

# Daniel

## Chapter 6

### *Daniel in the Den of Lions*

It pleased Darius to appoint 120 satraps to rule throughout the kingdom, <sup>2</sup> with three administrators over them, one of whom was Daniel. The satraps were made accountable to them so that the king might not suffer loss. <sup>3</sup> Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. <sup>4</sup> At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent. <sup>5</sup> Finally these men said, “We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God.” <sup>6</sup> So the administrators and the satraps went as a group to the king and said: “O King Darius, live forever! <sup>7</sup> The royal administrators, prefects, satraps, advisers and governors have all agreed that the king should issue an edict and enforce the decree that anyone who prays to any god or man during the next thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be thrown into the lions’ den. <sup>8</sup> Now, O king, issue the decree and put it in writing so that it cannot be altered—in accordance with the laws of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed.” <sup>9</sup> So King Darius put the decree in writing. <sup>10</sup> Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before. <sup>11</sup> Then these men went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help. <sup>12</sup> So they went to the king and spoke to him about his royal decree: “Did you not publish a decree that during the next thirty days anyone who prays to any god or man except to you, O king, would be thrown into the lions’ den?” The king answered, “The decree stands—in accordance with the laws of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed.” <sup>13</sup> Then they said to the king, “Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the decree you put in writing. He still prays three times a day.” <sup>14</sup> When the king heard this, he was greatly distressed; he was determined to rescue Daniel and made every effort until sundown to save him. <sup>15</sup> Then the men went as a group to the king and said to him, “Remember, O king, that according to the law of the Medes and Persians no decree or edict that the king issues can be changed.” <sup>16</sup> So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions’ den. The king said to Daniel, “May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!” <sup>17</sup> A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles, so that Daniel’s situation might not be changed. <sup>18</sup> Then the king returned to his palace and spent

the night without eating and without any entertainment being brought to him. And he could not sleep. <sup>19</sup> At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lions' den. <sup>20</sup> When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?" <sup>21</sup> Daniel answered, "O king, live forever! <sup>22</sup> My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, O king." <sup>23</sup> The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God. <sup>24</sup> At the king's command, the men who had falsely accused Daniel were brought in and thrown into the lions' den, along with their wives and children. And before they reached the floor of the den, the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones. <sup>25</sup> Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations and men of every language throughout the land: "May you prosper greatly! <sup>26</sup> "I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel. "For he is the living God and he endures forever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end. <sup>27</sup> he rescues and he saves; he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions." <sup>28</sup> So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

**Ch 6** Luth: "The fine and precious example of a good and righteous king [Darius] who loved Daniel... Once again God proves himself righteous and comforting; for he so marvelously reverses the plot [so] that that which Daniel's enemies had prepared for him they had to swallow themselves. This is just as Psalm 7[:14, 16] declares... Thus Daniel's life is nothing but a fine, clear mirror. In it we see the conflict and victory of faith, which, by the grace of God, triumphs over all men and devils; we see too the great fruit and use of faith, which it produces through patience and cross-bearing, before both God and the world" (AE 35:298–99). (TLSB)

**6:1** 120 SATRAPS – One of the first items following a conquest is to set up a government apparatus for administering the new king's rule. Darius, we are told, has decided to appoint one hundred twenty officials throughout the kingdom. Some interpreters have objected that the Persian Empire was never organized into as many as one hundred twenty satrapies, but usually had between twenty and thirty. However, nearly all commentators are agreed that the term "satrap" was often used in a loose sense to denote lower officials, so one hundred twenty governors or similar officials is not an unreasonable number. It compares well to the one hundred twenty-seven provinces of the Persian Empire under Xerxes, as reported in Esther (1:1; 8:9; 9:30). (CC)

**6:2** THREE ADMINISTRATORS – Commentators often point out that the establishment of the office of the three overseers (Dan 6:2) is without parallel in the history of the Persian Empire. However, if the historical setting of this chapter follows the death of Gubaru, this office may have been a temporary arrangement until Darius could determine whom he would appoint as governor of Babylon. Since Darius probably lacked firsthand knowledge of the capabilities and reliability of those leaders already in

