

Daniel Chapter 6

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Fellowship
BIBLE CHURCH

Wait: Application from Chapter 5

- Note Daniel 5:30: That very night Belshazzar was killed.
- See Luke 12:20: This very night the rich man's soul will be required of him.
- It could be that tonight God calls for YOUR soul. Is your number up and are you a lightweight in God's sight?

How To Live in a Pagan Culture?

- Daniel shows by way of example how we can live in an increasingly secular and evil culture.
- The record of his exemplary life starts in 1:8. He resolved to live totally for God.
- His friends expanded on the example in chapter 3. They were committed to believe in God and not to fall to idolatry.

How To Live in a Pagan Culture?

- Daniel “spoke truth to power” in 4:27, not being invited to do so, but calling the king to be righteous and show mercy.
- Daniel did the same years later to Nebuchadnezzar’s grandson Belshazzar (5:22-23), confronting him for his arrogance, idolatry, and lack of worship of the true God.

How To Live in a Pagan Culture?

- There are no guarantees that such committed, godly behavior will “end well” as far as this life is concerned.
 - Daniel almost died twice (chapters 1, 6).
 - Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah almost died also.
- But “this life” is not what we are living for, is it?

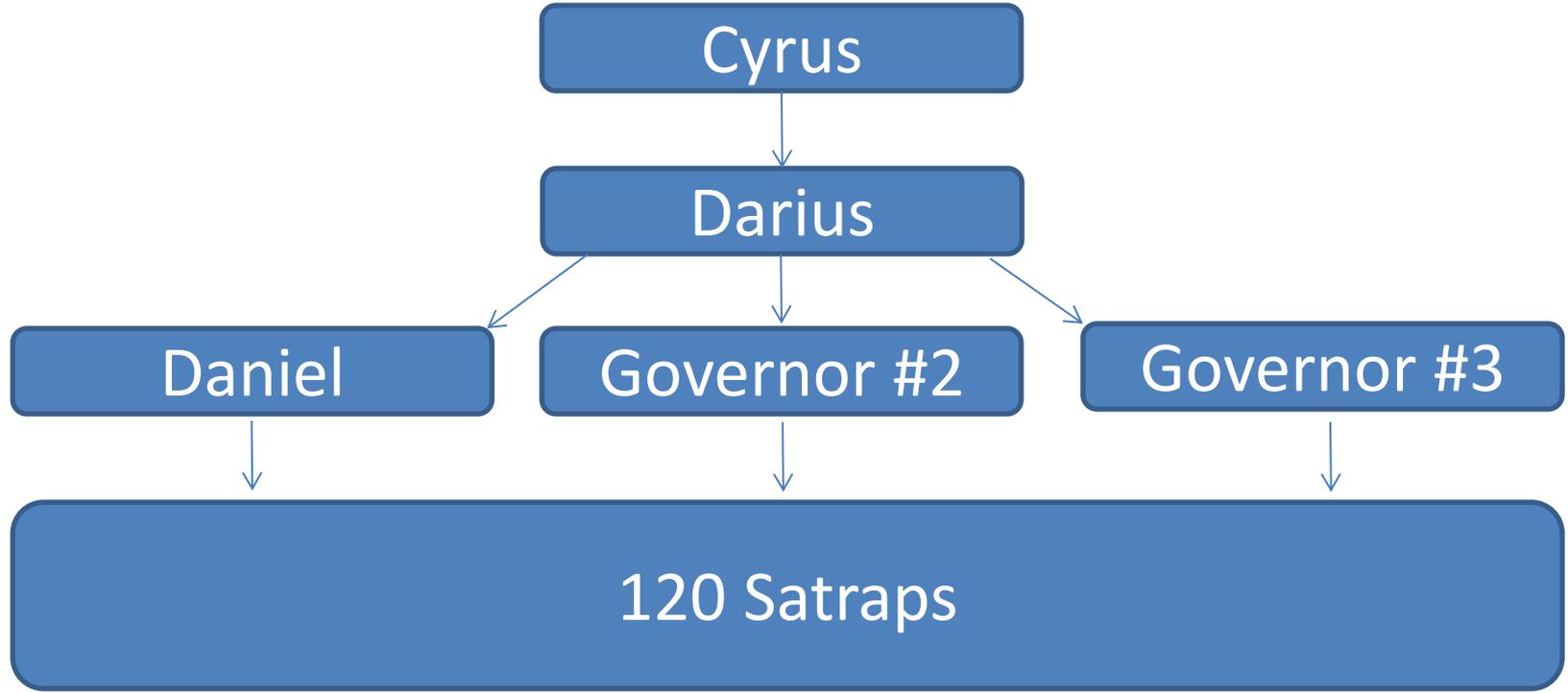
How To Live in a Pagan Culture?

