



DANIEL AND THE DEN OF LIONS

DANIEL CHAPTER SIX
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2018

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First Assembly of God Wednesday Night Bible Study

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THE PROPHECIES OF DANIEL STATESMAN FOR THE AGES

Session Six / Chapter Six
Wednesday, February 21, 2018

DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

1 Our study last week centered around the collapse of Babylon (the head of gold, Daniel 2)
2 under regent Prince Belshazzar (his father was Nabonidus and spent the last ten years
3 away from Babylon). The handwriting on the wall of Belshazzar's feasting room was
4 clear and from God: "Thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting!" In that
5 night he was killed.

6
7 King Cyrus of the burgeoning Medo-Persian Empire became the conquering monarch
8 over Babylon in 539 B.C. Cyrus united both the Medes and Persians. Defining the
9 ancient Medes is a rather arduous task but most scholars, I believe, would put them to the
10 northwest of Iran. Persia, of course, was Iran. Combined the empire stretched from
11 the Aegean Sea to Egypt to northwestern India and included Israel.

12
13 Medo-Persia ruled over the Jewish nation for more than 200 years, from the overthrow of
14 Babylon until Medo-Persia itself was defeated by the Greeks in 331 B.C.

15
16 We have this history from several sources, including the Bible. A clay document was
17 found known as the Cyrus Cylinder, discovered in 1879 in the ruins of ancient Babylon.
18 The inscription identifies Cyrus by name and describes his policy of returning captured
19 peoples and their religious objects to their native lands. Isaiah lauded the history of this
20 man: Isaiah 44:28 **That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all**
21 **my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy**
22 **foundation shall be laid.** As we will later see, Cyrus ordered funds for the
23 reconstruction of the Great Temple in Jerusalem (nearly 100 years after its destruction by
24 the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar). We know this from Ezra: Ezra 6:2-13

25 **And there was found at Achmetha, in the palace that is in the province of the**
26 **Medes, a roll, and therein was a record thus written: [3] In the first year of Cyrus**
27 **the king the same Cyrus the king made a decree concerning the house of God at**
28 **Jerusalem, Let the house be builded, the place where they offered sacrifices, and let**
29 **the foundations thereof be strongly laid; the height thereof threescore cubits, and**
30 **the breadth thereof threescore cubits; [4] With three rows of great stones, and a row**
31 **of new timber: and let the expences be given out of the king's house: [5] And also let**
32 **the golden and silver vessels of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took forth**

1 out of the temple which is at Jerusalem, and brought unto Babylon, be restored, and
2 brought again unto the temple which is at Jerusalem, every one to his place, and
3 place them in the house of God. [6] Now therefore, Tatnai, governor beyond the
4 river, Shethar-boznai, and your companions the Apharsachites, which are beyond
5 the river, be ye far from thence: [7] Let the work of this house of God alone; let the
6 governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews build this house of God in his place.
7 [8] Moreover I make a decree what ye shall do to the elders of these Jews for the
8 building of this house of God: that of the king's goods, even of the tribute beyond the
9 river, forthwith expences be given unto these men, that they be not hindered. [9]
10 And that which they have need of, both young bullocks, and rams, and lambs, for
11 the burnt offerings of the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine, and oil, according to the
12 appointment of the priests which are at Jerusalem, let it be given them day by day
13 without fail: [10] That they may offer sacrifices of sweet savours unto the God of
14 heaven, and pray for the life of the king, and of his sons. [11] Also I have made a
15 decree, that whosoever shall alter this word, let timber be pulled down from his
16 house, and being set up, let him be hanged thereon; and let his house be made a
17 dunghill for this. [12] And the God that hath caused his name to dwell there destroy
18 all kings and people, that shall put to their hand to alter and to destroy this house of
19 God which is at Jerusalem. I Darius have made a decree; let it be done with speed.