Babylon who may have been equipped for government service when he took control, he may have used the temporary arrangement of three overseers who could keep each other in check until he found someone he could trust. Indeed, this seems to have been the case according to 6:3. Daniel's faithful service comes to the attention of Darius after some time, and so Darius intends to appoint him as governor of the kingdom of Babylon. (CC)

**6:3** DANIEL SO DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF – The narration tells us that Daniel commended himself to Darius because “an outstanding spirit was in him” (רוּחַ יִתְיָרָא בְּהוֹ, 6:3). This recalls earlier phrases used to refer to the Holy Spirit dwelling in Daniel, although he was described by pagan Babylonian kings, who used the phrase “a spirit of (holy) gods” in earlier accounts (4:8–9, 18; 5:11, 14). In contrast, Daniel the author, when writing the narration here, avoids that polytheistic terminology (“gods”) and adopts the same phrase (רוּחַ יִתְיָרָא, “an outstanding spirit”) used by the Babylonian queen in 5:12 to refer to the Holy Spirit in Daniel. This enables him to imply that his accomplishments were a result of God's gifts and blessing instead of his own prowess. Similarly, the NT exhorts Christians to serve in their vocations faithfully and joyfully by the power of the Spirit, knowing that they are not just serving human masters (employers, bosses), but ultimately are serving the Lord (e.g., Rom 12:11; Eph 6:1–9; Col 3:16–24). (CC)

Age and experience were highly regarded in the ancient world. (TLSB)

**6:4** *sought to find a ... complaint.* Prompted by political jealousy of this exiled Judean (v 13; cf 3:8). (TLSB)

*faithful.* Daniel performed his official duties faultlessly. (TLSB)

**6:5** *law of his God.* Daniel's rivals were well aware of his religious practices. (TLSB)

The other officials seek to have Daniel removed from office out of ambition and jealousy. There is no mention of whether they are also motivated by ethnic or religious bigotry. However, since Daniel is faithful in his vocation, they decide that Daniel's monotheism and his devotion to his God are the only means to effect his downfall. They decide to use “the Law of his God” against him (see the textual note on 6:5). (CC)

This decision by the Babylonian officials tells us that Daniel's religious practices are known to those around him. Daniel does not hide his faith. Moreover, they understand that Daniel's dedication to worship Israel's God means that he will not neglect God's command to worship. Whether or not they are familiar with the First and Third Commandments, they understand that Daniel's commitment to worship is based on the laws and customs of Israel. (CC)

This chapter contrasts the “Law” (תּוֹרָה) of God (6:5) with the “law” (תּוֹרָה) of the Medes and the Persians (6:8, 12, 15). Daniel is perfectly willing to obey Persian law, as demonstrated by his faithful service in 6:1–4, even as he had submitted to the

Babylonian law and king in chapters 1–2, 4–5, since they had not required him to compromise faithfulness to God’s Word (as the Babylonian edict required the three Judeans to do in chapter 3). However, even his enemies know that his ultimate commitment is to the Law of his God. (CC)

**6:6** *came by agreement*. Hatched a plot to trap Daniel. (TLSB)

**6:7** The conspirators lied in stating that “all” the royal administrators supported the proposed decree, since they knew that Daniel (totally unaware of the proposal) was the foremost of the three administrators. (CSB)

*presidents ... governors*. The plotters claimed weighty support for their proposed law. (TLSB)

*ordinance ... injunction*. Law with enforcement procedures. (TLSB)

*petition*. Prayer. (TLSB)

*except to you, O king*. Elevated the king to divine status. *den*. Lit, “pit,” closed by a stone (v 17). (TLSB)

*lions*. Asiatic lions, smaller than African lions. Probably kept in captivity for royal hunting parties. (TLSB)

**6:8** *cannot be changed*. Making a mockery of his supposed divine authority. (TLSB)

LAWS OF MEDES AND PERSIANS – That “the law of the Medes and the Persians ... cannot be revoked” (6:8, 12) is also mentioned in Esth 1:19 and 8:8. It is confirmed by Diodorus Siculus, who reports that Darius III could not revoke a death sentence even though he later found out that the condemned man was innocent. Ironically, however, the same verb (הִדָּבַר) here translated “revoked” is used in other passages that describe how God “deposes” kings (2:21) and makes their kingdom and glory “pass/be taken away” from them (4:31; 5:20; cf. 7:12, 26). But it is also used to state that the kingdom and dominion given the Son of Man, the Messiah, “will not pass away” (7:14). (CC)