- Daniel gives further example in chapter 6.
- This is the year following the accession of the Median Darius to the local governorship under Persian King Cyrus.
- This makes Daniel around 85 years of age.
- Not even advanced age stops the enemies of God—couldn't they just let him live out his days?

Setting, 6:1-2

- Cyrus was King; Darius was in charge of the Babylonian “kingdom” which was a sub-kingdom of the Medo-Persian empire.
- Darius in turn set 120 satraps (provincial administrators) over his domain.
- And then he put 3 governors over them.

Org Chart



FYI

- These 120 are not the same as the 127 provinces under Ahasuerus in Esther 1:1.
 - Darius put them in place to re-organize a kingdom that Belshazzar had totally ruined.
- Some events in Esther are similar to these, but they happened at least 50 years later.

Daniel Excels Again, v. 3

- An excellent spirit was in him, as always.
- So he offered distinguished service. Somehow it was evident to Darius that Daniel was special.
 - This was part of Daniel’s “testimony” that affected Darius later.

A Conspiracy is Hatched, v. 4

- The other two governors and the 120 satraps, or a decent-sized group of them, formed a cabal to get rid of Daniel. What was wrong?
 - He was going to be their boss.
 - He was a good worker, making them look bad?
 - He was a Jew, an outsider, a foreigner.

Trouble with the Conspiracy, v. 4

- Daniel was faithful.
- Daniel did not exhibit any error or fault.
- Apparently they didn't have an FBI or IRS to really dig in and find some fault, even a trumped up one.

Another Approach, v. 5

- So they figured that they had to “get” Daniel through some issue related to his religion.
 - Conscious or not, this is an age-old trick that unbelievers play. They set up some new norm (like “tolerating gay marriage is required”) and then charge that the believer goes against the new “norm” with their age-old beliefs.

The Devil's Work, v. 6

- This kind of thing is what the Devil loves; in fact, he “inspires” it all over the globe.
- It starts with flattery, or at least with a disguising of the motives.

Conspiracy Starts, v. 7

- The plot appeals to consensus, to give it weight. “All” the governors, etc. have agreed on a decree.
 - All, that is, except for one notable omission.
 - And these are unbelievers, unwise, and driven by jealousy.
- It is temporary, for 30 days.
- The punishment for violation is capital: the lions’ den.

The Decree

- No one can make a petition to a god or a man for this time period, except to the king.
 - This is an unnecessary temporary law.
 - This seems like it would increase the king's workload in the next month.
- The goal was to puff up the king's pride.

King-as-god Cult

- Egypt, Rome, etc. developed the mentality that the king was a god, even though he was obviously only a man.
 - Like the pope-as-vicar of Christ even though he is only a mere man.
- The governors, etc. were appealing to Darius' pride and desire for power.

Decree Exhorted, v. 8

- The leaders exhorted him to establish this law.
- This is a very inadequate legislative process.
 - At least Daniel should have been brought in. He was evidently nearby, given the next verses.
 - The king was about to make a terrible mistake.

The Unalterable Law, v. 8

- The leaders use a phrase, “so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians.”
- Although doubted by liberal scholars, evidently there was some provision in Medo-Persian tradition that made laws unalterable.

An Unrevokable Law?

- The same thing happened in Esther.
- Xerxes could not change the decree permitting the killing of the Jews.
- But He could issue another decree to help the Jews.
- See Esther 7:4-7, 8:5, 8-11.

The Unalterable Law, v. 8-9

- This was merely a tradition, and not one that is wise. In fact, anyone trying to do this, say in our Congress, should be looked upon with at least great suspicion if not total disbelief.
- But Darius signed it anyway.
 - Rash and stupid, like Herod (Mark 6:23), or Jephthah (Judges 11:30-31). Don't you be that way!

What This Law Did

- Made a man mediator between people and God.
 - Note that no man is a mediator between you and God—except the man Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 2:5).
- Illegitimately mixed state and religious affairs.
 - This empire was multi-religious. No respect was given to any religion.
 - But polytheists don't care in the short term.

