

Daniel 6

- Let's start working our way out of Daniel's chiasm
 - We've reached Point B' in the chiasm of Chapters 2-7
 - The message of this chapter parallels the story in Chapter 3
 - Chapter 3 saw Daniel's friends suffering persecution at the hands of the king of Babylon because of their faithfulness
 - Now that we're on the flip side of the chiasm, we find a similar story of persecution and rescue

A - The prophecy concerning four Gentile empires that dominate Israel and the world
B - God delivers Daniel's friends from Gentile persecution
C - God humbles the Gentile king (Nebuchadnezzar) to demonstrate His sovereignty
C' - God deposes the Gentile king (Belshazzar) to demonstrate His sovereignty
B' - God delivers Daniel from Gentile persecution
A' - The prophecy concerning four Gentile empires that dominate Israel and the world

- The message in both chapters is largely the same
 - Those in Israel who remain faithful to the Lord will continue to receive His protection, even in captivity
 - The God of Israel was still at work preserving a remnant among the exiles
- In Chapter 6, however, the antagonists and the protagonist change
 - Instead of the king of Babylon, we have the king of the Medes, now that the Medes and Persians have supplanted Babylon
 - And instead of Daniel's friends, it's Daniel himself who suffers
- But, the outcome will be the same
 - Israel was in captivity by God's decree, but the nation was not forgotten or forsaken
 - He continues to protect them against the very enemies He's permitted to conquer His people

- We pick up tonight at the very end of Chapter 5, where we learn that there is a new sheriff in town

Dan. 5:31 So Darius the Mede received the kingdom at about the age of sixty-two.

- The final verse of Chapter 5 bridges us into Chapter 6, and in fact, this verse is the first verse of Chapter 6 in the Hebrew Bible
 - Darius the Mede is now ruling all that Babylon previous owned
 - This reminds us of the statue prophecy in Daniel 2
 - The Lord told Nebuchadnezzar that his nation's time ruling was appointed by God to last only a time
 - Then a second kingdom, the breast and arms of silver, would take over for Babylon
 - Now just 66 years later, we've moved into the second stage of the statue timeline
 - Babylon is no more, Belshazzar is dead and Darius is ruling
 - And the new ruler inherits the service of Babylon's previous court, including Daniel
 - The exact identity of Darius the Mede has long been a source of controversy in Daniel's book
 - History records that the first ruler of the new Medo-Persian Empire was not a Mede, but a Persian
 - Specifically, Cyrus the Persian was the king that defeated the Babylonians
 - Even Scripture confirms that Cyrus was ruling at the time
 - Isaiah says, hundreds of years before it even happened, that Cyrus would come conquering to release Israel from captivity
 - Ezra and 2 Chronicles confirms Cyrus as king of Persia
 - In roughly a year's time, Cyrus will issue an order that the Jewish people be released to rebuild their temple in Jerusalem
 - And even Daniel confirms he served Cyrus in the final verse of Chapter 6

- On the other hand, Daniel says he served BOTH King Darius the Mede and Cyrus the Persian
 - This comment at the end of the chapter tells us that Darius and Cyrus were different men
 - Yet Darius must have ruled in about the same time as Cyrus
 - Daniel was in his 80's when Babylon fell and he served both kings, he says
 - So they couldn't have ruled very far apart
 - In other books of Scripture, we hear of other kings of the Medo-Persian empire named Darius I and Darius II
 - These men ruled long after Cyrus
 - So they can't be the same Darius as mentioned here in Daniel 6
 - Therefore, some propose that Darius the Mede may have been a co-regent ruling with Cyrus the Persian
 - Perhaps they divided up the kingdom, with Darius ruling Babylon and Cyrus ruling in Persia
 - Then when Darius died, Cyrus took over the entire kingdom
 - Or perhaps Darius was the title of a lesser ruler over Babylon appointed by Cyrus, much as Belshazzar ruled under Nebonidus
 - Whatever the answer, Daniel's book is the only historical record we have of Darius' ruling
- And it's under the rule of Darius in Babylon that Daniel gains attention

Dan. 6:1 It seemed good to Darius to appoint 120 satraps over the kingdom, that they would be in charge of the whole kingdom,

Dan. 6:2 and over them three commissioners (of whom Daniel was one), that these satraps might be accountable to them, and that the king might not suffer loss.