**6:10** *toward Jerusalem*. See 2Ch 6:38–39. (CSB)

Daniel’s upper story room has windows facing Jerusalem. Apparently, he prays facing west in the direction of Jerusalem. Praying toward the temple in Jerusalem was first mentioned in Solomon’s prayer at the dedication of the temple as he asked God always to hear prayers directed toward the city and the temple, the place of sacrificial atonement for the forgiveness of sins, the place where God promised to dwell among his people in grace (1 Ki 8:27–53). God heard Solomon’s prayer and promised to be attentive to that place (1 Ki 9:3; 2 Chr 7:12, 15). Therefore, the direction of Daniel’s prayer is not simply custom, nostalgia, or superstition but is based on God’s promise.

While God can hear a prayer prayed in any direction, he promised to hear prayers directed toward Jerusalem. Therefore, Daniel relies on God's promise as he prays. This promise continued to be honored among Jews, as attested in 1 Esdras 4:58 and perhaps Tobit 3:11. (CC)

Jesus Christ is the new temple (Jn 2:18–22), the incarnate dwelling place of God with humanity (Jn 1:14), the one who offered the sacrificial atonement to forgive the sins of all through his blood (Eph 1:7). He has given us the model prayer (Mt 6:9–13; Lk 11:2–4). The corresponding way in which NT believers pray is not toward any place, but calling upon God in the name of Jesus Christ, relying on his grace and with faith in him. These are the prayers that are heard by God and acceptable to him. (CC)

*Three times a day.* See Ps 55:17. (CSB)

*on his knees three times a day.* Daniel did not protest the new law but witnessed to his faith by his actions. Judeans usually stood for public prayer and knelt in private. Luther suggests that kneeling shows we are beggars before God. Ter: “We pray at least not less than thrice in the day, debtors as we are to Three—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit” (ANF 3:690). (TLSB)

There is no command in Scripture concerning the number of times one should pray each day. In Ps 55:17, David mentions prayers at morning, noon, and evening, while in Ps 119:164, the psalmist tells of prayers he offers seven times each day. Josephus describes prayer twice daily, in the morning and evening. Some early Christians prayed three times each day, and the same practice was known among Jews of the Mishnaic period. Later rabbis based threefold daily prayer on this passage in Daniel and the practices of Abraham (morning), Isaac (afternoon), and Jacob (evening). In the NT, St. Paul encourages continual prayer: “rejoice always, pray ceaselessly” (1 Thess 5:16–17). (CC)

**ON HIS KNEES** – Praying on one's knees is attested elsewhere in Scripture, though other postures for prayer are also mentioned (see, e.g., 2 Sam 12:16). The custom is still followed by many Christians, particularly for confessional prayer. (CC)

**6:11** *by agreement.* Cf vv 6, 15. Every move was carefully plotted. (TLSB)

*found Daniel.* He made no attempt to conceal the fact that he was violating the king's law. (TLSB)

**ASKING GOD FOR HELP** – Daniel, we are told, knows about the king's decree but continues his habit of prayer “just as he had been doing before this” (Dan 6:10). While Daniel normally is a scrupulous follower of all laws of the governing authorities, he understands that his first loyalty is to God. When a human authority establishes a regulation that conflicts with God and his Word, then, as the apostles declares, “We must obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). Daniel could have tried to rationalize that simply refraining from prayer for thirty days would not deny the one true God nor his own faith in him. However, he knows that God has commanded prayer and graciously

invited his people to bring their requests to him. Prayer expresses his communion with God in faith and also is a testimony to others about his trust in God (cf. 6:23). Therefore, God's command and promise to hear and answer compel Daniel to continue his custom of praying. Thus Daniel understands that refraining from practicing his faith is as good as denying his faith in God. He refuses to abandon his practice of daily prayer and praise. Moreover, we are told that after Darius issued his command, the men found Daniel "praying and *seeking favor* from his God" (6:11). This implies that Daniel has specifically requested that God look upon him with favor and save him, even if he suffers the consequences of disobeying the king's command. While Daniel's enemies rely on Persian law to rid them of Daniel, Daniel relies on God to rid him of all trouble. (CC)

