

CONCERNING THE WAY

January 20, 2009

LESSON 44: PROPHECY SERIES — THE BOOK OF DANIEL



We start with the last verse of chapter 5, which really belongs with this chapter:

Daniel 5:31 So Darius the Mede received the kingdom at about the age of sixty-two.

Skeptics say that Darius is a fictional character, but that's what they used to say about Belshazzar. So Darius, the Mede, now is the new ruler. He is the beginning of the Medo-Persia reign over Babylon. Who is Darius the Mede? Nobody knows. There's no mention of this guy in history. So we have no evidence of who Darius the Mede really is. This, of course, causes skeptics to say that he never existed, that the Bible is not true history. But remember this: that you are dealing with a tremendous lack of historic material.

1. We have only a fraction of the artifacts from ancient times which have survived erosion, decay, souvenir hunting, and other human destruction.
2. Of this fraction, only a fraction of that has been surveyed. Israeli teams, for example, recently surveyed 2,000 archeological sites of which 800 were previously unknown.
3. Of the fraction surveyed only a fraction has been excavated; in Israel, due to modern obstructions, political issues, and high costs only 150 sites of 5,000 have been excavated.
4. Of this very small fraction of sites excavated, only a fraction have been examined and when a tel is excavated, usually only very small parts are actually dug up. One scholar estimated that to examine completely the Hatzor site would take 800 more years at the present rate of digging. Finally, of the artifactual material examined, only a fraction has been published; 50 more years would be required just to publish the materials already unearthed and examined.

Summarizing the extreme fragmentary nature of the artifactual data, Professor Yamuchi says, "If one could by an optimistic estimate reckon that one-tenth of our materials and inscriptions have survived, that six-tenths of the available sites have been surveyed, that one-fiftieth of these sites have been excavated, that one-tenth of the excavated sites have been examined, that one-half of the materials and inscriptions have been published, one would have one over ten times six over ten times one over fifty times one over ten times one-half at hand, but six one hundred thousandths of all the possible evidence."

So any time that someone comes up to you and says that there's no evidence of Darius the Mede, remember he is dealing with probably about one-millionth of the available data. So you don't have to worry, there's probably somewhere in the 999,000 parts that have not been discovered there's information about this unknown figure, Darius the Mede.

There are two contending theories for it that you ought to be aware of because when you listen to Bible teachers exegete Daniel they have to go with one or the other theories. One is that Darius the Mede is the governor of Babylon under Cyrus. That's been the old popular theory with evangelicals. The other theory is that Darius the Mede is another name for Cyrus the Great. At the end of the chapter, Daniel 6:28 says, "So this Daniel enjoyed success in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian." That can be taken as this: "So this Daniel enjoyed success in the reign of Darius, that is, in the reign of Cyrus the Persian." Example of where this occurs elsewhere in the Bible: 1 Chronicles 5:26. Cyrus could be called a Mede because of his mother, who was a Median. So, we just don't know for sure if Darius was Cyrus, or if he was another guy put in charge of the Babylonian province.

Chapter 6 - 539-538 BC

The Persians are now in control of the empire. This is the second of the four kingdoms in Daniel's vision. This is a more powerful kingdom and a less valuable kingdom than the Babylonian kingdom. Up to this point in history it was the largest empire the ancient world had ever seen and from the Biblical point of view very, very important. If you look at a map and you know the history of comparative religions, something immediately should strike you from the extent of that empire because if you notice that off to the right side, the empire extends all the way to India. What religion developed in this area? Hinduism, the fountainhead of oriental religion. Look at the other side, the left side of the map to the west, and all the way over there where do you see the boundary of that empire? It cuts through Thrace, or Greece, and what was going on in Greece at this time? The rise of pre-Socratic philosophy. So at the very critical moment in history, when you have Jainism begin in India as a reformed movement from Hinduism, when you have Buddha teaching in India, you have the Medo-Persian Empire under Daniel. When you have Confucius teaching in China, you have at the same period the Medo-Persian Empire with Daniel's influence spreading the Word of God. When you have the pre-Socratics at Milesia, making their early claims for the rise of theoretical thought in the west, what do you have? The Medo-Persian Empire.

