



Daniel 6

Daniel Chapter 6

Chapter 6 is a transition. The Babylonian Empire has fallen. The chest of silver has now been taken over. The Medo-Persian Empire is now reigning. The Babylonian Empire fell around 539-538 B.C., thus the timing for the story is probably somewhere around 537 B.C. It is said that Darius is perhaps a title rather than a name. It has been suggested that it is like the title of Prime Minister or the title of Rabshakeh. In the earlier part of the Old Testament that it is not actually the name of the individual, but the title that he had.

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

So, the Medo-Persian Empire has now taken over world domination, conquering the empire of Babylon. There are one hundred and twenty provinces, and so they appoint over it one hundred and twenty and princes that they might be over the whole kingdom.

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.

And, so the government is thus allotted the one hundred and twenty satraps or princes over the whole kingdom, and then the three presidents, Daniel being one of the three. And, he was preferred above the presidents and the princes because an excellent spirit was in him.

In the previous chapter we read that there was in him, “the spirit of the holy God.” And, when you have the Holy Spirit in you, you have an excellent spirit, because the fruit or the affect of having the Holy Spirit in your life is love, which will manifest itself in joy and peace and longsuffering and patience and temperance and meekness and goodness. That is an excellent spirit. You meet a person like that, you have met someone with an excellent spirit. Well, he has the Holy Spirit residing in him. And, how we need the Holy Spirit not just to reside in us, but actually to be in control of our lives, a spirit governed life, a spirit controlled life. And, such was the case with Daniel, the spirit of God dwelling in him.

and the king sought to set him over the whole realm.

It was his intention to make Daniel second in command. Now at the end of the last chapter, when he had interpreted for Belshazzar the writing on the wall, Belshazzar made him third in the kingdom. And, we made mention of the fact that Belshazzar’s father was still alive and Belshazzar was second in the kingdom and he made Daniel third. Now, Daniel is being thought of to be promoted to the position of Prime Minister in the Persian Empire, because of his excellent Spirit. But, this provoked the other presidents and the princes to jealousy. And, they sought to find occasion against Daniel of a misuse of his power, of some type or form of corruption. They were studying and scrutinizing him trying to find a flaw or something that they could accuse him about to the king, but they could find no occasion or no fault.

Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault;

That says a lot for Daniel. Being in the public eye is not an easy place to be. Your life is open and usually there are people that can find fault with something that you have said, or something that you have done, or in some way that you have responded. If you would follow me around for a week, you would probably find fault in the way I drive and in the way I respond to the way other people drive crazy too. Daniel was a man of excellent spirit. They could not find any fault, because he was faithful. It was accounted of a steward, Jesus said, that he be faithful. The most important characteristic that we could have is just to be what God has called us to be, faithful to the calling of God.

forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him. 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.

This fellow is committed to the Lord, and the Lord is first. So, they decide to devise a law that would cause Daniel to violate his conscience before God, knowing that his conscience before God would prevail over a law of man.

Now, we as Christian are told in the scriptures that we are to obey the laws of the land, to be in obedience to those that are in authority over us. But, if laws are created that violate my conscience before God, if in obeying that law I would be violating my conscience, then as Peter said, "We must obey God, rather than man." When Peter was commanded, and the disciples, not to preach any more in the name of Jesus, they said, "Whether or not we are to obey God or man judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things that we have seen and heard." In other words, we have no intention of keeping your law.

When the three Hebrew children were commanded by the king to bow down and worship the golden image, they defied him and made him angry. But, they said, "The God that we serve is able to deliver us out of your hand and even if he doesn't, we are not going to bow down to your image." They were not going to violate their conscience before God. So, with Daniel, they knew that his obedience and commitment to God was the primary love and thrust of his life, and the only way that they were going to get an occasion against Daniel was to devise a law that would violate his conscience before God. And, they knew that he would obey God.

Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever. (Now they start this big lie.) All the presidents of the kingdom (except Daniel, though it sounds like he is included), the governors, and the princes, the counselors, 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.

