternally) and will fight for them. He will fulfill every one of His promises to them.
- These guys probably **thought their plan was working perfectly**, and that Daniel would soon be dead. They did not count on Daniel's God entering the picture. There is a verse in 1 Chronicles 16:22 they should have known: *"Do not touch my anointed ones; do my prophets no harm."* That behavior doesn't sit well with God, and soon God will step into this man-made debacle.

¹⁴And the king, when he heard these words, was greatly displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him; and he labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him.

- Darius knew immediately exactly what he had fallen for, and the horrible consequences. He was upset because his foolish edict was affecting his most prized governor – Daniel. And like Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel had a way of becoming friends even with pagan kings. It is likely Darius cared greatly for Daniel already, as the scripture tells in a moment. Some translations do not include the "himself" but it is understood in the Hebrew. Darius was angry at himself for falling for this trick. He had been duped, and he knew it.
- Many ancient **laws decreed that any kind of execution sentence given by the king had to take place within a matter of hours**, usually the same day. By the end of this day Darius would have to throw Daniel to the lions unless he could figure some way around this. He apparently worked very hard all day to try to spare Daniel from this death sentence.

¹⁵Then these men approached the king, and said to the king, "Know, O king, that it is the law of the Medes and Persians that no decree or statute which the king establishes may be changed."

- As the sun went down on that day, **our nasty friends are back**, making sure that the king follows through with his word. They remind him that his written decree (remember how they insisted he put it in writing to make it official) could not be rescinded. It was now time to see his word through, according to their own laws. They would make sure their plan succeeded. Darius had no way out at this point. These jealous conspirators probably watched as Darius tried to figure a way around this terrible situation, but there *was no way*, and it was their own laws that sealed this deed.

¹⁶So the king gave the command, and they brought Daniel and cast him into the den of lions. But the king spoke, saying to Daniel, "Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you."¹⁷Then a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signets of his lords, that the purpose concerning Daniel might not be changed.¹⁸Now the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; and no musicians were brought before him. Also his sleep went from him.

- So, without further options, Darius gave the command to have Daniel thrown into the den of lions. But **notice what he says to Daniel**: *"Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you."* We're not really sure that Darius believed what he said, but he had come a long way from his pagan roots.

- Darius probably had heard the tales of how God had already delivered Daniel and his friends, numerous times. Darius did not want this to happen to Daniel. Perhaps he even recognized that the God of Daniel was omnipotent and sovereign and **could deliver him**.
- **Darius had also seen that Daniel was faithful to God.** Daniel’s testimony to two pagan world empires was nothing short of miraculous. His life of integrity and unwavering faith was a powerful witness to the saving grace of God. He is definitely someone we should emulate. Sometimes it seems that being like our Lord Jesus is just too hard – after all, He is God! However, Daniel was just a man, and life, an entire lifetime, true to God is not impossible.

- They put a stone against the mouth of the den of lions, and then hot wax was poured around the stone to make sure it was sealed. The king, and the satraps or administrators also, **affixed their seals to guarantee that this sentence would not be changed**. When the king gave an order and it was sealed with his signet ring, it could not, for any reason – not even the king’s own word – be stopped. This was the practice in those days, and was **also used when Jesus was sealed in the tomb** (do we detect a possible “type” here?? Daniel, who had committed no crime, blameless, was illegally sentenced as was Jesus. He spent a night in a place where he should have been found dead, but instead emerged alive.)



This painting is by the Flemish master Peter Paul Rubens, in the 1600s. Notice the age of Daniel here. Not bad for an 85+ year old! Obviously either Rubens did not know the age of Daniel at this time, or he preferred painting a nice, younger and muscled man. The “Daniel” here also seems anguished. Daniel was completely calm. He knew his God would deliver him one way or the other. The real Daniel in the lion’s den was neither young or anguished. Religious art can sometimes give us the wrong impressions!