20 [13] Then Tatnai, governor on this side the river, Shethar-boznai, and their
21 companions, according to that which Darius the king had sent, so they did speedily.
22

23 So we know quickly here that there was a great change in the sociological climate by the
24 Medes and Persians over that of Babylon. There was an easing of restrictions. A
25 releasing of civil prisoners (such as the Jews who were now free to return to Judea.)
26

27 Now we come to the amazing story of a ruler named DARIUS:

28
29 Daniel 5:31

30 **And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years**
31 **old.**

32
33 Daniel 6:1-3

34 **It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which**
35 **should be over the whole kingdom; [2] And over these three presidents; of whom**
36 **Daniel was first: that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king**
37 **should have no damage. [3] Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and**
38 **princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over**
39 **the whole realm.**
40

WHO WAS DARIUS?

1
2
3 While there is some debate about this, I believe that this ruler was, in fact, Darius
4 Cyaxares II. History records that he ruled for a short time, perhaps as short as two
5 years.

6
7 Although Daniel was a long-term counselor to the Babylonians, his reputation vaulted
8 him into an even higher level for the Medo-Persians. He is an old fellow by this time,
9 and yet his value to the then-rulers was vital.

10
11 *Chapter six of Daniel is perhaps one of the most familiar in the Bible. Have you ever
stopped to think that Daniel spent only one night in the den of lions, but he spent a
lifetime - from a boy of seventeen until he was about ninety - in the palace of pagan
kings? It was more dangerous to live in that palace than it was to spend a night in the
den of lions. The lions could not touch him, but yonder in the palace of
Nebuchadnezzar, Nabonidus, Belshazzar the Median, and Cyrus who were pagan men,
Daniel was in constant danger. However, he had the privilege of leading some of
these men to a knowledge of the living and true God.*

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12
13 With the historic and constant harassment of Jews through the centuries, it is easy to
14 understand the anger by the "local boys" against Daniel, the Jew, who now becomes, by
15 royal edict, their "boss." Think of it - in his young teen life, he was abducted from his
16 home in Jerusalem and taken to Babylon (Iraq/Iran) and now after decades he is not only
17 still living he is one of the highest echelon of leaders in the Persian Empire. This fact
18 elicited a whole lot of resentment - and danger for this Godly old man.

19
20 Daniel 6:4

21 **Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning**
22 **the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was**
23 **faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him.**

24
25 What a testimony for Daniel! After all those years - not using the prescribed Babylonian
26 diet as his then-king commanded, responding to Nebuchadnezzar's massive image-dream
27 in chapter 2, standing up to the king for his backsliding ways, confronting Belshazzar at
28 his huge drunken feast, and now in his old age knowing there is a group of influential
29 men who want him dead and out of the way - still Daniel kept his relationship to God and
30 men pure and holy. Just remarkable!

1 We live in a society today where accusations of immorality against leaders fly through the
2 air like vicious insects. Some are true; others are not. But no one could say anything
3 against Daniel for there was no evil in him. *Someone has said you cannot keep people*
4 *from talking about you, but you can so live that you make them liars when they do talk*
5 *about you.* Even Daniel's accusers realized they were striking out:
6

7 Daniel 6:5

8 **Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we**
9 **find it against him concerning the law of his God.**
10

11 Take a good look at that fifth verse. His accusers knew there was no "dirt" available to
12 fling at his reputation; however, they also knew of his reputation with God. And it was
13 there they could accuse him. His prayer life was something well-known and in their evil
14 minds these men thought they could set a trap because of it.
15

16 Daniel 6:6-7

17 **Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus**
18 **unto him, King Darius, live for ever. [7] All the presidents of the kingdom, the**
19 **governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted**
20 **together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall**
21 **ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be**
22 **cast into the den of lions.**
23

24 Although Darius was a decent, moral man, he had a weakness. So do all of us. Any
25 man who says he has no weakness has just shown he has one weakness for sure - he is a
26 liar. When you and I are tempted, we are tempted in the area of our weakness. This is
27 one of the reasons why Jesus commanded that we are not to judge each other. What was
28 Darius' weakness? PRIDE. He yielded to flattery.
29

30 While other kings made statues, Darius made a STATUTE, a law. No one could pray to
31 anyone but him for thirty days and, if they did, and got caught, they would be pitched into
32 a den of lions. Daniel 6:8-9 **Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the**
33 **writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians,**
34 **which altereth not. [9] Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree.**
35

36 What was "this decree of the law of the Medes and Persians?" A silly one and certainly
37 impractical: It could not be altered in any way. You have heard the saying, perhaps,
38 "it's the law of the Medes and Persians." It just simply means that once in order it
39 cannot be changed for any reason. All the pleadings in the world could not change one
40 iota of such a law.