Dan. 6:3 Then this Daniel began distinguishing himself among the commissioners and satraps because he possessed an extraordinary spirit, and the king planned to appoint him over the entire kingdom.

Dan. 6:4 Then the commissioners and satraps began trying to find a ground of accusation against Daniel in regard to government affairs; but they could find no ground of accusation or evidence of corruption, inasmuch as he was faithful, and no negligence or corruption was to be found in him.

Dan. 6:5 Then these men said, “We will not find any ground of accusation against this Daniel unless we find it against him with regard to the law of his God.”

- This chapter chronicles how the new king is manipulated into persecuting Daniel, and yet, Daniel is protected and his enemies vanquished by the Lord
 - The chapter is another chiasm in itself
 - It begins with Daniel’s success in serving the king
 - It will end the same way
 - In the middle, we’ll find Daniel’s enemies conspiring and later dying
 - And at the point of the chiasm, we find Darius hoping for Daniel’s deliverance, and then witnessing that deliverance
 - The story opens with Daniel’s new appointment as the commissioner of a third of the kingdom
 - Whatever role Daniel played in the years of Babylon’s decline, he’s back on top now
 - Darius divides his kingdom into 120 lesser provinces to administer the kingdom’s business
 - Their role is probably focused on tax collection more than anything else
 - But the king has limited trust in these 120, so he then divides the 120 into three groups of 40
 - And over each of the 40, he appoints a commissioner to ensure he does not suffer loss
 - That would tell us that the king has great trust in the integrity of these three men
 - And Daniel is one of the three commissioners
- Soon enough, Daniel begins again to distinguish himself before the king
 - The details of his good work are not provided, but we can imagine them on our own
 - Daniel is probably scrupulous in rooting out fraud and corruption

- He is probably wise in his judgments and incorruptible in his rule
- Where others might take bribes to look the other way, Daniel serves the king faithfully
- And when we hear that he has distinguished himself among the other commissioners, we know there is a comparison taking place
 - The king is looking at Daniel's behavior in comparison to the other commissioners
 - And the result is the king finds Daniel to be exceptional
 - But by the same token, it means his peers are diminished in the eyes of the king
 - Like the straight-A student who blows the curve on the test for the rest of the class
- So in jealousy over Daniel's success, and in anger over being convicted by comparison to Daniel, his peers begin to conspire against him
 - Both the commissioners and the satraps began searching for an accusation against Daniel
 - Presumably, they asked his associates or others in the court for anything they could charge against Daniel
- But much like the Pharisees seeking to discredit Jesus, they could find no accusation that would stick
 - Daniel was blameless
 - He couldn't be charged with corruption, because he was faithful
 - This finding must have amazed Daniel's enemies
 - Taking bribes was the norm in that line of work
 - Daniel's integrity must have been a complete shock
 - Furthermore, Daniel was never negligent in his duties
 - Here again, this is unprecedented
 - Men of great power are often found to take advantage of their position
 - Showing up late, going home early, taking long vacations, etc.

- Daniel never did these things...he was diligent in his duties
- Daniel's extraordinary testimony was the result of the extraordinary Spirit within him, as the king found in v.3
 - That Spirit, that is, the Spirit of the Lord working in Daniel, sanctified him, leading him into righteousness
 - That's the power of God working in the life of a faithful servant
 - We don't just possess a testimony in our words
 - We possess a testimony in our actions
 - And the testimony of our obedience and faithfulness is far more powerful than anything we might say
 - And when we conduct ourselves in a blameless fashion, we are making a public statement about the Lord
 - We are testifying that His love and approval of us matters more to us than gaining the approval of men
 - That His laws written on our hearts are more important than the ways of men
 - That testimony of faithfulness is more valuable than silver and gold
 - As Peter reminds us

1 Pet. 2:13 Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority,

1 Pet. 2:14 or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right.

1 Pet. 2:15 For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men.

- It's God's will that we would silence ignorant, foolish men by serving Him faithfully in submission to human authority
 - Just as Daniel silenced his critics because they could find nothing wrong in his service to the king
- But Scripture doesn't teach that our faithfulness will necessarily yield converts among those foolish men, nor even prevent them persecuting us

