

Daniel 6:16-28 – God Delivers Daniel

Daniel had excelled under the reign of Nebuchadnezzar in chapters 1 through 4. In chapter 6 Daniel excelled under the reign of Darius. Some officials wanted to get Daniel out of office. They tried to find incompetence or a scandal but they could not. Daniel was very competent at his work. He was also a very moral person. They realized that they could exploit his devotion to God. They also used flattery to trick Darius into making an irrevocable law that they were confident Daniel would violate. To keep this new law, Daniel would have had to stop worshiping God for 30 days. In the 30 days, people were only allowed to worship Darius. Daniel refused to stop worshiping the one true God. The punishment for disobeying the new law was that he was thrown into the den of lions. Darius did not realize the consequences of his actions and regretted that his new law could cost Daniel his life.

Read Daniel 6:16-24.

Darius could not find a way to deliver Daniel so he commanded that Daniel be thrown into the den of lions. How did Darius feel about having to cast Daniel into the den of lions? Contrast his attitude with that of Nebuchadnezzar in chapter 3. How were their attitudes different? Why do you think they were different? (6:16-18)

In verse 17, how did they make sure that no one could secretly come at night and take Daniel out of the den of lions? Does this remind you of something that happened in the New Testament? If so, what? (6:17)

How does verse 18 show that Darius was really on Daniel's side? Since Darius couldn't save Daniel, what hope did Darius have that Daniel would survive the lions? (6:16, 18)

In verse 16, Darius said to Daniel, "may your God ... deliver you". What evidence is there in verses 19-20 that Darius thought that Daniel's God may actually deliver him? I find it sad that Darius said in verse 16, "your God". Darius was essentially saying, "he is your God but he is not my god". From verses 16 and 20, what did Darius know about Daniel's commitment to God? (6:16, 19-20)

In verse 21, how would you characterize Daniel's initial response to the king? According to verse 22, why was Daniel saved from the lions? Daniel was condemned by the law of the Medes and Persians, but was Daniel condemned by God? (6:21-22)

There was nothing in the law that said Daniel had to be killed for disobeying the law. The law only said that anyone who disobeyed would be thrown into the den of lions. The conspirators made the wrong assumption that throwing someone into the den of lions would mean the person's death. They must not have heard about Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego or maybe they dismissed the story. It was a costly error on their part. In verse 23, what did the king command concerning Daniel? According to verse 23, why was no harm found on Daniel? In verse 24, what did Darius do with the conspirators who had tricked him and played him for a fool? We could say that the conspirators were guilty of the attempted murder of Daniel. Was it fair that the conspirators' families were punished along with them? (6:23-24)

Read Daniel 6:25-28.

After God's deliverance of Daniel's three friends, Nebuchadnezzar made a decree to any people, nation, or language. See 3:29. In 6:25-26, Darius made a decree to all the peoples, nations, and languages. This decree was not called a law of the Medes and Persians. Do you think it was more like a proclamation or more like a law? (6:25-26)

In the first part of verse 26, Darius decreed what people should do. In verses 26-27, Darius gave the reason for the decree. What did the decree tell people to do? Do you think the directive of this decree was followed? Do you think it is a good idea for governments to dictate who people should worship or how they should worship? It was a good thing that the decree was not retroactive or else Darius would have been guilty of breaking his own decree. It once again strikes me that Darius referred to the one true God as "the God of Daniel". It seems that God's deliverance at that time was still not enough for Darius to say "the God of Daniel who is also my God". (6:26-27)

In verses 27-28, what did Darius say about "the God of Daniel"? What did he say about God's kingdom and dominion? Compare and contrast Nebuchadnezzar's decree in 3:29 with Darius' decree in 6:26-28. How were they similar? How were they different? (6:26-28)

In verse 29, Daniel continued to prosper in the Medo-Persian empire. The EHV and EXB suggest that king Darius and king Cyrus were one and the same person. Some versions translate the verse so that the conclusion is that Cyrus was king after Darius. Do you think Darius was just a different name for Cyrus? Give your reasons. (6:29)

What lessons can we take away from chapter 6?