1 Word of this dangerous law reached Daniel's ears. He knew it was directed at him. He
2 knew he could be a meal for a lion. So what did he do?

3
4 Daniel 6:10

5 **Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and**
6 **his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his**
7 **knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did**
8 **aforetime.**

9
10 I love the fact that, according to this verse, Daniel's prayer consisted of thanksgiving to
11 God. Our prayers should be filled with our gratitude. Daniel faced Jerusalem as he
12 prayed. Why? When away from the great Temple in Jerusalem, God's people of that
13 day were to face praying in that direction. That no longer is needed. In the words of
14 Jesus Himself: John 4:21-24 **Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour**
15 **cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the**
16 **Father. [22] Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation**
17 **is of the Jews. [23] But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers**
18 **shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to**
19 **worship him. [24] God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in**
20 **spirit and in truth.**

21
22 So obviously Daniel's enemies caught him for they knew he would never back down,
23 never compromise:

24
25 Daniel 6:11-15

26 **Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication**
27 **before his God. [12] Then they came near, and spake before the king concerning the**
28 **king's decree; Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask a petition**
29 **of any God or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den**
30 **of lions? The king answered and said, The thing is true, according to the law of the**
31 **Medes and Persians, which altereth not. [13] Then answered they and said before**
32 **the king, That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth**
33 **not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three**
34 **times a day. [14] Then the king, when he heard these words, was sore displeased**
35 **with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he laboured till the**
36 **going down of the sun to deliver him. [15] Then these men assembled unto the king,**
37 **and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is,**
38 **That no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed.**

39
40 Darius now realized he had been suckered into a trap. The Word says he worked all

1 night, perhaps with his attorneys, to find away out of having Daniel put in the den of
2 lions. But there was no way. That dreadful “law of the Medes and Persians” precluded
3 any such merciful act. Daniel would die in the den of vicious animals:
4

5 Daniel 6:16-17

6 **Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of**
7 **lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest**
8 **continually, he will deliver thee. [17] And a stone was brought and laid upon the**
9 **mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of**
10 **his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel.**

11
12 One has to wonder if Darius really believed what he was saying (“He will deliver thee”).
13 He was up all night worrying, as we shall see a few verses later. Now Daniel finds
14 himself with the lions in a sealed enclosure - a small cave or den. No way out.
15

John Lennox has concluded that “using a lions’ den as an execution chamber solved two problems at one: getting rid of tiresome opponents and keeping the lions well-fed.” It would require a divine miracle to keep those lions at bay during the night.

16 Someday in Heaven I’d like to ask Daniel what it was like to be with all those massive
17 “cats.” What did he do? Did he talk to them? Pet them? Back off in a corner away
18 from them? Did they rumble and roar or did they just passively back off and sleep as
19 well?
20

21 We know what the king did:
22

23 Daniel 6:18-20

24 **Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were**
25 **instruments of musick brought before him: and his sleep went from him. [19] Then**
26 **the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions.**
27 **[20] And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and**
28 **the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God,**
29 **whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?**
30

31 We know that during the reigns of emperors such as Nero, Vespasian and others, many of
32 the people of God were pitched into arenas filled with wild and hungry animals - and
33 other sorts of terror. Interesting that in Rome not many people cared if you worshiped
34 Jesus – AS LONG AS YOU ALSO WORSHIPED THE EMPEROR. Christians would
35 not worship him or anyone else. Only God. While believers are sometimes accused of

1 intolerance, IT WAS THE INTOLERANCE OF OTHERS THAT BROUGHT ABOUT
2 THEIR UNTIMELY DEATHS.