Daniel's enemies are already prepared to accuse him and simply come together outside Daniel's house to see him praying as he faces out of his upper-story window toward Jerusalem. They observe that Daniel is praying—an indisputable conclusion since he is kneeling. He may also have his hands outstretched toward heaven, according to the ancient custom for prayer found elsewhere in Scripture and throughout the Near East. (CC)

**6:12 DID YOU NOT PUBLISH** – When the officials come to the king, they immediately remind him of the decree's content (6:12). They are attempting to back the king into a corner, and their question betrays a suspicion that Darius will favor Daniel over them. Therefore, to ensure that the decree will be applied to Daniel, the officials make Darius commit himself to the decree once again. They state the terms of the decree so they can later pressure the king to enforce the terms against Daniel. Indeed, Darius steps into their trap not only by affirming the decree and its terms but also by stating that it cannot be changed. (CC)

**6:13 PAYS NO ATTENTION** – Daniel's accusers spring their surprise on the king (6:13). Their strategy is to accuse Daniel of disobeying Darius, then attempt to place distance between Darius and Daniel, hoping to alienate Darius from his favored official whom he was intending to promote (6:3). The first way they attempt to lower Darius' opinion of Daniel is by referring to him as "from the exiles of Judah" (6:13). Daniel is suspect, they imply, because he is not a Mede or Persian, nor does he obey "the law of the Medes and the Persians" (6:12), and his loyalty to Judah might lead him to betray Darius. Second, they try to widen the split between Darius and Daniel by claiming that Daniel "does not pay attention to you, Your Majesty" (6:13). In fact, they place this charge before the accusation that Daniel is ignoring the decree. While they have evidence that Daniel has ignored the decree, their first charge, that he is in the habit of ignoring Darius, is unwarranted. In the months since Darius (Cyrus) had assumed power over Babylon, Daniel has distinguished himself as faithful under Darius (6:3). Thus the officials use Daniel's one area of disobedience to overgeneralize about him so that they can attack him politically. (CC)

Daniel's accusers make their point about Daniel's disobedience by noting that he continues to pray "*three times each day*" (6:13, echoing 6:10). They have conducted a

thorough investigation into Daniel's piety. Their observation is not of a single prayer but of his regular practice. His prayer is not a simple lapse or oversight; he has repeatedly violated the king's order. They are claiming that because of its repetition, Daniel's disobedience is not accidental, but willful rebellion. (CC)

**6:14–15** King Darius had come to depend on Daniel's expertise and wise counsel (v 3). But much to his distress, the law was unalterable. (TLSB)

**6:14** HE WAS GREATLY DISTRESSED – When Darius learns of the real intent of the decree he has issued at his officials' request, he is upset. He has been deceived by his officials. Moreover, he is at risk of losing a highly valued lieutenant, and he may well have a strong personal affection for Daniel. The text does not explain what methods Darius attempts to use to free Daniel from the charges against him. He may have consulted experts in the law, looked for a plausible alternate interpretation of the decree, or sought a way to annul the decree. However, Daniel's accusers press their advantage by reminding Darius that the law of the Medes and the Persians is supreme and will not allow any alteration of the decree. This must have appeared to them to be a good strategy at the time, but by angering the king, they have given him added incentive to carry out the punishment on themselves after Daniel is proven innocent by the miracle (6:24). In the end, the king gives in to their request even though he knows that Daniel does not deserve condemnation (cf. Jn 19:8–16). (CC)

**6:16** *serve continually*. See 1Co 15:58. (CSB)

Darius has no choice but to condemn Daniel to the lions. If he had refused to enforce his own decree, he would have undermined his own authority and encouraged others in Babylon to ignore the law of the Medes and the Persians—a risky example for a new king to set for his newly conquered people. Yet he does not abandon all hope, but expresses the desire that Daniel's God would save him (see the textual note on 6:16). (CC)