What are we saying in all this? That the Medo-Persian Empire in the 6th century was filled with Jewish influence and it is not surprising that this Jewish influence triggered numerous reform movements throughout the world; rejection of the old priesthood, and rejection of gross polytheism. And Zoroaster was doing this later on in Persia. So you have Zoroasterism, Jainism, Confucianism, Buddhism, Tao, the pre-Socratic philosophers in Greece, all these movements spring up interestingly with the Medo-Persian Empire. So this is a momentous time in history and when you read in this chapter that Daniel was set in command as chief administrator in this kingdom, this gives you an idea of one man's influence, that he probably had tremendous influence in setting the Scriptures throughout the kingdom and causing polarization of men's thinking.

Daniel 6:1-2 It seemed good to Darius to appoint 120 satraps over the kingdom, that they would be in charge of the whole kingdom, (2) and over them three commissioners (of whom Daniel was one), that these satraps might be accountable to them, and that the king might not suffer loss.

These satraps were over areas of provinces, like states, and he has a very good organization. The chapter starts out by drawing our attention to the fact that here is a well-organized beautifully run kingdom.

Daniel is retained in the new administration, and made one of three commissioners over 120 governors under Darius the Mede. This isn't speaking of the entire Persian empire which stretched from Egypt to India, but only the Babylonian province. This is an illustration of what Jesus said in Matthew 6:32-33:

Matthew 6:32-33 "For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. (33) "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Daniel patiently trusts the Lord. He rejects Belshazzar's promotion in chapter 5, and then immediately gets promoted under the new administration in Daniel 6. Now that's what comes by trusting the Lord. This organization is twice as big as the Babylonian Empire. He has much more responsibility, it is a better run kingdom, and Daniel has far more influence. So now what was the smart thing? Daniel said no in Daniel 5:17, no, I don't want that promotion, I came here to explain the Word.

What do you suppose made Darius impressed with Daniel? Darius has come in to conquer this nation and what does he find? Somebody comes up to him and says, there's a guy that they had in their administration

that is fantastic. He does a tremendous job, he's very wise, and he also is known for his prophecies of the future. Darius thought, I'm setting up this new empire and I've got 120 provinces and I want to have a well run organization, I need men like that. So Daniel got promoted but it was in God's time.

And notice why he was promoted at the end of verse 2. He needed someone that he knew would be honest. Here is something that you'll see time and time again, that the one thing that attracts business organizations to believers is their moral reliability. This is a sensitive job that Daniel is being put into; he has got to watch for insurrection, he is in a job that can be bribed. If someone wants to start trouble for Darius the first way to do it is to worm your way in and buy off one of the three administrators. So that's the perfect job for the mature stable believer. Now Darius may or may not be a believer, but Darius is a smart man, and he says I need a person with character to fit into this slot in my organization.

Daniel 6:3 Then this Daniel began distinguishing himself among the commissioners and satraps because he possessed an extraordinary spirit, and the king planned to appoint him over the entire kingdom.

Just as he had done many years before under Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel proved himself to be exceptional among the other leaders of the kingdom. Daniel not only was promoted, but he distinguished himself above the other two administrators, to the point where Darius planned to place him over the entire kingdom! Verse 3 illustrates another point of wisdom for those of you entering business organizations, in classroom situations, etc. you're going to run into this one.

Daniel did a better job than his peers, he excelled. And beginning in verse 4 you're going to have what often happens when somebody excels - jealousy on the part of the other workers in the organization. Whenever somebody excels there can be somebody with sour grapes in the group. People who are bitter, people who are lazy hate people who excel. People like this love to have the whole organization full of others like them because it makes them feel better; they don't stand out that way, they blend into the scenery. But any time somebody excels it draws attention not just to the person who excels, but it draws attention to the person who isn't excelling.

Unfortunately it's becoming part of our American trait. An attitude is developing in this country that everybody is equal. Everybody is not equal; there is only one place everybody is equal and that is their God-consciousness; they are equally responsible. But nowadays everything has to be equal. If we have 30 kids in the classroom and 2 kids can't read when they're in junior high, then we have to stop the whole class for the two that can't read, hire special teachers, penalize the parents who have studied with their children and cater to the ones who haven't studied.

