

Daniel 6

Written by K B Napier
Thursday, 30 March 2017 14:43

We now come to a more 'upbeat' part of Daniel's book, compared to the previous two chapters on the arrogance of men. The last two chapters contained a modern message of severe warning for one or more Christians who read the study. Intriguingly, this study, too, contains a strong message for someone today, but of hope!

God does incredible things, because that is Who He is. No matter what grave circumstance befall us, He is in control and is ready to give us everything. But, He demands willing obedience arising from a genuine love for Him. I recently read an error by Dr D Martyn Lloyd-Jones in one of his books, in which he states that a Christian is born with his personality and so he cannot change it. It is error because it is – wrong. The person who claims to be a Christian *must* do all within him to comply with the characteristics of holiness given by God; there is no room for allowing the imposition of sin on our temperament. Part of this obedience to God is the removal of what is bad, replacement with what is good. If we do not do this, our lives will always be miserable and sinful!

I am convinced that when most Christians read this text or hear it preached, it is relegated to the back of their minds as history, and not considered to be present reality. I can tell this is so, by the way most Christians live and speak. (I do not mean their lives necessarily portray obvious sins – though they often do). It is why all their righteous heroes are in the past, and why the only miracles they know of are in the Bible. They have no idea of God's existence in today's world and do not expect Him to act. This is why they always pray "*If it is your will!*" That tiny word 'if' proves that they do not really mean it. Thus, their lives are powerless and without a working hope.

They pray, but always keep failure in the back of their mind and so bring in a proviso... God will do this or that IF He wants to. That much is obvious! But, it betrays unbelief. When God prompts us with His assurance, it will pervade every part of us and overwhelm us with its reality. Thus, when we pray, we can pray with confidence that what we ask for will be given. Stop your unbelief! If God gives you a prayer to pray, then pray it with full trust, not with a 'just-in-case' attitude that God will not answer! And when you pray – stop anything that is sin, or you will only know silence.

Verses 1-4

1.

It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom;

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2.

And over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first: that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage.

3.

Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm.

4.

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

It seems that Daniel was 'out in the cold' for some years, not known to the successive kings, or at least to the previous one, Belshazzar. The king died during the taking of Babylon by the Persian army, just an hour or so after making Daniel the 'third' in the kingdom, because he interpreted the writing on the wall. In this chapter we see Daniel, at early old age, being again promoted to high office in Babylon.

The Darius in this chapter is Darius the Mede, also known in other historical records as Gubaru the Mede. He ruled Babylon as a sub-king on behalf of Cyrus the Persian. In that capacity he had freedom to rule the old kingdom as he wished. So, he divided the old Babylonia into 120 regions, each under a governor or 'prince'.

To make sure the 120 governors ruled properly, Darius appointed three 'presidents', to whom the 120 were subject. A 'president', or carek, was a minister acting on behalf of the royal ruler, Darius, who was himself subject to Cyrus. In every way these three had the status of true princes. In modern parlance they were co-prime-ministers.

The 'first' prince of the three was Daniel, the 'prince of princes', or 'number one'. He had thus

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returned to being second in charge of the country. He made sure that the other two princes acted properly, and the 120 satraps gave a good account of themselves to the other princes, so that *“the king should have no damage”*, or **nēzaq** – any kind of adversity or wrongdoing. When a ruler acts properly we may easily subject ourselves to him. But, when he acts against God and His people, we have no duty to offer our service or obedience. Thus, Daniel could serve Darius with good conscience.

What prompted Darius to elect Daniel as chief prince, was Daniel’s proven *“excellent spirit”*. He was of known good character and godliness, so Darius had no hesitation in appointing him *“over the whole realm”*.

Today, rulers do the reverse – they appoint men who follow a path of unrighteousness and immorality. They must be capable of subterfuge and rotten behaviour and ethics, because that is how rulers rule nowadays.

If only rulers could see the wisdom of employing godly men instead of evil men, they would see a vast improvement in their own welfare as well as in the welfare of the people. Sadly, today, they only have their own interests at heart and care nothing for the people. So, they reject God and we see the results all around us, of godless men wanting immoral and godless countries, to suit their own characters.

Once again, the other two presidents and the 120 satraps plotted against Daniel. Whilst godly men do a country much good, they were not interested in that. They wanted to gain as much as possible for themselves, using their own evil ways. Daniel was godly, and that stopped him approving of wicked ways. So, in the eyes of these wicked men, Daniel had to go!

The problem they had, was that they found nothing at all in him to accuse him of wrongdoing, or of being unfaithful to the king. They would have to resort to conspiracy. Today, this happens more commonly than is thought. I was myself accused by a conspiracy after my accusers at work spent two full years trying to ‘catch me out’ – but they had nothing to catch me out with! This is because my way was to give 110% effort, with loyalty and fairplay, leading to prosperity for my employer, even though I was treated badly. I knew that no-one could then ‘catch me’ in anything untoward.