- Daniel spent the night down there. These lions were fierce and wild beasts—they were not toothless old lions. This was an execution chamber and the lions were kept “hungry” just for this purpose. Daniel should have been torn to pieces and killed.
- The interesting thing is that the **king probably was more disturbed than Daniel**. He anguished over what he had done, and over Daniel. Darius was obviously depressed and troubled over this. He wouldn’t eat, he didn’t want any entertainment, and he couldn’t sleep. It was probably a much longer night for Darius than for Daniel.

¹⁹Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions. ²⁰And when he came to the den, he cried out with a lamenting voice to Daniel. The king spoke, saying to Daniel, “Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?” ²¹Then Daniel said to the king, “O king, live forever! ²²“My God sent His angel and shut the lions’ mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you.”

- Finally, Darius’ long night is over and he rushes down to the den of lions. This is truly odd behavior for the king of a world empire. He would most likely not have done this if he didn’t have **some hope** that Daniel’s God had indeed spared his life, just as He had done many times before.

- The text indicates that this was VERY early in the morning, perhaps before sunrise. **Darius was beginning to understand the power of the Most High God.** He was obviously greatly upset. The words used in this chapter (like “lamenting voice” and “exceedingly glad” in next verses) show us just how much he loved Daniel.
- Darius couldn’t help himself. **He called out to Daniel, hoping he was still alive.** Darius could have sent anyone down to check on Daniel, but he had to come himself. This king cares a great deal about Daniel, and hopes his stupid mistake did not result in Daniel’s death. Darius is upset, but hopeful.
- **“O king, live forever!** was Daniel’s respectful greeting (unlike how he greeted and spoke to Belshazzar in Chapter 5!). This was the customary and expected greeting for anyone addressing the king. Daniel apparently knew and respected Darius, as he did Nebuchadnezzar, but not Belshazzar. We can imagine the intense relief Darius experienced upon hearing Daniel’s voice.
- **“My God sent His angel...”** Was this just an “angel?” Or perhaps the “Angel of the Lord?” He is identified as “His angel,” so it seems likely that it is the One we have seen many times before, the only member of the Godhead who appears “incarnate” (in the flesh), Jesus Himself. He appeared to shut up the mouths of the lions, and comfort Daniel, just as he appeared to cool the fire in the furnace in chapter 3.
- **“I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you.”** Daniel proclaims that he was found innocent before God, and he is also innocent of any wrong doing to Darius. Darius probably already knew that.
- **We should not assume that Daniel knew he would be saved in this event.** Just like the three men in the furnace who knew God would deliver them one way or the other (through life or death, at His will), Daniel knew he was serving a mighty God capable of delivering him, but he also knew that God had a will of His own. Either way was OK with Daniel. He probably did not enter that lion’s den knowing of his rescue. He trusted God to do his will.



▪ **COMMENTARY: “Spiritual forces and resources are available to all Christians. Because our resources are unlimited, Christians will be winners. Millions of angels are at God’s command and at our service. The hosts of heaven stand at attention as we make our way from earth to glory, and Satan’s BB guns are no match for God’s heavy artillery. So don’t be afraid. God is for you. He has committed his angels to wage war in the conflict of the ages – and they will win the victory.”** (Billy Graham)

²³***Then the king was exceedingly 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 injury whatever was found on him, because he believed in his God.***

- Darius was overjoyed! He went early to the den hoping, but probably never expected to find this healthy and vibrant old man greeting him! He immediately commanded that Daniel be brought up out of the pit of lions. Just like the three men in the furnace, there was not a mark on him. He was perfectly healthy.

- Notice we are told **WHY Daniel survived** intact: “...*because he believed in his God.*” His faith. In Daniel (and in Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah) we have some of the boldest and most dramatic examples of rock solid faith in God in all the scriptures.
- Daniel had experienced the punishment for disobeying the king’s edict, and he survived. The law had been fulfilled. He had been thrown in the lion’s den, and now he could be taken out. Unfortunately for the plotters of this conspiracy, the lions did not oblige and do their part. It’s going to be *really* unfortunate for them in the next few moments.