Darius notes that Daniel continually serves God. This does not mean that he does not serve the king, but that in serving the king, he is also serving God through his vocation (cf. Rom 13:1–10). Daniel's service to God is so faithful that he has no question about the choice between abandoning his worship of God for thirty days in order to obey the royal decree or continuing to worship God and place his service to God above all other responsibilities. Faith, worship, and service to God are continual throughout the life of a believer and should not be abandoned at any time (cf. Jn 8:31–32; 15:4–6; 1 Cor 13:8, 13; 1 Thess 5:17; 1 Jn 2:24). Service in one's job or occupation normally is not continual, but only required when one is performing the duties of a vocation. (CC)

*May your God ... deliver you!* This heathen king expressed the hope that Daniel's God would save him. This may signal the king's doubts about the powers of his own gods. (TLSB)

**6:17** SEALED IT – Daniel's fate was sealed; his death seemed inevitable. (TLSB)

The sealing of the pit with the signet rings of the king and his nobles (Dan 6:17]) ensures that neither party can tamper with the judgment on Daniel. The king will not be able to rescue Daniel, and Daniel's accusers will not be able to kill him if the lions do not. We are told that Darius has the pit sealed with the rings (6:17), indicating not only that he will abide by the decree but also that he does not trust Daniel's enemies (cf. Mt 27:66). (CC)

**6:18** *spent the night fasting; no diversions.* Evidence of the king's distress (v 14). (TLSB)

HE COULD NOT SLEEP – Darius' night without food and sleep are a consequence of the severe anxiety he is experiencing. It would be torturous for a ruler to be pressured into condemning an innocent man whom he has regarded favorably (cf. Dan 6:3; Mt 27:19). With a guilty conscience, Darius is not able to enjoy entertainment or pleasures, and so he refrains from them (see the textual note on 6:18). (CC)

**6:20** SERVANT OF THE LIVING GOD – Only time a non-Israelite makes this confession. (TLSB)

Darius seems to have displayed some hope that God would be able to deliver Daniel from the lions. He repeats most of his wish or prayer from 6:16 in the form of his hopeful question in 6:20. He hurries to the sealed pit at dawn (cf. Mt 28:1) and calls out to Daniel, which he would not have done if he were certain Daniel was dead. He characterizes Daniel as "servant of the living God" (6:20). God is often called "the living God" in Scripture. However, these (6:20, 26) are the only passages in the entire OT where the divine title appears on the lips of a Gentile (non-Israelite). It demonstrates that Darius has at least some small hope that it is possible for Daniel yet to live if his God favors him. Since Daniel worships a God who is "living," unlike the gods of metal, stone, and wood (5:4, 23), his God might be able to preserve and save life. (CC)

In the NT, Jesus builds on the fact that God is "the God ... of the living" in order to support the biblical doctrine of the resurrection and that believers who have died still live to God (Mk 12:18–27). Moreover, after his bodily resurrection from the dead, Jesus himself is acclaimed as "the living one" (Lk 24:5). (CC)

*able to deliver you.* Darius hoped that his wish was fulfilled (v 16). (TLSB)

**6:22** GOD SENT AND ANGEL – Daniel's reply from the pit begins with a formal greeting for the king with another reference to life: "Your Majesty, may you live forever!" (6:21). He then explains why he has been able to survive among the lions overnight: God sent an angel, who shut their mouths. Occasionally in both Testaments God sends an angel to deliver his faithful people from harm and bring them to safety (e.g., 1 Ki 19:5–7; Mt 2:13, 19–20). Earlier Nebuchadnezzar saw the divine man (Dan 3:25) whom he described as God's "angel" (3:28), yet who probably was the pre-incarnate Christ, the Son of God, who is the "stone" who brings God's kingdom in 2:34–35, 44–45 and who also appears as the "Son of Man" who receives God's kingdom in 7:13–14; the "Prince of the army" in 8:11; the "Messiah" and "Leader" in 9:25–26; and the heavenly