However, wicked people will go beyond what is true, and use all kinds of evil to catch a man with their evils. Even so, Christians must, as a priority, always act in good conscience and with a proper ethical approach, so that they represent godliness and not the intentions of evil men. If

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they do not, they *will* get caught out, and their fall will be well-known. I would rather be well-known for falling to evil men who lie, than for falling because of something I should not have done!

Verses 5-9

1.

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

2.

Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever.

3.

All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions.

4.

Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.

5.

Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree.

The conspirators talked amongst themselves. Realising they would never catch Daniel out in wrongdoing, they decided that the only way was to somehow use his own godly ways to give him a bad name. Even today, it is godly men who are crushed. Not because of anything they do wrong, but because their very existence causes intense hatred amongst the wicked, who will not tolerate godly men to live. They do not want godly men to rule over them or to even be nice to them! They just want absolute freedom to do whatever they wish – which is always sin.

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So, the wicked rulers met with Darius, saying that every ruler and lesser governors had talked about Darius creating a new law. This they called a “*firm decree*”, or strong law. The law would state that if any man sought favour from a god or a man over the next month, they had to ask first of Darius. If they did not, they would be thrown into the lions’ den. Even wise rulers can be duped... and Darius had no idea what was going on. Of course, Daniel was not present, so he had no input. Darius signed the law, not knowing it would be used to catch Daniel.

In a remarkably modern way, the commentator, Matthew Henry, said of the way leaders obtained this law:

“It is no new thing for that to be represented, and with great assurance too, as the sense of the nation, which is far from being so, and that which few approve of is sometimes confidently said to be that which all agree to.”

This exactly describes today’s leaders, who insist on laws and policies they alone have designed and carried out, without the consent of the people. It is done this way because what they plan will actually harm the population. Godless plans *always* harm.

It is sometimes hard to understand or accept that whole groups of men will gather together just to destroy one person. But, this is what wicked men do! They will design elaborate plots to damage someone. This is happening today: governments are plotting to destroy Christianity, and general freedoms, using elaborate lies and deceptions. Sometimes, what governments sign into being has a very deep plot hidden within, that even they are unaware of. The most recent successful plot of this kind was designed by homosexuals, whose seemingly ordinary earlier requests turned into a full-scale war against Christians. Another war against Christians is the green movement, to which even some foolish Christians align themselves!

Though the king later expressed alarm, he nevertheless signed the law into existence. It is possible that he did not anticipate any problems from, or to, the people; on the other hand we do not read of him asking the leaders why they wanted such a law. Whatever really happened, once a Persian law was signed it could never be revoked.

Verses 10-14

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1.

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

2.

Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God.

3.

Then they came near, and spake before the king concerning the king's decree; Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask a petition of any God or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said, The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.

4.

Then answered they and said before the king, That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day.

5.

Then the king, when he heard these words, was sore displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him.

Daniel was not at home when he heard the law had been signed. Conjecture suggests that he was near the palace but did not approve of the intended law. Once the law was signed he immediately went into his home and kneeled before the open window that faced Jerusalem. He gave thanks to God, probably with a sense of foreboding, for he knew the intent of the leaders towards him.

A group of the wicked leaders gathered, and *“found Daniel praying... before his God”*. What a surprise that they happened to be at Daniel’s house! Of course, they knew he prayed at certain

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times, and in front of a certain window, so they waited for the appropriate time and then pounced, knowing their plot had worked. They went to the king and reminded him of the terms of the new law. When the king confirmed the terms, as he must, the evil ones told him that Daniel, the first in the land, had ignored the law and the king, by praying to his own God three times a day without permission.

When they told him, Darius was really angry with himself, because he had been duped into signing the law. But, according to the custom of the Medes and Persians, he had no choice but to enact the law. Yet, until it was dark, he tried to think of many ways to save Daniel from the penalty. It shows us that when plans are made we should always, as far as we are able, try to envisage the many possible repercussions of what we plan, whether it is about actions or doctrine, otherwise the outcome could be severe.

Verses 15-18

1.

Then these men assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, That no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed.

2.

Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee.

3.

And a stone was brought and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel.

4.

Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of musick brought before him: and his sleep went from him.

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The wicked men gathered again, probably next day, to remind Darius that once a Mede or Persian king made a law, he could not go back on it. No doubt this angered the king, but he knew he had been well and truly deceived. He commanded that Daniel be cast into the den of lions. Darius spoke to Daniel before the penalty was brought into force, saying: 'Your God, whom you serve always, will save you'.

Unlike the taunts made against Christ when He was on the cross, when evil men jeered him to call upon His Father to save him, this statement by Darius was not a taunt. He had heard of Daniel's God and had a hope Daniel would be kept safe. Daniel was thrown into the den – a cave? A pit? A large stone was placed at the entrance to block it, and the king impressed the wax seal with his signet ring, and with the signet ring that represented the lords, so no man could get Daniel back out.