Immovable Daniel, v. 10

- He was “in the know.” Not ignorant of the law.
- He prayed openly in his home.
- He prayed toward Jerusalem.
- He prayed three times daily on his knees.
- He gave thanks to God.
- This was his daily custom for decades.

Immovable Daniel, v. 10

- Prayed toward Jerusalem.
 - 1 Kings 8:46-49, Psalm 5:7. See Daniel 9:1-19.
 - This is not for the Christian today: John 4:21.
- Three times daily.
 - Psalm 55:17. This is not a legalistic requirement.
- Content of prayer.
 - Gave thanks. 1 Thess. 5:18. Us too.

Conspirators Spying, v. 11

- They went together to see what Daniel did.
 - They had probably scoped out the situation beforehand and knew where and when to look.
- The text says Daniel was giving thanks. He was probably also interceding and the like.
- They read him as making petitions and supplications. They got their man!

Conspirators Tattling, v. 12-13

- Perhaps a day or two has passed between the signing and the tattling. Maybe a few more.
- They asked the king about his own very recent law, and he agreed that it was on the books and could not be changed.

Conspirators Tattling, v. 12-13

- They identify Daniel like Belshazzar did (5:13).
 - They call Daniel a Judean captive.
- They claim that Daniel does not show proper respect or attention to the king in his prayers.
 - But Daniel knew about the law (6:10).
 - And Daniel certainly honored the king in the appropriate ways.

Conspirators Tattling, v. 12-13

- Notice how they make it not just an issue of obeying the decree, but...
- ...they also make it into a personal issue where the king, who they had puffed up as a little god, was not being honored by his subject.
- Darius knew about Daniel's God (see 6:16).

Darius Troubled, v. 14

- He now knew why the leaders wanted the temporary law—to get Daniel.
- He was troubled not only because of their evil but because harm was to come upon Daniel.
- He did his best to reverse the consequences, but was impotent against the unalterable law.

No Head of Gold Here

- The “law of the Medes and Persians” that cannot be revoked is the reason why this Medo-Persian ruler was not like Nebuchadnezzar.
 - An absolute monarch like Nebu. would not be constrained by such artificial limitations.

Conspirators Nag, v. 15

- They repeat the obvious to the king.
- They want their revenge on Daniel, and they insist on having it.
- Daniel suffered for doing good, 1 Peter 4:12, 14, 16.

Darius Knuckles Under, v. 16

- Darius reluctantly ordered Daniel to be thrown to the lions.
- But he also exhibited some level of trust in God that He would deliver Daniel.
- Note “whom you serve continually.” This shows Daniel’s reputation.

The Den is Sealed, v. 17

- They apparently took an extra measure with this execution by placing a stone over the mouth of the den, and sealing it with the king's ring.
- This ensured that the decree for Daniel would not be changed.

A Humanly Hopeless Situation

- There was no man who could save Daniel.
- This reminds us of another stone-sealed compartment, a tomb hewn out of rock that briefly held the body of Jesus Christ.
 - There was no possible human deliverance for Jesus either.



Darius Very Troubled, v. 18-19

- He was fasting. Perhaps also praying.
- He did not receive the usual entertainment.
- He did not sleep.
- He got up early to see if Daniel was still alive.
- I suspect he had formulated a plan for the conspirators during the evening/night.

The Question of the Hour, v. 20

- Note again the deep emotion of the king.
- He acknowledges Daniel as a continual servant of the living God—not an idol.
- Has your God been **able to deliver** you?
 - Of course He is able!!! But does Darius believe?
- He was hoping to hear a voice...

The Great Deliverance, v. 21-22

- Daniel's voice called up and out from the den!
- He shows respect, even now, for the king.
 - He learned the details of the conspiracy so he knew the king was relatively innocent and not malicious.
- Daniel credits God for saving him.
- Daniel claims innocence before God and the King.

How Such a Deliverance?

- Miraculous. Daniel may have even seen a delivering angel come to calm the lions.
- They had not been filled with an earlier meal. The den keepers would be sure of that.
- Like God did for Noah's ark, or like the kingdom promise of Isaiah 11:7 and 65:25.

Darius Glad, v. 23

- Now the emotional roller coaster reaches a high point. Darius was very glad.
- He reversed his order of the previous evening and had Daniel brought up and out of the den.
- Absolutely zero injuries were found on Daniel.
- When God delivers, He does it completely.