- On the contrary, our faithfulness may very well provoke persecution
 - Those who witness our faithfulness to Christ may choose to attack us for that very reason
 - Like the commissioners and satraps, our enemies may grow angry at us because of their conviction in witnessing our blameless ways
 - Christ knew that persecution, so we may as well
- Nevertheless, we persevere in our obedience, integrity and diligence because we know the Lord may reward us one day
 - As Paul says

Col. 3:23 Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, **Col. 3:24** knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

- So because these men couldn't find something against Daniel, they turn to the only solution left to them
 - In v.5, they say they must find a way to turn the Law of Daniel's God against him
 - These men are using the oldest trick in the book, literally
 - They are looking for a way to manipulate the Word of God against Daniel
 - Understand, they aren't depending on finding Daniel violating God's Law
 - On the contrary, they are depending on Daniel's obedience
 - They are looking to turn his obedience to the Law against him in the eyes of the king
 - I call this the oldest trick in the book, because in a sense, this was Satan's trick against Woman in the Garden
 - He knew she was inclined to obey the Word of God, so he manipulated God's Word to deceive her
 - Woman was innocent and without the support of her husband in the face of a superior adversary

- So the enemy used the Word of God against her in that sense
- So these men devise a plan to bring Daniel's obedience to the Word of God into conflict with the expectations of a pagan king

Dan. 6:6 Then these commissioners and satraps came by agreement to the king and spoke to him as follows: "King Darius, live forever!

Dan. 6:7 "All the commissioners of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the high officials and the governors have consulted together that the king should establish a statute and enforce an injunction that anyone who makes a petition to any god or man besides you, O king, for thirty days, shall be cast into the lions' den.

Dan. 6:8 "Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document so that it may not be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which may not be revoked."

Dan. 6:9 Therefore King Darius signed the document, that is, the injunction.

- The advisors come to the king with an appeal to his pride
 - Specifically, they know the king will react predictably to any suggestion that there are those in his government who do not toe the line
 - They suggest a test to ensure that everyone is loyal to him
 - Everyone must worship only the king and should one disobey this law, they will be cast into a den of lions
 - The test will last for 30 days, long enough to ensure time to catch someone who is disobedient to the king
 - Obviously, the test is specially-designed to target Daniel's piety toward Yahweh
 - These men knew of Daniel's religious practice, of course
 - They are confident Daniel will be obedient, they are depending upon it
 - In proposing this rule to the king, they add that everyone in his government has agreed it should be done
 - There is no evidence that this was, in fact, the case
 - For one thing, Daniel himself is in the government and he didn't propose this, of course
 - They are lying to manipulate the king
- The game they are playing is obvious

- They have the king issue this edict, knowing that Daniel will not cease worshipping his God
 - Then they lay in wait to catch Daniel and expose him to the king
 - Essentially, they are making a law tailored to arrive at Daniel's disobedience
- This is an example of the kind of law that a godly man or woman must disobey
 - While we endeavor to obey rulers, there are limits to our obedience

Rom. 12:18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

- When the law of man compels us to disobey the Law of God, we refuse men and live to serve God
- The commissioners knew Daniel's heart would act in this way, so they intended to take advantage of it
- As we consider the impact of their actions on Daniel, don't forget this law would have impacted all the Jews in captivity
 - While we don't hear what they did, we can imagine that many chose apostasy during these 30 days
 - In fact, we don't hear of anyone else entering the lions' den beyond Daniel
 - These men may have only sought to prosecute Daniel, while ignoring anyone else's violation of the law
 - If this is so, then it would mean that any other Jew who chose to remain faithful to God was spared in the end
 - They didn't go to the lions' den because they were never the true target
 - And even if some were caught and killed, their faithfulness was a testimony to the rest of Israel
 - This is how the Lord uses trial to purify the true heart and expose the false
 - And as the story will reveal, the Lord continues to bless those who are faithful in Israel