Now, the idea is to flatter, first of all, the king; to let the people realize how important you are; and, to let the people give the honor that is due to you. It is really a very ridiculous kind of a law that no one could pray or offer any request of any god or man with the exception of the king for thirty days with the threat of being cast into the den of lions. And, so they were pressuring him.

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

So the pressure of "come on and sign it," be careful of that kind of pressure. The kind that says, "Well, this is the last opportunity. The sale is going off. You better sign today.", this push pressure kind of a thing, that is where one can make mistakes. This is where a trust in the Lord comes in great. "Well, if the Lord wants me to have it, it will be here when I get back, and if it isn't here than the Lord does not want me to have it." I drive these pressure salesmen crazy, because they threaten me and I say, "Great! It means the Lord does not want me to have it.", and they don't know what to do with that. I don't get to where I have got to have it. Those "got to's" can be costly. So, they are pressuring him to quickly sign the decree.

Now, Nebuchadnezzar was a sovereign ruler. Those who he would he slew. Those who he would he kept alive. He could do what he wanted. He was not bound by the law. He was the law. His word was law, and he could change it. He could altar it. But, now you find that the king is really governed by the laws. He no longer is a sovereign type of a ruler, but he himself is subject to the laws of the Medes and the Persians. Thus, the gold head is replaced by an inferior kingdom, the chest of silver.

Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree.

Under the pressure, under the lies, under the deceit, under the flattery, he signed the decree.

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

He didn't stop his habit of daily prayer. What a tremendous person this Daniel is. He is one of those that I am looking forward to meeting in heaven. I am hoping to spend quite a bit of time with Daniel. I admire this man, and his Godly character, his commitment to the Lord. I can understand why the angel said to him that he was greatly loved of God. He was just a excellent man, a man of prayer and a man of the Word.

We find that Daniel speaks about the scriptures. When he was reading the prophecies of Jeremiah, he realized by the prophesies of Jeremiah that the time of captivity would be seventy years. He was a man of the Word, and he was a man of prayer. And, God always uses men of the Word and men of prayer. If you want your life to count for God, if you want God to use your life, just become a man of prayer and a man of the Word, and you will find that God will use you.

Now, his windows were opened towards Jerusalem. In I Kings 8:46, Solomon is praying unto God at the time of the dedication of the temple. Thousands of the Israelites are gathered there. He is on this little platform, and he is praying unto God as they are initiating the worship in the newly built temple. And, in his prayer he said, "If they sin against you, (for there is no man that sinneth not,) and you are angry with them and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captives unto a land of the enemy, far or near." Now, what was the situation with Daniel? He was carried away as a captive to Babylon. So, Solomon's prayer is foreseeing the very situation that Daniel is in. "Yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they are carried captives, and they repent, and they make supplication unto you in the land of them that carried them captive, saying, We have sinned, and we have done perversely, we have committed wickedness."

Now, when you get to the ninth chapter in the book of Daniel, and as you read Daniel's prayer, this is exactly what he is praying. He is acknowledging, "Lord we have sinned against you. We have done wickedly." And, thus Daniel no doubt is very familiar, being a man of the Word, with this prayer of Solomon. And, in verse 48, "And so return unto you with all their heart, and with all their soul, in the land of their enemies, which have led them away captive, and they pray unto you toward their land." In other words, if they are turning toward Jerusalem, "toward their land, which you gave to unto their fathers, the city (which is Jerusalem) which thou hast chosen, and the house (the temple) which I have built for your name: Then hear their prayer and their supplication in heaven your dwelling place, and maintain their cause." So, here is Solomon asking God that when the time comes the people have sinned and done wickedly, and because of their wickedness you allowed them to be carried away to their enemies' lands. If there they confess their sins, they repent, and they turn towards this place, towards this house, and they pray, then hear thou from your dwelling place in heaven, and answer their prayers.