After a few decades of that kind of thing you're going to have one big low class, because you've discouraged people from excelling. You've done everything to thwart them, like graduated income tax; it's a penalty for progress. It penalizes the person who earns more dollars than someone else. We have graduated income tax because somehow it's a sin to be rich. This is unbiblical, it's socialistic.

Daniel is better than his peers; he is a superior person, and often when you have superior people you have a lot of inferior people with jealousy that want to tear him down to size. This is why we have college professors always maligning the founding fathers of this country. Do you know why? Because they're put to shame by the founding fathers of this country; the founding fathers of this country were brilliant men, they were people who were good in many, many different fields.

Daniel 6:4-5 Then the commissioners and satraps began trying to find a ground of accusation against Daniel in regard to government affairs; but they could find no

ground of accusation or evidence of corruption, inasmuch as he was faithful, and no negligence or corruption was to be found in him. (5) Then these men said, "We will not find any ground of accusation against this Daniel unless we find it against him with regard to the law of his God."

They try to find corruption or incompetence in his work, but could find none. Daniel's record was above reproach. The word "faithful" means reliable, and every time they would go to somebody that worked with him, they'd say what do you think of Daniel's work, well, he's absolutely reliable, comes through every time; then they'd go to somebody else and say haven't you had some problems with this guy Daniel over there? Oh no, Daniel gets his reports in before anybody else. So they went around and around and they couldn't find anything.

Then they said what about this? I see something in the files on him, something about he worships three times a day. So they say okay, I think that's what we'll hit him with; we've got him now.

Daniel 6:6-7 Then these commissioners and satraps came by agreement to the king and spoke to him as follows: "King Darius, live forever! (7) "All the commissioners of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the high officials and the governors have consulted together that the king should establish a statute and enforce an injunction that anyone who makes a petition to any god or man besides you, O king, for thirty days, shall be cast into the lions' den."

When it says they "came by agreement" it means (1) they were in a conspiracy together to get rid of Daniel from the job, and (2) they were coming together to put pressure on Darius; they are manipulators, they are lobbyists, who are going to pressure him.

You can see who they had in mind when coming up with the idea of this statute. They were lying, because all of the commissioners did not consult about this, Daniel obviously didn't, and there were probably others that knew nothing about it. But Darius must have assumed that Daniel had agreed to it.

That's one of the things that you'll always see pressure groups do. They always like to over-represent their position, and that's a tactic that goes on today. Why, everybody is doing this, children learn this about the time they go to school. Everybody is doing it, and then children turn into manipulators of their parents, all the guys are doing it.

Why the change in the method of execution? Well, we have a different culture in power now. The Persians were Zoroastrians. Fire played an important role in their religious rituals. They had a fire god, so using fire to kill may have been considered sacrilegious.

Daniel 6:8-9 "Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document so that it may not be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which may not be revoked." (9) Therefore King Darius signed the document, that is, the injunction.

This probably seemed like a good idea to Darius, and flattered his pride. But it's also important to understand that Persian kings were influenced by their administrators and nobles much more than the Babylonian kings. He was pressured into this. And, also unlike the Babylonian empire, once the king signed the injunction, he could not change or revoke it.

Here is a statement we have from Plutarch, he speaks of Themistocles who sought an audience with Xerxes during the time of the book of Esther, and as this Greek comes into the court the Persian man stops him,

and says, wait, before you come in and get an appointment with my king, King Xerxes, I have something to say to you, and here's what he said:

"Oh stranger, the laws of men are different and one thing is honorable to one man and to another another. But it is honorable for all to observe their own laws. It is the habit of the Greeks we are told to honor above all things liberty and equality, but amongst our many excellent laws we account this the most excellent; to honor the king, and to worship him as the image of the great preserver of the universe. If then you shall consent to our laws and fall down before the king and worship him, you may come see him and talk to him. But if your mind is otherwise you must make use of others to intercede for you, for it is not the national custom here for the king to give audience to anyone who will not worship him."

So that's an extra-Biblical confirmation of the Medo-Persia emperor worship that went on. The emperor was the mediator between heaven and earth; he was the high priest of God walking on earth and his laws were immutable. Now God, with a sense of humor, but also with much seriousness, is going to refute this Medo-Persia version of the kingdom of man.

