

SUNDAY SCHOOL

H

A. P. 07-22-2018

HIGHLIGHT: Daniel 6:1-18

It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom 120 satraps, to be throughout the whole kingdom; ²and over them three high officials, of whom Daniel was one, to whom these satraps should give account, so that the king might suffer no loss. ³Then this Daniel became distinguished above all the other high officials and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him. And the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. ⁴Then the high officials and the satraps sought to find a ground for complaint against Daniel with regard to the kingdom, but they could find no ground for complaint or any fault, because he was faithful, and no error or fault was found in him. ⁵Then these men said, "We shall not find any ground for complaint against this Daniel unless we find it in connection with the law of his God."

⁶Then these high officials and satraps came by agreement to the king and said to him, "O King Darius, live forever! ⁷All the high officials of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the counselors and the governors are agreed that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce an injunction, that whoever makes petition to any god or man for thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. ⁸Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which cannot be revoked." ⁹Therefore King Darius signed the document and injunction.

¹⁰When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three

times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously. ¹¹Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and plea before his God. ¹²Then they came near and said before the king, concerning the injunction, "O king! Did you not sign an injunction, that anyone who makes petition to any god or man within thirty days except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?" The king answered and said, "The thing stands fast, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be revoked." ¹³Then they answered and said before the king, "Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or the injunction you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day."

¹⁴Then the king, when he heard these words, was much distressed and set his mind to deliver Daniel. And he labored till the sun went down to rescue him. ¹⁵Then these men came by agreement to the king and said to the king, "Know, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no injunction or ordinance that the king establishes can be changed."

¹⁶Then the king commanded, and Daniel was brought and cast into the den of lions. The king declared to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, deliver you!" ¹⁷And a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet and with the signet of his lords, that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel. ¹⁸Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; no diversions were brought to him, and sleep fled from him.



EXPLAIN

Decades after the time of King Nebuchadnezzar, King Belshazzar was killed in a sudden siege by the Persians. After this raid, Darius took Belshazzar's place as king and was quickly brought into a plan to get rid of Daniel, an Israelite prophet who kept rising up the ranks in Darius' kingdom. In today's passage, we will see how God is always worthy of our worship and obedience no matter the consequences.

- v.1 A Satrap was a governor of a province in the ancient Persian empire. Ancient Persia was set up for efficiency and justice. For this reason, its Satraps, or governors, carried significant weight in the King's ear.

Critics argue that Daniel is unreliable because Extra-Biblical documents have no record of any king Darius in Babylon. There are at least two solid responses to this: first, the absence of evidence is not evidence in itself. It may be that we have simply not found evidence yet. Second, it is likely that Darius is either an alternate name or a title (Darius can mean "Holder of the Scepter"). There are three historical Babylonian kings who could be the very same "Darius" as this: Cyrus, who ruled the Medo-Persian region during this time, Cambyses, Cyrus' son, who served in Cyrus' kingdom and later inherited the whole empire, or Gubaru, who was an official placed in direct command over the Babylonian conquest.

- v.7 When the administrators went to the king to tell him that all of the governors had approved this surprising edict, they were, of course, lying. Daniel was one of the governors and had certainly not signed off on it. Since they could find no fault with which to attack him personally, they were going to have to fabricate something that could incriminate him.

- v.10 There are two key phrases in this verse: "When he learned" and "just as he had done before." The first phrase is crucial because Daniel was fully aware of what the consequences for worshipping God were. He probably even knew that it was an intentional trap set out to ensnare him. The second phrase indicates that this was simply the pattern of his life. It is not time to begin following the Lord when you are put to the test.

- v.15 Kingly edicts in the Medo-Persian world were well-documented as having been irrevocable. In Diodorus of Sicily's account of the time around the Trojan War (which took place centuries after the events of Daniel), the Medo-Persian's unflinching dedication to the steadfastness of the law is confirmed: "Once the king's passion had cooled he promptly regretted his act and reproached himself for having made a serious mistake, but all his royal power was not able to undo what was done" (Diodorus Siculus, XVII:30:6).



A**APPLY**

1. This story is a famous one. But as we read it again, what stuck out to you or challenged you?
2. What did the men find out about Daniel's character when they were investigating him? What are qualities that someone with good character will have? Share about who you think of when you think of someone with good character.
3. Daniel followed every law of the land to the letter—until one edict went out that prohibited him from worshiping God. Discuss the relationship between obeying the law of the land and obeying and worshiping God. How can you tell when you have to make a decision between doing one or the other?
4. Daniel knew the consequences of worshiping God—being thrown into a den of lions—but he did it anyway. What consequences do we face for worshiping Him? What stops us?
5. Gus said it this week, and Tim said it last week: The Lord is going to do what brings Him the most glory. God does not always choose to deliver us, but He is always able to. How does understanding this alter the way that we see our individual lives and situations?

R**RESPOND**

- Take a moment to evaluate your trust in the Lord. What are areas in which you trust Him entirely? Where is it more difficult to trust Him? How can you trust Him more completely this week than you did last week?