Daniel Totally Fine, v. 23

- To reiterate that point, note that Daniel
 - Was not scratched by being thrown into the den.
 - Had no bite-mark evidence.
 - Was not missing any limbs.
 - Did not need blood transfusions and life support.
 - Did not require a long recuperation period.

Punishment for Enemies, v. 24

- The leaders who hatched this plot were
 - Enemies of the king.
 - Not fit to be rulers in the kingdom.
 - Treacherous people, like Proverbs 1:16.
- Who were these men? Probably the other two governors, and perhaps some of the satraps, but probably not all 120 of them.

Darius Got Some Backbone, v. 24

- Now, Darius behaves differently than his earlier submission to the dumb legislation proposed by his underlings.
- He issues an executive order with power and confidence that it is what needs to be done.

The Kind of Punishment

- They got the same as they wished on Daniel. See Deut. 19:18-19, and Prov. 1:18.
- Harsh, in that it included wives and children.
 - This was not Israel, where children were not to be punished for parent's sins (Deut. 24:16).
- Swift. The lions were starving.

Sins of the Parents

- 2 Kings 14:6; Ezekiel 18:4, 20; Jer. 31:30
- But what about...
 - Achan's family? Joshua 7:24. Accomplices.
 - Korah's family? Num. 16:27, 31-33. Co-conspirators.
 - Saul's descendants? 2 Samuel 21:1-14. Note verse 1 says blood was shed by "Saul and his blood-stained house." Perhaps they were guilty as well.
 - Haman's sons? Esther 9:10. This is not Israel.

The Kingdom of God

- A time of perfect justice is coming over the entire world. We are obviously not there yet.
- Until then, we will see a lot of injustices, including children who are relatively innocent, at least to begin with, but who are deeply impacted by the sins of their parents.

Conclusion, v. 25-28

- Darius wrote a letter.
 - It is addressed to “all peoples, nations, and languages” on earth.
 - He wishes them peace.
 - This is just like Nebuchadnezzar did in chapter 4.
- In the short letter, he makes a simple decree.

Conclusion, v. 25-28

- The decree is a universal command.
- People must tremble and fear before Daniel's God, Whom we know is the only true God.
- Think: Is this kind of decree right? Is it feasible in the present day? Does God make such a universal decree (hint: Acts 17:30)?

Why the Decree, v. 26b

- The “for” tells us why the decree is right.
- God is alive—that is, He is real.
- God is eternal—that is, enduring or steadfast.
- God’s kingdom is indestructible.
- God’s dominion will endure forever.
- Note the pairs of statements.

Why the Decree, v. 27

- God delivers and rescues (His people).
- God works signs and wonders.
 - In heaven above, and earth beneath.
- God has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions – a prime example!
 - And by extension, from the power of Medo-Persia.

Doubts Erased

- Any doubt expressed in the question of 6:20 has been erased. “Has your God...been able to deliver you from the lions?”
- Darius knows that God is able, and that it was no fluke. The situation was set up so that any other conclusion would be unreasonable.

Conclusion of Daniel's Career

- A quick summary is offered of Daniel's longevity. He continued to prosper under Darius and his boss, King Cyrus.
- We know from 10:1 that he continued for at least a couple more years.
 - From 605 to 536 B.C., 68 years inclusive.

More on Daniel's Career

- Daniel was an inter-kingdom holdover.
- He outlasted the neo-Babylonian empire!
- So it will be with God's people. We will outlast all earthly kingdoms (Daniel 12:3)!

Daniel's Character

- Daniel was not, as Whitcomb says, a “flabby” saint. He was chiseled to near perfection.
- But God was not done with him until He took him through at least one more major trial in chapter 6.
- Are you spiritually flabby?

Following Daniel's Example

- Do people know you for your faith, honesty, skill, and integrity?
- Could you be convicted on the grounds that you regularly pray to God?
- Would you keep serving God even if the law prohibited it?

Timeline of Daniel 7-12

- Chapter 7 flashes back 14 years earlier than ch. 5, and 15 or so before ch. 6.
- Chapter 8 is about 12 years before ch. 5.
- Chapter 9 probably occurs about the same year as ch. 5, either just before or after.
- Chapters 10-12 happen 2 years after ch. 6.

By the Way...About Cyrus

- He is mentioned by name in Isaiah 44:28 and 45:1...
- ...in 681 B.C., 142 years *before* Cyrus became king over Babylon—before he was born!!
- Tradition says when Cyrus entered Bablyon, Daniel read to him about himself from Isaiah!