Daniel 6:10 Now when Daniel knew that the document was signed, he entered his house (now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem); and he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously.

This decree did not stop Daniel from continuing his daily prayers. This man feared God, not what men could do to him. He didn't run to the king and protest how unfair the decree was, and there's no indication that he cried out to God asking to be delivered. He did what all believers should do when faced with a conflict between God's law and the law of governments, go directly to prayer and give thanks.

If Daniel had done what most of us would do he'd shut the door and pray silently, hiding. No, Daniel is not going to hide, he enjoys the fight so he's going to get out there, he's going to stick with the Word and he's going to pray right out in the open so every man can see that he is praying three times a day. If they don't like it they can lump it, but he's going to follow the Word. That's Daniel's attitude, and that is the attitude that we should have inside the kingdom of man; don't chicken out, just stay with it. Satan uses the kingdom of man as an evil system to intimidate believers to shut them up or to get them to retreat from an open conflict. If Satan can't get you to deny Jesus by word, he will get you to deny Jesus by avoiding confrontation. And either way he's won. Either way he has made you subordinate to his evil.

Daniel just went right home and did what he always did. This is why few believers can do this, because you have to have the ability to trust the Lord and since most believers fail so miserably in trusting in the simple things, they are unprepared for something like this. This really requires an application of trust. Daniel is going to have to trust the Lord with his entire career. He lays his entire reputation on the line by this act that you see him doing here.

Why is he praying toward Jerusalem? 1 Kings 8:44-50, and 2 Chronicles 6:36-39. Orthodox Jewish people still pray three times a day. It's likely that Daniel's prayer times coincided with the times of the offerings in the Jewish temple before it was destroyed, at sunrise, midmorning, and about 3 o'clock in the afternoon. Daniel wasn't being superstitious. He knew the Word of God:

1 Kings 8:46-49 "When they sin against You (for there is no man who does not sin) and You are angry with them and deliver them to an enemy, so that they take them away captive to the land of the enemy, far off or near; (47) if they take thought in the land where they have been taken captive, and repent and make supplication to You in the

land of those who have taken them captive, saying, 'We have sinned and have committed iniquity, we have acted wickedly'; (48) if they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their enemies who have taken them captive, and pray to You toward their land which You have given to their fathers, the city which You have chosen, and the house which I have built for Your name; (49) then hear their prayer and their supplication in heaven Your dwelling place, and maintain their cause,

This was part of the prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the temple in Jerusalem. So Daniel was being faithful in prayer because he knew that God would keep this promise. Here's another passage I'm sure Daniel knew:

Jeremiah 29:11-13 'For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. (12) 'Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. (13) 'You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart.

Jeremiah was in his Bible so he knew this book, he was just following what it said. He knew this promise, he had probably memorized it, he probably used it daily, because Daniel was a man who had absorbed the Word, he'd meditate upon it, it permeated all areas of his life. In principle it applies to the believer, but actually it's talking about the people in the nation Israel. Verse 13 is a promise that's extended in principle to the entire human race. It's a promise of Scripture, and a stimulus for prayer.

Now here's the interesting thing; Daniel is following a prayer instruction given by the Great King, the King of Israel, who was Jehovah. But now he is going to receive an order from the king of Medo-Persia, Darius. Which order does He follow? God's order, and he disobeys the order of the king of Medo-Persia. That's the issue, which king's orders do you follow?

And under the kingdom of man it's always the same issue: do we follow the orders given to us by Jesus Christ, the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, or are we going to follow orders given to us by temporal authority? When they are in collision we have a clear mandate from the Word of God that we disobey the earthly authority; that is legitimate disobedience because those institutions have overstepped their legitimate authority.

There's one further passage, Psalm 55:16 that was also in Daniel's Bible and it was this Psalm that told him how many times to pray.

Psalms 55:16-17 As for me, I shall call upon God, And the LORD will save me. (17) Evening and morning and at noon, I will complain and murmur, And He will hear my voice.

Remember, he would be equivalent in our society to Secretary of State. And he found himself from dawn to dusk busy with the affairs of administrating the largest kingdom the world had ever seen. Remember how big the Medo-Persian Empire was; can you imagine the administrative task; imagine the trade alone, millions of dollars in trade. Imagine the deployment of military soldiers; the logistics needed; the patrols that had to be sent out to make sure that things were okay in all the thousands of miles of frontier. Think of all that, and that was what preoccupied Daniel, yet in spite of all the preoccupations of his job, Daniel demonstrated something else: he was never too busy for the Word, and he had to pick it up on his own.