²⁴And the king gave the command, and they brought those men who had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions—they, their children, and their wives; and the lions overpowered them, and broke all their bones in pieces before they ever came to the bottom of the den.

- Perhaps there was a whole crowd down at the lion’s den now. Everyone knew Daniel had survived. The king is greatly relieved, but now is also greatly angered that he had been duped. He will give another edict, and this one will not be foiled. God will allow it. Darius orders that the very men who conspired against Daniel be thrown into the lion’s den. We don’t know when this happened, but chances are it was soon after Daniel was removed, perhaps the same day. Maybe even the same hour. It would be likely that the conspirators were there as well, eager to see Daniel dead. But instead, they were the food the lions craved, even before they hit bottom. Docile lions? Nope.
- Well, **the lion’s got their dinner after all.** It’s not that they (the lions) weren’t hungry the night before – God shut their mouths and calmed them. They were ravenous when these traitors were thrown in. They were dead before they hit the ground. Should shoot holes in theories that try to say the lions were old, toothless and not very interested in Daniel. They were indeed interested in their food! But only when God said so...
- *their children, and their wives;...*” This seems terrible, and it was. However, it was what the Persians and other cultures did to conspirators and other treasonous persons. When someone acted against those in power, it was assumed he had some support, either family or friends, or other co-conspirators. If he was found guilty, his entire family paid the price. This was a way of deterring such behavior, but it was also considered a practicality so no surviving family members could seek revenge. It was a way to completely end these sorts of treasons and rebellions.

²⁵Then King Darius wrote: To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you. ²⁶I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom men must tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. For He is the living God, And steadfast forever; His kingdom is the one which shall not be destroyed, And His dominion shall endure to the end. ²⁷He delivers and rescues, And He works signs and wonders In heaven and on earth, Who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.

- Now comes the **next most important part of this chapter**, in addition to Daniel’s rescue and incredible faith. This is the part most people don’t know or remember, and certainly is not the part we portrayed on felt boards in Sunday School. Here again, remarkably, we have a powerful, formerly pagan, Gentile king, giving honor and glory to the God of Israel and making a worldwide proclamation.
- Darius sent out a worldwide decree, similar to the one sent by Nebuchadnezzar in chapter 4. **Both of these men had amazing experiences with the Most High God**, which left quite an impression. This is Darius’ personal testimony to His power. The night before Darius could not sleep. Now he is at peace.

- To Nebuchadnezzar, in his edict, **He is the Most High God**. To Darius, **He is the Living God**.
- Once again, the ultimate result of this miracle was not just to spare Daniel’s life and give Darius an experience with the Living God, but to **inform the entire world and acquaint them with the God of miracles**.
- Some **great theology is found** in verses 26–27. Look at the statements Darius makes:
 - 1) God is the LIVING God (not a dead or false god like idols)
 - 2) God lives forever – He is alive and well in every generation
 - 3) His kingdom will not be destroyed – all earthly kingdoms will end, but God’s remains forever – it will never end
 - 4) His dominion will never end – nothing can replace God’s authority, or prevail against Him.
 - 5) He is a God who rescues His own, performing signs and wonders (also unlike the lifeless gods of idolatry) AMEN!