man in 10:4–21. It is possible that the “angel” here in 6:22 might be the pre-incarnate Christ, who sometimes appears in the OT as “the Angel of Yahweh/the Lord.” (CC) Here Daniel is the only one who perceived the angel (though possibly the lions saw him; cf. Num 22:23–31), but Darius and his officials certainly witness the result of the miracle. The miraculous preservation of Daniel confirms that the usual purpose for which God sends his “ministering spirits” is to aid believers as part of his larger plan of bringing them to eternal life (Heb 1:14; cf. Heb 1:7). The deliverance of believers can give them further opportunities to proclaim the Gospel and so lead unbelievers to salvation (cf. Acts 5:19; 8:26; 10:22; 12:7–11). (CC)

*found blameless.* The expression can mean he was not guilty of “great transgression” (Ps 19:13). (TLSB)

Daniel declares that he was saved because he is righteous before God, who “found me innocent before him” (Dan 6:22). His faith was evident in his faithfulness in worship and prayer, even when threatened with the penalty of death. He was confident that not even death would separate him from his loving God. Later God will reveal more to Daniel about the resurrection to eternal life (Dan 12:2–3; cf. Rom 8:31–39). The portrayal of Daniel in this chapter is consistent with the probable allusion to him in Heb 11:33 that saints by faith “stopped the mouths of lions.” (CC)

Daniel’s dual statement that he was “found ... innocent” by God and also “committed no crime” against the king (6:22) affirms the two kinds of righteousness that each believer has by grace. The saving righteousness before God (*coram Deo*) that each believer has through faith is normally hidden from other people, but God has publicly revealed his favor toward Daniel by saving him from the lions. The believer’s righteousness before other people (*coram hominibus*) is demonstrated by good works, that is, deeds of love and fidelity motivated by the Gospel. Daniel’s civil righteousness was already evident to the king (6:3, 14) and even to his opponents (6:4–5). (CC)

By suffering because of his righteousness, Daniel serves as a fine example of a believer who lives out the apostle’s exhortation in 1 Pet 2:12–25. (CC)

**6:23** *he ... trusted in his God.* That the lions were ravenously hungry (v. 24) was no obstacle to the Lord’s rewarding Daniel’s faith by saving his life. (CSB)

Daniel demonstrated his faith when he continued to pray to the true God (v 10). (TLSB)

Darius’ reaction to Daniel’s reply (Dan 6:23) reveals that he has been well-disposed toward Daniel all along. When Daniel is lifted out of the pit, he is found to be unharmed, demonstrating that he has received divine protection. The parallel to the account of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace is striking. In both cases, God demonstrated his power by providing complete protection from harm. The preservation of his faithful followers from physical harm and temporal death affords a glimpse of the salvation from eternal death and resurrection to eternal life that all God’s people have through faith (12:2–3). (CC)

**6:24** *along with their wives and children.* In accordance with Persian custom. (CSB)

*those men.* Plotters against Daniel (vv 5–6). *children ... wives.* Gk historian Herodotus reported that fear of conspiracy might cause a Persian ruler to kill the family of a criminal (Hdt 3:119). *before they reached the bottom.* Evidence of God’s power in preserving Daniel’s life. (TLSB)

The punishment for Daniel’s accusers is the fate they had designed for him. The legal practice of imposing upon those who make a false accusation the penalty that would have been imposed on the accused was common in the ancient Near East (see Esth 7:10) and was even endorsed in OT Law. The punishment of the entire families of the offenders, however, was forbidden in the Law of Moses (Deut 24:16; see also 2 Ki 14:6; Ezekiel 18). In Israel, families were punished together with the offender only when they appear to have been complicit accomplices (Num 16:27–33; Josh 7:24–25). (CC)

The ravenous appetite of the lions is demonstrated in the way that they pounce upon their prey before the bodies have reached the floor of the pit. Daniel includes this detail to highlight the miraculous intervention of God that saved Daniel from the lions. This was a vivid demonstration of what the absence of God’s protection means. It is also a foreshadowing of the resurrection to eternal death, “contempt,” and “everlasting abhorrence” awaiting all who die as unbelievers (12:2; see also the second textual note on 6:24). (CC)