He didn't use the excuse a lot of men do, oh, you don't know my job, my job is so demanding, I just don't have time for anything. Daniel gives a pretty good argument; Daniel would say you think you're busy, you

ought to have been in my job. I prayed and took the Word of God in three times a day; that shows you a man in a pressure type situation of leadership cannot afford to get away from the Word.

Some argue that the Jews lost their national identity while in exile, and that God's promises to Israel have been cancelled. This passage about Daniel praying toward Jerusalem is one of many arguments against this. As evidenced by the millions who have returned and are returning to Israel, the Jews have never given up the idea of returning to their land and abandoning the idea that God has a role for them and Jerusalem at the end of the age. They will worship again at the temple. God's prophetic plans will be fulfilled.

"The early Christians faced the same choice - obey God or earthly rulers. In some cases those who obeyed God and suffered were delivered, as when Peter was released from prison in Acts 12. But others who obeyed were executed, as were Stephen and James the brother of the Lord. It's not that God failed them. Their deaths were their victories, for their martyrdom proved the ultimate validation of their faith." Frank Ramirez

Daniel 6:11 Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and supplication before his God.

Obviously this was a setup. They knew that Daniel was faithful to his God, and were spying on him to catch him in the act.

A Christian in such company (among unbelievers) is a marked man when his life is consistent before God. The reason is that Satan hates men of prayer and will stir up foes against them. Daniel's prayer life brought not only recognition from his king, but it also led to persecution from his enemies. Theodore H. Epp

Daniel was one of the chief administrators in a world kingdom. He had many pressing responsibilities, and he had a group of corrupt people to supervise. But, with all this, Daniel:

1. Prayed regularly
2. Had a set time for prayer (3 times a day)
3. Had a set place of prayer (in his room by the window facing Jerusalem)
4. Was humble (he kneeled)
5. Showed gratitude (he gave thanks to God)
6. Was persistent (he prayed as he had always done)

Daniel 6:12-13 Then they approached and spoke before the king about the king's injunction, "Did you not sign an injunction that any man who makes a petition to any god or man besides you, O king, for thirty days, is to be cast into the lions' den?" The king replied, "The statement is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which may not be revoked." (13) Then they answered and spoke before the king, "Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the injunction which you signed, but keeps making his petition three times a day."

Notice these guys got Darius to agree with them before they said who the law-breaker was.

"Millions of American Christians pray in their churches each week, oblivious to the fact that Christians in many parts of the world suffer brutal torture, arrest, imprisonment, and even death – their homes and communities laid waste – for no other reason than that they are Christians," writes Nina Shea, director of Puebla Program of Freedom House, in her book "In the Lion's Den". "The shocking untold story of our time

is that more Christians have died this century simply for being Christians than in the first 19 centuries after the birth of Christ. They have been persecuted and martyred before an unknowing, indifferent world and a largely silent Christian community."

Daniel 6:14-15 Then, as soon as the king heard this statement, he was deeply distressed and set his mind on delivering Daniel; and even until sunset he kept exerting himself to rescue him. (15) Then these men came by agreement to the king and said to the king, "Recognize, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no injunction or statute which the king establishes may be changed."

Darius had developed a fondness for Daniel, and probably consulted the best lawyers he could find trying to find a loophole in this law. But ultimately he was unable to protect Daniel because of the decree he had signed; it couldn't be changed. He hoped that Daniel's God would deliver him.

At this point Darius realizes that he's been had; some time after these people came to him he said, boy have I been taken for a sucker; here's my best administrator, the man who is doing the most in my administration for these 120 satraps, the man who has pulled this whole kingdom together, who has given me encouragement and helped me, and now look what I've done; I've allowed myself to be manipulated by people with jealousy, maligning and gossip, and now I have to kill my friend.

