

Chapter 6 relates the famous story of Daniel's escape from the lions' den. Beyond its inspiring story which concludes the narrative section of the book of Daniel, it has a larger prophetic meaning.

Darius commands that men worship him instead of God. In this he is a type of the wicked king of Daniel 11:36 who "shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god" and the man of lawlessness in 2 Thessalonians 2:4 "who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God."

The type, like others, is imperfect. Darius is actually sympathetic to Daniel and is flattered into his unfortunate decree by deceitful counselors. But he does come to represent the long dominion of the Gentiles who lift man above God, culminating in the beast of Revelation.

And what does Daniel typify? He stands for his people. His long night in the lions' den foreshadows the intense persecution of the Jews during the tribulation, pictured in Revelation 12 as a woman pursued by a raging dragon. But just as God shuts the mouths of the ravenous lions, the nation of Israel eludes Satan and his servants and is preserved to enter into the promised blessings of the millennium.

Notes on Daniel 6

6:1 A satrap was a Persian governor of a province.

6:2 We are not told how Daniel survived the night of the Medo-Persian conquest but his character and abilities clearly commended him to the new regime.

6:4-5 Daniel becomes the target of envious courtiers. We all may hope that, like him, the only fault that men can find in us is our devotion to our God and Savior. *"If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. But let*

none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler" (1 Peter 4:14-15).

6:7-8 It would appear that under the government headed by Darius, laws were initiated by nobles and once approved by the king, could not be modified. This may have protected against the changing whims of monarchs but must have led to many regrettable actions. It is another way Darius made himself like God "with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change" (James 1:17). The difference is God is all knowing, all loving, and all powerful. Man, on the other hand, inevitably makes errors that need correction.

This also illustrates the decline in kingly power from the "head of gold" to the "arms and chest of silver." Nebuchadnezzar had unlimited sovereignty; Darius is restricted.

6:10 The command for Jews held captive away from their land to pray toward Jerusalem comes from 1 Kings 8:48. Note that Daniel only follows his regular godly custom. He does not make a public show of prayer any more than he ceases or hides it because of the injunction. The guiding principle is obedience to God and not defiance toward man.

6:13 It is true that Daniel ignores the king's injunction but saying that he pays no attention to the king himself is a baseless charge. Daniel has been subservient and attentive to the king in all other matters.

6:14 We don't know exactly how Darius labors to rescue Daniel. Presumably he attempts to persuade the officials to somehow soften the unalterable law.

6:17 The stone over the entrance to the Lord's tomb was also sealed (Matt. 27:66). The Jews had requested the seal and a guard of soldiers to prevent any trickery by the disciples. Ironically, the seal in both cases only serves to authenticate the very real miracle that occurs.

6:18 Poor King Darius has no diversions to distract him as he grapples with the consequences of his actions. Fortunately, we always have plenty of entertainments close at hand.

6:20 His own efforts having failed, Darius now recognizes that only God can save Daniel. “*Who then can be saved?*” ... *Jesus looked at them and said, ‘With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible’* (Matt. 19:25).

6:22 Daniel’s conscience is clear before both God and man.

6:25-27 Darius’s declaration of praise to God is remarkably similar to those uttered by Nebuchadnezzar.

6:28 As noted before, the identity of King Darius is uncertain. At the time of the Medo-Persian conquest of Babylon, Daniel would have been an old man of seventy or eighty.

Cyrus the Great (c. 600 or 576 – 530 BC) is well known to history as the founder of the Achaemenid (Persian) empire which stretched from present day India to southeastern Europe. One important archaeological record is the “Cyrus cylinder” telling in cuneiform writing some of Cyrus’s decrees. Among them are commands to restore the temples of local gods. This agrees with the portrait we have of Cyrus from the book of Ezra, where he orders the temple in Jerusalem to be rebuilt.