²⁸*So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.*

- Daniel has **prospered through two world empires and several kings**. He is most likely in his 90s at the end of this book. He probably did not return to Israel with the rest of the Jewish remnant, due to his age, though we are not sure of this. God honored Daniel because Daniel honored Him. He has been blessed with far more than wealth. We often confuse “prospering” with material goods. Daniel prospered in this way probably merely due to his position. But he prospered in his relationship with God before anything else, which afforded him wisdom, faithfulness, convictions, integrity, steadfastness and longevity. He is truly an example of a Godly man.
- Peter (1 Peter 5:8-9) sends a similar message and warning as that in Daniel. The message for us today, and for those at that time in history is the same: *“Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.”*
- We are at the half way point through this book, and this chapter **concludes the historical section of the Book of Daniel**, but it is not just history for history’s sake. Each historical event has been recorded for us for a purpose. In addition to perhaps seeing an interesting type here, this particular episode in Daniel’s life is another illustration of the keeping power of God, and it is another example of the way in which God will protect the remnant during the Great Tribulation period. This chapter is a counterpart of chapter 3 where God preserved Daniel’s three friends in the fiery furnace.
- Chapters 3 and 6, therefore, may give two aspects of the **preservation of the remnant**—both of Israel and of the Gentiles—during the Great Tribulation period. Some think that chapter 3 (Azariah, Mishael and Hananiah) represents the protection of the Jews, and chapter 6 the preservation of the Gentile believers. Others believe that here in this chapter, Daniel represents believing Jews during the Tribulation. Either way, God’s people are protected. Here’s a sample commentary about this:
 - **COMMENTARY: ...in my opinion, here we have an illustration of something that is going to happen as we move toward the End of the Age. The righteous will be persecuted by the wicked, but in the final analysis the righteous will triumph and the wicked will be destroyed.** (Dave Breese)

That is the end of chapter 6, but let’s take a look at something interesting...

A STORY FROM THE APOCRYPHA: BEL AND THE DRAGON

(this is found in the Catholic Bible, and is usually designated as Daniel chapter 14. It is not recognized by the Protestant churches because, as the others, it cannot be verified and is not considered part of the inspired word of God.) Most think this was written well after the time of Daniel, and may have even been folklore. We don’t know, but it is interesting.)

¹ When King Astayages (Darius) was buried with his ancestors, Cyrus the Persian took over his kingdom. ² Daniel was a companion of the king, honored above all Cyrus' political advisors. ³ Now the Babylonians had an idol named Bel. Each day they supplied it with twelve bushels of fine flour, forty sheep, and sixty gallons. ⁴ The king honored Bel and worshipped it daily, but Daniel worshipped his own God. So the king said to him, "Why don't you worship Bel?" ⁵ He said, "I don't honor idols made by humans, rather the living God who created heaven and earth and has authority over all living things." ⁶ The king said to him, "You believe Bel is a living god, don't you? Haven't you seen how much he eats and drinks every day?" ⁷ Daniel laughed and said, "Don't be taken in, Your Majesty! This is clay on the inside and brass on the outside. It hasn't eaten or drunk anything, ever!" ⁸ Furious, the king called for his priests. He said to them, "If you don't tell me who eats these provisions, you die! But if you can prove that Bel eats them, Daniel will die for insulting Bel." ⁹ Daniel said to the king, "That's fair enough."

Now Bel had seventy priests plus their wives and children. ¹⁰ The king went with Daniel to Bel's temple. ¹¹ Bel's priests said, "We're going outside now. Your Majesty, you set out the food and mix the wine. Lock the door and seal it with your own seal. Early tomorrow, if you don't find that Bel has eaten everything, you can kill us. Otherwise, kill Daniel for lying about us!" (¹² The priests weren't worried because they had made a hidden entrance under the table, which they regularly used to enter to eat everything.) ¹³ When the priests went out, the king set out Bel's food. ¹⁴ But Daniel ordered his servants to bring ashes and sprinkle the whole temple, with only the king watching. Then everyone went out, locked the door, sealed it with the king's seal, and left.