Darius, remorseful, went to his palace, but did not sleep. He fasted as he thought about Daniel's fate. Unusually, he did not want music played, but kept vigil in his room. I don't know of many Christians who, when there are dire straits, would fast! Yet, this heathen king did.

Verses 19-22

1.

Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions.

2.

And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?

3.

Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever.

4.

My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.

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The king, after fasting all night, went out *“very early in the morning”* – in Aramaic, shēpharphar means ‘dawn’. So, Darius quickly went to the den of lions to see what had happened. When he reached the den, he cried out to Daniel

“with a lamentable voice”,

‘atsab

: in emotional pain and grief. He called out, ‘Daniel, has your living God, the One you always serve, saved you from the lions?’

Darius must have been ecstatic when Daniel actually answered back: *“O king, live for ever”!* Daniel went on to shout behind the large sealed stone, that God sent an angel who stopped the lions harming him. God did it, he said, because he had done no wrong before Him or before the king.

Christians must always do what is right, whether or not a king or other ruler demands obedience to a sinful law. This should be known by all believers, who sometimes obey godless laws to keep the peace. By complying, they go along with the evil and endorse it, making matters worse, and tearing-down their own claimed faith. We live in days where we are called upon by leaders to go against God and His commands. Obviously, we cannot, even if we are destroyed... though many do. Wicked men hoped Daniel would be destroyed, but his complete trust in God meant that God delivered him. Once again, this ties in with the text in Matthew 6: ask without doubt and it will be given, and do not be anxious about tomorrow!

Sinful people will do their utmost to destroy Christians, who will sometimes be taken to the very edge of their sensibilities and mental endurance. Then, God acts on their behalf, if they truly believe and wait for His answers. This is the message for someone today: believe without doubt, and God will return to you whatever has been taken away by sinful men or by circumstances... which may be the desire of God, to test you.

Verses 23&24

1.

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

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2.

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

Daniel had complete trust in God, even when all events in his life seemed doomed. It was this utter trust that keep him alive and gave him hope and even earthly riches and power. Perhaps today we will not get such riches and power, but God will save us from the doom we fear.

The king was genuinely overjoyed, and commanded for the men who caused the awful situation with their accusations, to be brought before him. Then, he had them thrown to the lions – a well-deserved reward for their treachery. So, they died by the same punishment they wanted to inflict upon Daniel. When wicked people attacked me without mercy in my last job, I knew that whilst I might not myself see their destruction for their evils against me, that they would forever have a life of misery and also be cast into hell, and I told them so. I am confident that they have thus suffered, and will suffer in eternity, for harming a child of God.

The accusers also brought destruction upon their own wives and children, who were all ripped apart by the lions, that broke their bones and ate them. The wicked will have their day, and they will know continual punishment in hell for their evils against God's people. They will also know earthly trouble, and this will be visited upon those who rely on them. So, watch who you align yourself with.

Verses 25-28

1.

Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you.

2.

I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end.

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3.

He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.

4.

So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

Such news quickly spread, and Darius proclaimed in writing to all his subjects: "*Peace be multiplied to you*".

This 'peace' is

shēlam

in Aramaic, approximating to the Hebrew shalom, meaning goodness for the people, peace and prosperity.

Darius then introduced a new law for all the people, that they should quake and bow before the Almighty God of Daniel, because He lives and will always exist; His kingdom will live forever and His rule will be eternal; He delivered Daniel from the lions and works miracles.

It is not quite how men should be, for they cannot be forced to praise God or obey Him. We do not need laws to worship God, only the freedom to do so. However, it is a good thing to create *godly*

laws, that never do harm and which recognize the reality and worth of having godly values, because these only

benefit

the people, even if they do not believe in God. What we see today, however, is the removal of all laws that are of benefit, and the employment of evil laws that damage many and cause sin to proliferate, bringing the nation to ruin.

Do you believe in the God of Daniel? Do you truly believe He is the God of miracles? Do you really believe He will keep you safe in the worst of times? If you do not, then you will not know deliverance or safety, only misery and spiritual drought.

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During the reigns of Darius in Babylon and the uber-king, Cyrus the Persian, Daniel prospered as second in charge of the kingdom, receiving many honours and material riches. Though I do not uphold the notions of the 'name it and claim it' cultists, I do believe God honours those who honour Him. So, believe and honour the Lord, and all will be well.

Finally, I ask what I regularly ask students of the word of God – do you TRULY and REALLY believe what God says in His word? Look hard at your life. Do you commit sin and call it good? Do you ignore a godly path, calling it righteous? Do you claim to honour and believe God's promises and yet live as though He did not exist? Do you REALLY believe in God and, do you REALLY believe He is real? These are vital questions to answer, for they affect your soul, your spirit, your future and present.

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