- This is the fundamental lesson of the chapter...that faithfulness, even in times of trial, has its own rewards
- The commissioners tell the king to sign the law so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians
 - They are referring to an unique aspect of Medo-Persian law
 - In their law, the king was all powerful in the kingdom
 - There was no senate or parliament to counter his judgments
 - In that sense, their kingdom was equal to the Babylonians
 - But there was one key difference
 - The Medes and Persians required sitting kings to honor all previous royal edicts, even their own
 - So once a law was passed by a king, it couldn't be changed or ignored, even by future kings
 - This was a constraint on the king's power, since it gave a king reason to give careful thought before making edicts
 - This one difference between the Medo-Persian empire and the Babylonians accounts for the difference in the metals in the statue
 - Remember, we noted that the gold of Babylon gave way to the silver of the Medes and Persians
 - Silver is of lower value than gold, which suggested a less glorious or majestic kingdom
 - The lower value of the metal is symbolic of this limit on the king's power in the Medo-Persian empire
 - Babylonian kings had no such restriction, and therefore, they were more majestic in power
- The commissioners' trick worked and the king signed the document, sealing Daniel's fate
 - We can't tell if the king expected to entrap Daniel with his order
 - He may have given his law little forethought, which is ironic, given the Medo-Persian rule
 - He took the bad counsel and acted too quickly

- As a result, he needlessly endangers the life of his most trusted advisor

Dan. 6:10 Now when Daniel knew that the document was signed, he entered his house (now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem); and he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously.

Dan. 6:11 Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and supplication before his God.

Dan. 6:12 Then they approached and spoke before the king about the king's injunction, "Did you not sign an injunction that any man who makes a petition to any god or man besides you, O king, for thirty days, is to be cast into the lions' den?" The king replied, "The statement is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which may not be revoked."

Dan. 6:13 Then they answered and spoke before the king, "Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the injunction which you signed, but keeps making his petition three times a day."

Dan. 6:14 Then, as soon as the king heard this statement, he was deeply distressed and set his mind on delivering Daniel; and even until sunset he kept exerting himself to rescue him.

Dan. 6:15 Then these men came by agreement to the king and said to the king, "Recognize, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no injunction or statute which the king establishes may be changed."

- First, we hear that Daniel has learned of the decree
 - He must have suspected why it has been issued and that it was directed against him
 - He has suffered attacks and jealousies in his role ever since he interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream
 - So this is nothing new
 - On the other hand, this threat represents real jeopardy for Daniel
 - The king has issued an injunction Daniel can't obey
 - And he has specified a penalty he can't survive, or so one would assume
 - So we might think Daniel would step carefully at this point
 - Nevertheless, in v.10, we're told Daniel keeps to his normal routine

- Three times a day, Daniel goes to a room on the roof, where it was cooler and semi-private, and he prays and gives thanks to the Lord, facing Jerusalem
- His posture of facing the city was a practice Solomon taught the people of Israel as a way of looking expectantly for the Messiah
- Obviously, Daniel's routine was already somewhat private
- But because Daniel has followed this routine for so long, it was also probably well known
- For that reason, we would expect Daniel to change his practice, now that it could get him killed
 - Daniel could go about his worship and prayer, but do it at other times, or in other places or less frequently
 - But Daniel shows great confidence in his convictions by sticking to his normal pattern
- Even as we consider his courage, are you not simply impressed by his routine?
 - He prays and praises the Lord every day, three times a day, without fail
 - It's one thing for Daniel to hold the line in the face of persecution
 - That's admirable, of course, and some of us would struggle to follow his example
 - We might see persecution as good reason to shrink back and save ourselves by becoming more secretive in our practices
 - On the other hand, following this practice routinely is a challenge all itself
 - Many people gain greater resolve in the face of trials
 - It's not uncommon for people to grow stronger when under threat
 - Like a mother putting herself in harm's way to save her children
 - Or a husband protecting his wife from an intruder, etc.
 - We grow braver and show more resolve when someone threatens us