So, here is Daniel, facing Jerusalem three times a day, praying before the Lord. In chapter 9:3, "And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek my prayer and my supplication, with fasting, and sackcloth and ashes; I prayed unto the Lord God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and awesome God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to those that keep his commandments; we have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments; neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets," a beautiful prayer, and we will get to that as we get to chapter 9. And that is no doubt just a sampling of the prayer that he is offering to the Lord, three times a day, towards Jerusalem, windows open. He knows the decree has been signed. He knows that this can get him in the lion's den. I don't think that he really cares. I don't think it really bothers him. I think he is probably around eighty-eight years old at this time, and he is thinking so feed the lion's. What difference does it make? He will be with the Lord.

It is amazing. I think the older you get, the less you fear death. I feel that I have lived a very full and rich life. It is a great feeling to look back and see that God has blessed and God has been good. You have tasted the fullness of life in Christ here. Thus, you are ready for the next chapter. What has God got in store now?

So, with Daniel, he was not really cowed by this decree. But, three times a day he prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.

I think that often times we misunderstand pray when we think of it only as petition. We think of prayer as only asking God for something. When in the prayers of the Bible, they are usually more involved in the acknowledging of God, his greatness, his power, his glory, then they are in petition. Notice the prayers, they are usually rather lacking on petition. When Jesus gave you the model, he said, "This is the way you should pray, Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come," Well, that is a petition, but one for God's kingdom. "Thy will be done, in this earth as it is in heaven." Then, you get to the petition, "give us this day our daily bread. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever." So interspersed with the petition is that praise and worship and the acknowledgment of God.

When the disciples were threatened not to speak anymore in the name of Jesus, and when they came back to the company of disciples and told them the things that had transpired and the threats that had been made, they prayed. But, you notice their prayer, "O Lord, thou art God, you have created the heavens and the earth and everything that is in them and by the mouth of your servant David you have spoken of these days when he said, Why do the heathen rage and imagine a vain thing, for they have gathered together against the Lord and against His Messiah saying..." Then they finally get to the petition, but they go way down telling the Lord that He is great and has created everything.

I think that more time should be spent in praising the Lord and thanking the Lord, rather than in just petition. When you begin to praise the Lord and thank the Lord, you are brought into an intimacy of fellowship and relationship that you can never know just by petitions. If your prayer only involves petitions you never draw into the holy of holies, so to speak, of just worship. Next time when you get down to pray just spend some time telling the Lord how much you love Him and how wonderful you think he is. You know I think if we would spend more time praising the Lord and giving thanks, we would have less petitions to offer.

Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. Then they near, and spake before the king concerning the king's 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 laws of the Medes and the Persians, which altereth not.

It has been signed. It has been set into law. It can not be altered or changed.

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. Then the king, when he heard these words, was sore displeased with himself,

They took him. The whole thing just opened up and he saw that they set a trap and he fell in it. And, it upset him.

and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him.

He searched for a loop hole in the law looking for some way where by he might not have to put Daniel in the lion's den. And, he laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him.

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

Now they are pushing it. Now they are pressing it. They are forcing the king to enforce the law. These men have murder in their hearts. Jealousy so often leads to murder. They were jealous of Daniel and the position that he was being considered for, and mastered by jealousy they conspired to murder.

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

Now, where did he get that kind of confidence in Daniel's God? He probably had heard the story of the three Hebrew children. He probably heard how He delivered them from the burning fiery furnace. Something like that would have been broadcast a long way. And, when he became king, it could be being close to Daniel, and as they are sharing stories Daniel is witnessing to him about God. It could very well be that Daniel witnessed to him about their history of their nation what God had done throughout the history. I can not believe that Daniel could be this close to the man without really witnessing to the man about the true and the living God whom he served. And, having witnessed to the king, now God is sort of on the line.

I love the story in Ezra when Cyrus gave to them the decree to go back and rebuild the temple in Jerusalem and they gave them many of the gold and silver vessels. They were carrying back tremendously valuable artifacts back to Jerusalem, priceless artifacts. It says that Ezra was sort of embarrassed to ask for a military guard to go with them, which would have been the wise thing to do, because their were bandits all the way along the route that would rip off the caravans and robe the treasures. And having these treasures he was embarrassed to ask for a military escort to go with them, because he had been telling the king about the greatness of his God.

