

## Study on Daniel

### Chapter Six

### Daniel preserved in the Lion's Den

Belshazzar was now no more. He had been killed in 539 BC. By Cyrus the great of the Persians – a Persian commander (he became leader of the Persians in 559 BC) Darius the Mede was the king, who being weak and sensual (this has quite a significance in the following story) had given up all authority to his energetic nephew Cyrus but still remained king so verse 31 in chapter 5 is accurate in that Darius received the kingdom when he was 62 years old. He followed on from Belshazzar. Eventually Cyrus took over the kingdom.

An interesting side-line - Cyrus was a more compassionate ruler in that he allowed the Hebrew captives to return to Palestine to Jerusalem to re-build their temple (2 Chronicles 36: 22 – 23 and Ezra 1: 2 – 3) allowing the contents of the temple that had been stolen by Nebuchadnezzar, to be returned. Archaeology unearthed the famous cylinder of Cyrus in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that is in remarkable agreement with the royal edict as set forth in the bible

It pleased Darius to appoint 120 Satraps and over those three administrators of whom Daniel was one. (Persians were responsible for taxation – the satraps were tax collectors) Read **chapter 6: 1 – 16**

Daniel showed himself to be better than the other administrators because of his greater abilities and his excellent character and the king was that impressed he made plans to make Daniel ruler over the whole kingdom.

Not a good idea! People being people were jealous of Daniel's success and they plotted together to remove Daniel from favour. Finding nothing, they came up with a devious plan by appealing to the ego of Darius. They suggested that Darius should make a law that all should obey, requiring everyone to pray only to Darius as a god for the next thirty days knowing full well that Daniel prayed three times everyday to his God.

When Daniel heard that the document had been signed he deliberately opened his windows and in full view, knelt down and prayed as he always did.

Rubbing their hands with glee the satraps and administrators reported to Darius Daniel's deliberate defiance. The king on hearing this was much distressed and tried to rescue Daniel but his word once signed, were law. This was the same law that applied in the time of Esther (**Esther 8: 8**)

Once signed with the king's ring an edict could not be revoked (but that is another study entirely so moving swiftly on). This is an example of Darius weakness and lack of wisdom in that he was easily led by other people pandering to his ego. They knew how to work his ego to meet their own ends. This is a lesson in as much as we should think before we speak or act considering the affect our words can have on others.

Sadly Daniel was brought out and cast into the den of lions. A stone was brought to seal the den and the king sealed it with his own ring and the signets of all the lords so that nothing might be changed. This is an analogy - Consider that same scenario at the tomb scene when Christ was buried. The tomb was sealed with a large stone **Matthew 27: verses 62 – 66**

Darius spent a very troubled sleepless night. His conscience was bothering him. As soon as it was daylight the king headed straight for the lion's den. Even before he reached it he was shouting out Daniel's name. This was a sign of how distressed he was in allowing himself to be deceived into destroying Daniel. Did he really think that Daniel would be alive?

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Let's read verses 19 – 24

Much to Darius's great relief Daniel answered him. Daniel was lifted from the den with no injuries and the king was overjoyed. The king commanded that all those who had accused Daniel be thrown into the lion's den. The king's great anger resulted in the execution of all the king's officers and their families. Evil deeds often back-fire on those who plan cruelty. Although harsh in our eyes, this was the law of the land at that time. This eradicated any future uprisings in the kingdom. (It is ironic that the very species that is prone to do that is lions – a male lion will kill the offspring of another lion to ensure his supremacy) Once again innocent people died because of the actions of others

In the last few verses we see how once again a king gives homage and acknowledges the sovereignty of the Lord

### Notes:

To **petition** – Ask for something specific

**Supplication** - humble asking, entreating and requesting with a sense of need, recognising our weakness and in adequacy and God's strength.

### Lessons from chapter 6

1. Good will eventually win over evil, however harsh that victory may seem at times.
2. God recognises and blesses people who put Him first and don't compromise their faith
3. Strength of faith like Daniel had gives the peace of mind as knowledge of God is to our own good. Prayer is so effective and powerful **Philippians 4: 6**
4. We have to have faith in an all powerful God in any and all circumstances
5. God can use all circumstances to promote his sovereign power. The message was spread over all the earth that the God of Daniel was a living God and all powerful.
6. No fault could be founding Daniel's life or life style – this is an example for us all in our Christian work

Let's now review **Daniel 1 – 6**

### On the menu of the lion's club

Daniel in the lion's den is a story that we never get tired of hearing. As a child I was impressed by this story because Daniel was not thrown into the lion's den for being bad. He was thrown in for being godly! That is an important point to keep in mind as we study.

We usually expect that when we do wrong we ought to be punished, and when we do right we ought to be praised. This is certainly the ideal, but it doesn't always work out that way. Sometimes those who do wrong are rewarded, and those who do right are persecuted. This chapter demonstrates that godliness can be costly.

1. How would you feel if the people you work with decided to watch everything about your public and private life?
2. If you were being watched as Daniel was being watched, what changes would you want to make in your present life style?

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3. How has Daniel encouraged you to be a more Christ like example, to those around you?
4. In what ways would the miracle Darius witnessed have re-enforced Daniel's personal example?  
Verses 21 – 24
5. What do we learn about Daniel's character from the investigation by Daniel's enemies?
6. Think back over the first six chapters. How can the fact that God holds in his hand your life and all your ways help you to honour and obey Him as Daniel did?