**6:25-27** Darius’ decree has three parts. It begins with a greeting, “may your peace increase!” (כַּלְשׁוּן מִן־הַלְשׁוּן, 6:25). Compare Paul’s standard Christianized greeting at the start of his epistles: “grace to you and peace” (χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη, e.g., Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:3; Philemon 3). Next follows the decree’s command to reverence Daniel’s God. Similar to the decrees of Nebuchadnezzar in Dan 3:29 and in 4:1–37, this decree is addressed to “all the peoples, nations, and languages that dwelt in the entire earth” (6:25). However, this decree goes beyond the first decree of Nebuchadnezzar, a negative decree that only commanded punishment for blasphemy against the God of the Judeans (3:29). This positive decree commands respect for God: all people “should continually tremble and be afraid before the God of Daniel” (6:25). The vocabulary is Law-based and stops short of using Gospel language of faith and trust for salvation. This is what one would expect among syncretistic polytheists who might recognize the supremacy of Israel’s God without trusting in him alone for salvation and without renouncing the existence of all other gods. Yet this fear of God could lead to repentance and be important preparation for believing the message of salvation through faith in this God alone. (CC)

The longest section of the decree is a poetic rationale for the command (6:26b–27). The rationale’s first and last lines identify God as “(the) living God ... [who] saved Daniel from the hand of the lions.” Between these lines, God and his work are described. (CC)

Darius’ praise of God in his decree echoes the praise in Nebuchadnezzar’s decrees. He acknowledges that God’s kingdom endures forever (6:26; see also 3:33; 4:34; cf. 7:14,

18, 27) and will never be destroyed (cf. 2:44). He agrees with Nebuchadnezzar's statement that "there is no other god who is able to save like this" (3:29) and that Daniel's God is the one who works signs and wonders (3:32–33). (CC)

The inclusion of Darius' decree by Daniel the author allows him to summarize the lessons learned by pagan rulers throughout the narrative section of Daniel (chapters 1–6) before moving on to the section of the book that will relate his visions (chapters 7–12). The visions presuppose the actions and attributes of God set forth in the decrees of Nebuchadnezzar and Darius. The visions go on to relate how God will bring his eternal kingdom to his people and save them for eternity. (CC)

**6:26** *tremble and fear*. Darius's decree went even further than Nebuchadnezzar's had (3:29) in commanding respect for the God of Israel. (TLSB)

**6:27** *delivers and rescues ... saved*. God protected Daniel as He had protected Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (3:25–27). See "deliver," p 842. *signs and wonders*. Miracles. (TLSB)

**6:28** DANIEL PROSPERED – The narrative concludes by telling us that Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius (Cyrus). He lived until at least Cyrus' third year (10:1). However, this sentence does not say that Daniel was promoted to the position Darius had intended to give him (6:3). There is no record here or elsewhere that he became governor or top official of Babylon. Perhaps after the infighting among his officials described in chapter 6, Darius decided that it would be politically expedient not to appoint a Judean to such a high position. Perhaps Daniel, who by this time was probably into his eighth decade of life, desired to go into retirement or semi-retirement and remain only as an advisor to the king without having responsibility for the day-to-day duties that would normally be required of a palace official. Whatever the case, God enabled Daniel to prosper as a further sign of his grace, which no doubt was evident to the competing pagans among whom Daniel served. (CC)

*and the reign of Cyrus the Persian*. Or, "that is, in the reign of Cyrus the Persian," which would make Darius the Mede and Cyrus the Persian the same person. (TLSB)

**Ch 6** Daniel is cast into the lions' den for continuing to pray to the true God. When Daniel is saved from death, Darius issues a new decree ordering all people in his kingdom to fear the God of Daniel. These events are a preview of God's ultimate triumph over all the forces of evil. Then every knee shall bow (Is 45:23; Php 2:10), and every nation will come and worship the Lord (Rv 15:4). The devil, that roaring lion (1Pt 5:8), means deadly woe, but we tremble not (*LSB* 656)! For Christ is our protector. • All praise to You, O Christ, for conquering Satan and rescuing me from his deadly threats. Amen. (TLSB)