Daniel 6:16-18 Then the king gave orders, and Daniel was brought in and cast into the lions' den. The king spoke and said to Daniel, "Your God whom you constantly serve will Himself deliver you." (17) A stone was brought and laid over the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signet rings of his nobles, so that nothing would be changed in regard to Daniel. (18) Then the king went off to his palace and spent the night fasting, and no entertainment was brought before him; and his sleep fled from him.



Darius is expressing some faith here that Daniel's God would deliver him. So Daniel had obviously made a big impression on the king. Then he spent the night fasting and being unable to sleep. He would have slept much better if he would have known that the lions were fasting that night, too!

Now the beautiful thing about this is Darius is forced into the position of having to trust the Lord. See how effective and efficient God works; the whole situation looks like it's messed up; everything is falling apart, and what happens? In the end Darius has to trust the Lord; a tremendous teaching system.

Verse 18 is the most beautiful illustration of two men, two different situations, one with the Word, one without the Word. Darius is in a palace, Darius in his environment has wealth, power, Darius has all the means for human enjoyment. Darius has everything that most people could want. Daniel is in a dirty den,

a den of lions, full of manure, full of dead bodies that have been thrown down there, the flies are eating the skin off the people that had been thrown down there before, I just want you to get the picture of it, and it's not just the sweet little den that you see in your Sunday School material. Sunday School artists never did read the Word too carefully and when they come to these scenes they don't present them in all their gore. Now the Holy Spirit, when He writes Scripture He lets it all hang out so you'll get the point.

It was the execution chamber and that is where Daniel spent his evening. Now look at the two men; one is using faith; he's relaxed, sacked out, sleeping fine. And the other one is surrounded with wealth, power, fame, and he can't sleep. One man has stability in the den, this is really the den of happiness, and the other is a palace of misery. So environment does not determine your happiness. Here's a beautiful illustration of it.

This recalls Philippians 4:11, "I have learned to be content in any circumstance." That's one of the great promises of Scripture. That doesn't mean you have to just sit there and do nothing about it. You can do something about it, but it's the mental attitude that you have in the situation. There is no situation that you will ever face as a believer for which God has not made total provision.

1 Corinthians 10:13 No trial has overtaken you that is not faced by others. And God is faithful: He will not let you be tried beyond what you are able to bear, but with the trial will also provide a way out so that you may be able to endure it.

This verse guarantees to you that God will never allow you to be in an overwhelming situation. God has always made provision ahead of time for you. Do you know why? Because God loves you and God is sovereign, and God has to screen every test before you get it. There's Joe down there, it's time he had a trial, I want to see if he's learned any of the Word. Oh, he hasn't? Fine, give it to him five more times and see if after five times he's learned to accept My promises. That's the way God taught Israel, so He's going to teach us the same way, God hasn't changed His basic character.

If we don't learn to trust Him at His Word He'll just keep giving the same pressure, in different form, but He'll keep it up, and you can look back in your life and see this pattern. Often times you can see exactly the same problem come up again and again. It comes up with different people and different situations but ultimately it's the same thing. Now why do you suppose that thing seems to haunt you?

There's somebody watching you and it's not Big Brother, it's your heavenly Father and He is not only watching you but He loves you, if you have trusted in Christ, so much that He wants to get that human viewpoint out of your soul and He's going to keep after you and work you over until you learn to become a grace oriented individual; until you learn to put aside all the gimmicks and all the human good, all the façade and just relax in what He's told you to do in the Word.

The next morning Darius discovers the loophole in the decree. It had stated that the law-breaker would be cast into the lion's den, but it didn't say anyone who violated the law must be killed. The assumption was that they would be killed, of course, but they obviously didn't believe in the sovereign power of the God of Daniel.

Daniel 6:19-22 Then the king arose at dawn, at the break of day, and went in haste to the lions' den. (20) When he had come near the den to Daniel, he cried out with a troubled voice. The king spoke and said to Daniel, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you constantly serve, been able to deliver you from the lions?" (21) Then Daniel spoke to the king, "O king, live forever! (22) "My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths and they have not harmed me, inasmuch as I was found innocent before

Him; and also toward you, O king, I have committed no crime."



Darius didn't have a sure faith that Daniel would be delivered, but he did have hope. Daniel is amazingly calm, as usual, no big deal, just sitting here with the kitty-cats! It would have been very easy for Daniel to have scorn in his heart, why you big slob, yeah, I'm all right, why don't you hop in here with me. I would have been tempted to do that, come on big mouth, get down here, we'll have some fellowship, ha-ha. Now Daniel didn't do that, he respected his authority, and said "O king, live forever.