You start bragging about God and sometimes you are put on the line. If your God is so great, He will take care of you. So, the king is encouraging Daniel, having heard of Daniel's God, that your God who you serve continually, He will deliver you.

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

This was one of those things that you get on your mind, how could I have been so foolish, an innocent man is suffering tonight because of my folly. He was just miserable and his thoughts were just not giving him any rest.

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

Now this is again very interesting. The acknowledgment that Daniel served a living God. Now most people serve insensate gods, gods that can not breath or see or hear or talk. Even today, the majority of people are worshipping insensate gods. Their lives are being ruled, dominated, mastered by their passion for money, or their passion for excitement or thrills, or their passion for knowledge and understanding. And, that becomes their god. They devote their lives to the amassing of material wealth. And, they make every decision based upon the prophet aspect. That is their god, but it is not alive. It is dead, an inanimate object. Daniel served the living God.

Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou serve continually, able to deliver thee from the den of lions?

What happened to his faith the night before? He was saying your God is going to deliver you. He made it very positive. Now the question, is He able to deliver you from the lions?

Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever. My God has sent his angel,

Remember the three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace? How when Nebuchadnezzar looked in, he said, "Did we not cast three, how is it that I see four walking around in the midst of the fire, and the fourth, his face is like the son of God." Oh, how the Lord shares in our times of trial. He said, "I will not leave you, nor forsake you." And, you do not go through a testing or a trial, but the Lord is there with you in it to see you through it.

My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me:

I imagine that Daniel slept better than the king. I would suppose that a lion would make a pretty soft pillow.

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.

Jesus said, "If you can believe, all things are possible." Satan is out to destroy your faith in God, and he does what he can to challenge your belief. And again I think that in keeping with this it would be well to read the eleventh chapter of the book of Hebrews, reminding ourselves again of what God has done for those people who dared to trust in him, or dared to believe His promises. And, as Hebrew 11 is telling us about these men. It says, "Who through faith stopped the mouths of lions." This is no doubt referring to this very chapter and to Daniel's experience. Jesus said, "Have faith in God." "For if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed you could say to yonder mountain, Be thou removed and cast into the midst of the sea, and it would be done." How far short we fall today. There was no harm to Daniel, nor hurt to Daniel, because he believed in His God. There was no harm to the Hebrew children, because they believed in their God.

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.

This dispels any thought that the lions were not hungry. And you may say, "O my, but why would they throw in the wives and the children?" Well, because this is a pagan empire, and it was the practice of the Persian Empire that when a man was guilty of treason or whatever, they would not only kill him but the family. Now, God's law said that a son was not to be slain for his father's sin nor the father for the son, but every man is responsible for his own guilt. Under the law of God this would not be, but under the law of the Persians that is the way it was. So, this is not God's law. It is not what God required. It is just the laws of the Persians that this happened.

Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth;

Notice how God is getting his witness out. You know God has never left himself without a witness. Now the nation of Israel was to be God's witness to the world through the blessings of God upon that nation the world was to see the benefits of worshipping God and serving the true and the living God. That is God's witness and it was to be God's witness to the world. But, they no longer served God. They began to serve the gods of the heathen. They began to serve the gods of the Canaanites, even the Babylonian gods. And, thus they were driven from the land, no longer a witness. But, God is not without a witness, and Nebuchadnezzar, this great king of Babylon, bears witness to the world about God. In chapter 4, it said, "Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all people, nations, languages that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you." It is quite similar to the way Darius begins his proclamation.

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

So God is now using these kings, the Babylonian king, and now the Mede king.

I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel:

That is quite a decree. You better fear and tremble before Daniel's God. The problem is righteousness can not be legislated. You know there are always those today because we object to the filth that they are seeking to dump on us. They say, "O, those right wing Christian fundamentalist. They are trying to force us to live according to their convictions." No, you can not legislate righteousness. You can not create laws and force people to be righteous. God did not intend that people be forced to be righteous now.