¹⁵ The priests came that night, as usual, with their wives and children, and ate and drank everything. ¹⁶ The king and Daniel got up very early the next morning. ¹⁷ The king said, "Are the seals unbroken, Daniel?" He answered, "Unbroken, Your Majesty." ¹⁸ As soon as the doors were opened, the king looked at the table and yelled, "You are great, Bel! There's nothing fake about you!" ¹⁹ But Daniel laughed and held the king back from going in. He said, "Look at the floor. Whose tracks are these?" ²⁰ The king said, "I see the footprints of men, women, and children!" ²¹ Then the king became angry. He arrested the priests, their wives, and children. They showed him the hidden doors through which they regularly entered to eat what was on the table. ²² The king killed them and handed Bel over to Daniel, who tore it and its temple down.

A living god?

²³ Now there was a big snake that the Babylonians worshipped. ²⁴ The king said to Daniel, "You can't say that this one isn't a living god. So worship it!" ²⁵ Daniel said, "I will keep worshipping the Lord my God, because he is a living God. But, Your Majesty, just give me permission, and I'll kill the snake without using a sword or stick!" ²⁶ The king said, "I give you permission."

²⁷ Then Daniel took tar and cooking grease and hair. He boiled them down, made patties, and put them into the snake's mouth. The snake swallowed them and burst open. Daniel said, "Look at what you have been worshipping!"

Daniel in the lions' pit

²⁸ When the Babylonians heard what happened, they were very angry. They came together as a mob and started toward the king, saying, "The king has become a Jew! He's torn down Bel, killed the snake, and murdered the priests!" ²⁹ When they reached the king, they said, "Hand Daniel over to us! If you don't, we'll kill you and your family!" ³⁰ The king saw that he was in a bind and was forced to hand Daniel over to them. ³¹ They threw Daniel into a pit of lions. He was there six days. ³² There were seven lions in the pit. Usually they were fed two bodies and two sheep daily, but now they were fed nothing so that they would devour Daniel.

³³ At the same time, the prophet Habakkuk was in Judah. He had boiled a stew, put some bread in a bowl, and was carrying it to the people harvesting the field. ³⁴ But the Lord's angel said to Habakkuk, "Take this lunch to Babylon, to Daniel in the lions' pit." ³⁵ Habakkuk said, "Lord, I've never seen

Babylon, and I'm not familiar with that pit.”³⁶ So the Lord's angel lifted Habakkuk by his hair and brought him in a rush of wind to Babylon, right above the pit.³⁷ Habakkuk yelled, “Daniel! Daniel! Take the lunch that God has sent to you!”³⁸ Daniel said, “God, you remembered me! You don't abandon the people who love you.”³⁹ Daniel got up and ate, while God's angel took Habakkuk instantly back to his own place.⁴⁰ On the seventh day the king came to the pit to grieve for Daniel. He looked in, and there was Daniel, sitting there!⁴¹ Then the king shouted out loud, “You are great, Lord, Daniel's God! There's no other but you!”⁴² He pulled Daniel out. But he threw the ones who had planned Daniel's destruction into the pit, and they were eaten instantly, right in front of him.

If this story can be trusted, **Daniel may have experienced the lion's den a few times.** Instead of Darius, here it is Cyrus. Looks like every one Daniel worked for tried to kill him at some point, only to end up a fan of the Most High and Living God! And they respected Daniel more each time.

The part about **Habakkuk seems a little far-fetched**, but may not be. There is scripture in Ezekiel (8:2-3) that is remarkably similar: *“I looked, and I saw a figure like that of a man. From what appeared to be his waist down he was like fire, and from there up his appearance was as bright as glowing metal. He stretched out what looked like a hand and took me by the hair of my head. The Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven and in visions of God he took me to Jerusalem, to the entrance to the north gate of the inner court, where the idol that provokes to jealousy stood.”*

Interesting little side trip! Remember, we cannot count on the inspiration of any apocryphal or pseudepigraphal book, but they are sometimes helpful for insights into the conditions and possible additional events of the times.

From this point on the book will be mainly concerned with the visions and prophecies which were given to Daniel over the long period of his life spent outside Israel. Some absolutely incredible stuff is found in chapters 7 through 12.