- For this reason, I'm even more impressed that Daniel followed his three-times-a-day routine before God, even when he wasn't being persecuted
 - I think the hardest test of faithfulness to pass is keeping to our disciplines of the faith when times are easy and nothing forces our hand
 - It's easy to find time to pray when you're desperate for rescue
 - But it's hard to pray when we don't feel you have much need for God's grace
 - It's easy to give thanks in times of ease
 - But it's hard to rise three times a day to thank the Lord when doing so puts you at risk of dying for proclaiming it
 - Daniel prayed three times a day in times of ease
 - And he gave thanks to the Lord three times a day in times of great trial and testing
 - He's a great example of a mature, faithful follower of God
 - He didn't let his relationship with the Lord turn on his life circumstances
 - And he didn't let life's circumstances dictate his pattern of prayer and praise
 - How closely do we live this pattern in our lives?
 - It's been said that those who have no regular habit of prayer or study or praise rarely do much praying, studying or praising
 - In other words, these practices develop out of habit
 - And the formation of habits must be by intent, by choice
 - They will not form of their own
 - And if you do not make them habit in times of ease, then you will not turn to them with much conviction in times of distress
- Then in v.11, we see the conspiracy come to conclusion
 - His adversaries came "by agreement" to Daniel's house at one of his appointed prayer times

- “By agreement” means in a conspiracy, because they want multiple witnesses to make their accusations stick
- They planned the time of their visit to coincide with Daniel’s usual time of prayer
- And they knew what they would find
- After they observe Daniel in violation of the order, they quickly return to the king and make their accusations
 - First, they remind the king of his edict
 - And they remind him that an order by the king is binding, even upon the king himself
 - To which the king agrees again
- Then, they lower the boom and reveal what Daniel has been witnessed doing
 - Obviously, these men realize that Darius has a sweet spot in his heart for Daniel
 - And in fact, notice in v.14, that the king is distressed over Daniel’s situation
 - And then he begins to look for some way to rescue Daniel
- This is different than the corresponding story in our chiasm in Chapter 3
 - In that chapter, Nebuchadnezzar had become enraged at Daniel’s friends
 - So he quickly ordered that they would be placed in a super hot furnace
 - His anger burned against them, being driven by his pride
 - But now, we see the Gentile king working hard to save Daniel
 - But having been trapped by his own edict and his kingdom’s own rules, the king can do nothing to help Daniel
 - Not even the king of the most powerful kingdom on earth can save Daniel now
 - The point in this difference is to emphasize that God doesn’t just rescue the remnant of Israel from kings He sets against them

- God remains Israel's deliverer, even when kings are favorable to Israel
 - The Lord has constructed this situation so that Daniel's rescue must depend on the Lord, and the Lord alone
 - Darius may be king, but even he can't solve this problem
- So all that remained was for the sentence to be carried out

Dan. 6:16 Then the king gave orders, and Daniel was brought in and cast into the lions' den. The king spoke and said to Daniel, "Your God whom you constantly serve will Himself deliver you."

Dan. 6:17 A stone was brought and laid over the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signet rings of his nobles, so that nothing would be changed in regard to Daniel.

Dan. 6:18 Then the king went off to his palace and spent the night fasting, and no entertainment was brought before him; and his sleep fled from him.

Dan. 6:19 Then the king arose at dawn, at the break of day, and went in haste to the lions' den.

Dan. 6:20 When he had come near the den to Daniel, he cried out with a troubled voice. The king spoke and said to Daniel, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you constantly serve, been able to deliver you from the lions?"

Dan. 6:21 Then Daniel spoke to the king, "O king, live forever!

Dan. 6:22 "My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths and they have not harmed me, inasmuch as I was found innocent before Him; and also toward you, O king, I have committed no crime."

Dan. 6:23 Then the king was very pleased and gave orders for Daniel to be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den and no injury whatever was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.

- Now we have the infamous moment which has inspired countless young coloring book artists
 - As Daniel is pushed into the den, the king pronounces a prophetic blessing
 - He says the Lord Daniel served continuously will deliver him
 - In other words, the king is saying you served me well, Daniel, but I couldn't save you
 - So the God you serve without fail will have to save you instead
 - And as I said, that's exactly what the Lord wanted