The angel spoken of here could have been the Lord Jesus, or it could have been the angel Michael, who's job it is to protect the people of Israel (Dan. 12:1). Regardless of who it was, Daniel enjoyed spending the night with this heavenly person.

Daniel gives credit to God for saving him from the lions, but notice it wasn't just Daniel's faith that delivered him, but his innocence. He had not sinned against God or the king.

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

Daniel 6:23 Then the king was very pleased and gave orders for Daniel to be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den and no injury whatever was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.

Many students of prophecy believe the deliverance of Daniel from the lion's den foreshadows the

deliverance of the Jews from the anti-christ during the Tribulation Period. Those Jews who trust in God and flee to the mountain will be saved.

Daniel 6:24 The king then gave orders, and they brought those men who had maliciously accused Daniel, and they cast them, their children and their wives into the lions' den; and they had not reached the bottom of the den before the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.

Some might say that the lions just weren't hungry, that maybe Darius fed them before Daniel was thrown in with them. But they were definitely hungry, as you can see clearly in verse 24! That angel stopped the lions from eating Daniel because of his faith and his innocence. It was a miracle of God.

According to the law of the Medo-Persians, the families of the criminals also were condemned to death, as cruel as that sounds. This was not a Jewish or Christian kingdom. This could have been quite a group of people thrown to the lions, with all the conspirators and their families, so we can assume there must have been more than a few lions.

Daniel 6:25-28 Then Darius the king wrote to all the peoples, nations and men of every language who were living in all the land: "May your peace abound! (26) "I make a decree that in all the dominion of my kingdom men are to fear and tremble before the God of Daniel; For He is the living God and enduring forever, And His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed, And His dominion will be forever. (27) "He delivers and rescues and performs signs and wonders In heaven and on earth, Who has also delivered Daniel from the power of the lions." (28) So this Daniel enjoyed success in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

The decree gave a warning to everyone in the kingdom to fear the God of Daniel, for the following reasons:

1. He is the living God (not a dead god, false god, or idol)
2. He is enduring forever (alive and well in every generation)
3. His kingdom will not be destroyed (it will never end)
4. His dominion will endure forever (nothing can prevail against him)
5. He delivers and rescues (He delivered Daniel)
6. He performs signs and wonders in heaven and on earth.

So once again a man of great courage and faith has brought great honor to God, and the name of the Lord God was elevated among the unbelievers. And God honored Daniel by giving him great success.

Darius' words don't necessarily indicate he came to faith in the true God, but he is recognizing that God is highest among the gods and must be revered.

Daniel prospered and he was promoted. He used the faith technique, he didn't hustle, he didn't push, he didn't have brochures prepared on what a great man he was, he didn't flaunt his authority, he didn't use 100 different gimmicks that believers are fond of using. Daniel just encountered one trial and out of that trial the king heard the word, and the entire kingdom, everybody in the Medo-Persian Empire had read this decree, and now everybody had heard about this other deity. Now God-consciousness had an opportunity to spread to the citizens of this vast empire, from the Indus on the east to Thrace to the west, to hear about this new God, the God of Daniel and the God of the Jewish Diaspora.

So the gospel did go out. Did it go out because Daniel had a program? Knock on five doors and get ten points; bring somebody to church and get a free lunch? No, Daniel used one thing: trust in God's word, that's all that was needed, God took care of the rest.

Lessons:

Jews in the diaspora (dispersion) will always prosper.

While they may be prosper, they will always be envied and thus be in danger.

Jewish people will always survive, no matter what comes their way, because God has decreed it.

Chapter 6 questions

If Daniel were a schoolteacher today, would he pray in school? If he were a judge would he hang the 10 commandments in his courtroom? If he were a mayor would he set up a nativity scene in front of city hall? Read 2 Corinthians 10:3-5.

Daniel was a great man of faith. Why is it that a person of faith pleases God so much? (Hebrews 11)

How was Daniel able to remain calm and quiet in the midst of such a trial? Why do so many Christians become anxious and complaining when difficult times come?