This is a testing time. God has given a person a free will. And, God wants not a legal relationship with you, but a loving relationship with you. And, if being a Christian was a law, and this is the problem with the Muslims in that they have the laws that people are forced to remain in that faith or they can be put to death. It is a capital crime to leave the Muslim faith. It is also a capital crime to convert a Muslim from his faith to another religion. So how do you know that they really love Alla or maybe they are just afraid of the sword. Poor Alla, he really doesn't know whether they love him or not. He just really doesn't know period.

But God has given you that free will and he wants you to exercise that free will by choosing to live a righteous life, choosing to live a life of purity, choosing to deny your flesh, to deny yourself, choosing to take up your cross to follow him. I don't have to love God. I don't have to serve God. I could live after the flesh. I could pursue the things of the flesh. I could live for pleasure or whatever. I have that choice, but I choose to serve God. I choose to deny myself, to take up the cross and follow Jesus. And, thus my relationship with Him is a loving relationship. And, I am held by the bonds of love, not by the laws, and that is exactly the way God wants it, not a legal relationship, just a loving relationship. I don't want laws that would force them to live righteously, but I don't want laws either that forces me to take their filth, for that is not freedom either.

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.

What a witness! Go for it, Darius, I love it. Bear witness to the whole world of the greatness of the God of Daniel.

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.

You know we are so anxious that God deliver us from the situation, rather than through the situation. But, many times God gets much more glory by delivering us through the situation, then had He delivered us from it. When he delivers us from it, so often people say, "It probably would not have happened anyhow." But, when it does happen and God is there and He delivers you, it is often times a much greater testimony in the situation, through the situation the Lord has brought me.

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

Darius only reigned for two years and he died. He was sixty-two when they captured Babylon. And, Cyrus became the king. And, Daniel also was thought highly of by Cyrus, and he prospered also in reign of Cyrus the Persian.

Now, this brings us to the end of the historic part of the book of Daniel. We have sort of followed the history of Daniel from his teenage years in Chapter 1, where he was taken captive to Babylon. We saw some of the major events that took place to Daniel and to his companions while they were captives in Babylon. We saw the fall of Babylon and the rise of the Medo-Persian Empire. And, now through Cyrus, it brings us to the end of Daniel's life from a historic standpoint.

Beginning in Chapter 7 and through the rest of the book, we have visions, which are prophetic that God gave to Daniel concerning the future of the world. So beginning with Chapter 7, these events looking at

verse 1, "In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote down the dream, and told the sum of the matters." So, Chapter 7 actually took place back in the area between Chapters 3 and 4, when Belshazzar was in his first year as king. And, Daniel will date for you these various prophecies, the time that they came to him, as we get into the rest of the book of Daniel. But, this is where the book becomes quite fascinating because now Daniel begins to prophecy of the future events that are going to take place upon the earth during the time of the gentiles.

The times of the gentiles began with the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jews being taken to Babylon as captives, when the nation ceased to exist, when Zedekiah was blinded, the last king taken to Babylon, the kingdom ceased to exist. Thus, the Jews are being reigned over by the gentiles. So, you are in a period of time known as the time of the gentiles. These prophecies that Daniel will be giving are prophecies that will transpire during the time of the gentiles. So, we are going to come into the very fascinating portion of the book of Daniel as we get into that portion that deals with events that have already many of them taken place, and events which have not yet taken place but are shaping up in the world today. So, Daniel will bring you right up to the minute, right up to what is happening and what will be happening in the near future.

It is absolutely phenomenal the things that Daniel writes about and they give proof that this book the Bible was inspired by God. Jesus said, "I told you things before they come to pass, so when they come to pass you might believe." And, when you see with what tremendous accuracy Daniel spoke of the future events, which we will look at history and see where these things took place just exactly as Daniel prophesied, then you will realize, surely God is the author of this book.