- He is Israel's Deliverer
- Even though Gentile nations rule over Israel, those nations do not hold the secret to Israel's safety and security
- The Lord alone is Israel's strength
- The king's words sound a lot like the way many Christians think under trying circumstances
 - We pray, "God, I couldn't solve this problem myself."
 - "And my family and friends couldn't solve it."
 - "My lawyer, banker or doctor couldn't solve it..."
 - "So I guess you are going to have to solve it."
 - Why do we try everything else before seeking the Lord?
- In Daniel's case, the Lord *wanted* everyone else out of the way so He could show Himself to Daniel
 - But Daniel was already praying three times a day
 - And I suspect he prayed for deliverance even before he was taken before the king
 - But if we're not in the habit of praying and praising regularly, perhaps the Lord will use trial to teach us the importance of depending upon Him
- Nevertheless, there is no guarantee the Lord is going to rescue us every time we come to Him for relief
 - He may solve our problem, or He may let it overcome us
 - Regardless of how it turns out in the end, the question is: did we respond in faith and obedience?
 - Because the spiritual benefits of depending on the Lord are far greater than the physical toll taken by our trials
- At that moment, the king puts Daniel in the den, which was a large pit or cistern used to hold the king's lions
 - A cistern was a large underground cavern used to store rain water

- Larger cisterns or pits can be the size of a large hall or theater, so this pit may have been a very large cave
- As Daniel is dropped into the pit, the entrance is covered over with a stone
- So no one is going in and no one is going out
- That sealing reminds us of Jesus' tomb
 - In fact, Daniel can serve as a picture of Christ here
 - Like Daniel, Jesus was given over to death for obedience to the Word of God
 - Jesus was subjected to the penalty by a ruler, Pilate, who was sympathetic, but felt he had no choice
 - Only Jesus' God could rescue Him
 - And after a time in the ground, He was vindicated by His God and Father
- Certainly, no one expected to see anything of Daniel again
 - No one being left overnight in such a place would be expected to survive
 - In fact, there would be no trace of the person come morning
 - Every bit of the person would be consumed
- During that night, the king is fasting and wants no entertainment before him, because he's obviously not in the mood for merriment
 - The king is troubled by what has happened and he can't sleep at all
 - It's interesting to wonder about what the king is doing
 - He is obviously worried for Daniel and yet, he seems to hold out some kind of hope
 - His fasting would seem to suggest a petition before a god or gods
 - But it may just be nerves
 - When morning comes, he goes to the den with some anticipation

- He seems to believe that Daniel's God has the potential to do something miraculous for Daniel
- Such a thought would be expected for a pagan, since they looked to many gods for many things
- But perhaps Daniel's history and the history of Yahweh in Babylon are also giving the king some reason for hope
- The next morning, the king rushes to see if Daniel survived
 - The sentence of death in the lions' den must not have had a specific length of time, since the king is already ready to release Daniel
 - Again, the king's return to open the pit at dawn foreshadows the women running to Jesus' tomb on the first day of the week
 - And like Jesus' tomb, the king finds only the living in the pit
 - He calls out to Daniel through the mouth of the opening
 - His question is specific:
 - Has your God delivered you?
 - The king is already prepared to credit Israel's God, should Daniel have survived
 - Again, this is the message of the chapter
 - And the Lord is reminding the reader of the point each time the king makes this pronouncement
 - Daniel is in God's hands
 - And even lions submit to God's will
- Daniel responds to the king with a greeting of honor and respect
 - Remember, Daniel is in his 80's by this time, probably a bit feeble and obviously no match for a lion
 - And so as he emerges unscathed, it's clearly a miracle
 - Daniel says the Lord sent His Angel to guard the lions' mouths
 - The mention of God's Angel suggests the Angel of the Lord appeared to save Daniel

- Remember, the Angel of the Lord saved Daniel's friends in Chapter 3
- So it seems sensible to conclude this is the same Person, that is Jesus Christ, pre-incarnate
- Daniel says the Lord shut the mouths of the lions
 - His words make clear that the lions were still inclined to eat Daniel
 - This wasn't a case of lazy or disinterested lions
 - They were supernaturally held back from pursuing their natural course
- When Jesus went to the grave, it was the enemy himself who pursued Jesus, but the enemy wasn't able to defeat Jesus in the end
 - The Bible calls the enemy a prowling lion looking to devour
 - And the Lord shut the enemy's mouth in His day, just as He did in Daniel's day
- Daniel adds that his vindication was proof from God that Daniel was innocent in the matter
 - Daniel is speaking about the larger claims the king's advisors made against him
 - Daniel certainly violated the king's law
 - He prayed to a God other than the king
 - But the advisors sold the king on passing this law on the basis that it would expose those who were disloyal to the king
 - And in that, Daniel was innocent
 - He was not disloyal to the king
 - In fact, he was the king's most loyal subject
 - The king's edict was poorly conceived and executed rashly, leading to Daniel's entrapment
 - So the Lord vindicated Daniel by saving him in the den
 - Interestingly, the edict said that this law remained in effect for 30 days