3
4 Daniel had great news for Darius: Daniel 6:21-22

5 **Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever. [22] My God hath sent his**
6 **angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as**
7 **before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no**
8 **hurt.**

9
10 Daniel not only had that good report of his own safety, but he also showed respect to the
11 man with the authority, Darius himself. We are observing in America a growing
12 disrespect for authority. That animosity comes from any number of people and sources
13 for whom the legacy of the United States seems to mean very little. Many in the
14 national news services seem to feel they should interpret the news rather than report it.
15 Both Republicans and Democrats apparently feel a need to feed off each other rather than
16 give the nation progressive and sensible government. It seems to me that both political
17 parties can share - or should anyway - this responsibility. Politicians should earn this
18 respect; however, the very offices they hold should command dignified response from our
19 citizens. Romans 13:1-3 **Obey the government, for God is the one who has put it**
20 **there. There is no government anywhere that God has not placed in power. [2] So**
21 **those who refuse to obey the laws of the land are refusing to obey God, and**
22 **punishment will follow. [3] For the policeman does not frighten people who are**
23 **doing right; but those doing evil will always fear him. So if you don't want to be**
24 **afraid, keep the laws and you will get along well.** This is a divine edict, all-too-often
25 set aside even by professing followers of Christ.

26
27 Such disrespect did not come from the lips or heart of the prophet Daniel: (Verse 21)
28 "O King, live forever!" Think of it - this greeting to the authority who made a foolish
29 law that almost cost the prophet his very life.

30
31 What was Darius' response? Daniel 6:23

32 **Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take**
33 **Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of**
34 **hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God.**

35
36 While Daniel was certainly miraculously delivered, not all saints have been so blessed:
37 Hebrews 11:36-40 **And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea,**
38 **moreover of bonds and imprisonment: [37] They were stoned, they were sawn**
39 **asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in**
40 **sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; [38] (Of whom the**

1 **world was not worthy:)** they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens
2 **and caves of the earth. [39] And these all, having obtained a good report through**
3 **faith, received not the promise: [40] God having provided some better thing for us,**
4 **that they without us should not be made perfect.**

5
6 There is a wonderful old hymn, long since abandoned in church, with this clear message:

7 *“Some through the water, some through the flood;*
8 *Some through the fire, but all through the blood;*
9 *Some through great trial, but God gives a song*
10 *In the night season and all the day long.”*

11
12 Thank God for Daniel’s deliverance. But I also remember that the Apostle Peter was
13 crucified in Rome and the Apostle Paul was beheaded.

14
15 What about Daniel’s accusers?

16
17 Daniel 6:24

18 **And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel,**
19 **and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and**
20 **the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they**
21 **came at the bottom of the den.**

22
23 It seems at this point that Darius, like Nebuchadnezzar, had a conversion experience:

24
25 Daniel 6:25-27

26 **Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all**
27 **the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. [26] I make a decree, That in every**
28 **dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is**
29 **the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be**
30 **destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end. [27] He delivereth and**
31 **rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath**
32 **delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.**

33
34 Years later, in the fourth century A.D., Roman Emperor Constantine made the same sort
35 of edict. It sounds wonderful; but no one comes to God through government edict.
36 Only through personal repentance and the blood of Jesus Christ. This edict did not work
37 out in Persia nor did it succeed in Rome. Only the Holy Spirit can draw anyone to God:
38 John 6:44 **No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw**
39 **him: and I will raise him up at the last day.** Everyone needs to make a PERSONAL
40 decision to follow God.

1 One of the high points of Daniel’s life is the fact that Cyrus released the Jews to return to
2 Jerusalem and Judea. 2 Chron. 36:22-23 **Now in the first year of Cyrus king of**
3 **Persia, that the word of the Lord spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be**
4 **accomplished, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a**
5 **proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, [23]**
6 **Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord God of**
7 **heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem,**
8 **which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? The Lord his God be**
9 **with him, and let him go up.**

10
11 As we will see later, not all Jews returned.

12
13 Daniel 6:28 **So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of**
14 **Cyrus the Persian.**

15
16 In the remaining chapters of Daniel, we will learn of the extraordinary prophecies of the
17 future that came to him. Daniel 7 will open a new section of the Book of Daniel and will
18 show once again, so clearly, that the book has supernatural origin.

19
20 Next week: Daniel’s vision of the four beasts.