- Yet, we must assume that Daniel went back to praying three times a day without further incident
 - We know the law could not be changed
 - So how did Daniel avoid another round of persecution under that law?
- The answer is, his enemies were no longer around to accuse him
 - Because ironically, the king's edict did, in fact, expose those who were disloyal to him

Dan. 6:24 The king then gave orders, and they brought those men who had maliciously accused Daniel, and they cast them, their children and their wives into the lions' den; and they had not reached the bottom of the den before the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.

- Those who had conspired against Daniel were now judged guilty of the very crime they accused Daniel of
 - They weren't guilty of praying to another god
 - But they were guilty of disloyalty by conspiring against one of the king's loyal advisors
- Therefore, the king cast all of them and their families into the den
 - And this time, the lions' mouths were allowed to remain open
 - In fact, we might wonder if the lions were all the more hungry, having just stared at Daniel all night without being able to pounce
- While we might question the decision to destroy whole families, this was common practice in these days
 - The errors of the leader of a home brought consequences to everyone in the home
 - This is still somewhat true today, though not in the same way, obviously
 - If a father is poor with money, the family suffers
 - If a wife has an affair, the family suffers

- If children rebel, the family suffers
 - These aren't necessarily judgments from God, so much as the natural consequences of sin
- The chapter finishes with another decree, one that sounds much like the one issued in Chapter 4 by Nebuchadnezzar, following his humiliation

Dan. 6:25 Then Darius the king wrote to all the peoples, nations and men of every language who were living in all the land: "May your peace abound!

Dan. 6:26 "I make a decree that in all the dominion of my kingdom men are to fear and tremble before the God of Daniel;
 For He is the living God and enduring forever,
 And His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed,
 And His dominion will be forever.

Dan. 6:27 "He delivers and rescues and performs signs and wonders
 In heaven and on earth,
 Who has also delivered Daniel from the power of the lions."

Dan. 6:28 So this Daniel enjoyed success in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

- Darius wrote an edict for all people of earth to hear, which again made sense, given he was (co)ruler of the most powerful nation on earth
 - As we read his recounting of the story and his praise for Daniel's God, we see two things reinforced
 - First, the key lesson of the chapter emerges again
 - God will rule over the Gentile nations that rule over Israel
 - So that as Israel exists under Gentile authority during the Age of Gentiles, this is according to God's purposes and plans
 - Secondly, Gentile kingdoms will rise and fall as God appoints, but His dominion goes on forever
 - He is still on the throne, and Israel's plight is not cause to doubt God's power and authority
 - Here, we see another chapter where God uses Gentile kings to remind Israel of that truth
- Finally, Darius' praise for Yahweh leads us to ask the same question we asked about Nebuchadnezzar: did he become a convert? Was he saved by faith in the Lord?

- He uses striking language
 - He calls Yahweh the Living God and the God that endures forever
 - But he also calls Him the God of Daniel
- Once again, the answer is, we don't know for sure
 - It makes more sense to conclude that the Lord doesn't persuade the king to faith
 - It would remind Israel that God can use even their enemies to save them
- The chapter ends, reminding us that Daniel forevermore enjoyed success under these kings in Persia
 - The events of Daniel 7 and 8 occur prior to these events in Chapter 6
 - But the events of Chapter 9 happen in the same year as the lions' den experience
 - And then Daniel's final revelations are given in Chapters 10-12
 - Those revelations come in the third year of Cyrus' reign, just a couple of years after this
 - Daniel died soon thereafter, while still in Babylon
 - He never returned to Jerusalem
 - He was faithful during his time in exile