



An Exploration of Eschatology in Exile

WEEK 6: October 20, 2020, 10 am

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Seneca Church of God of Prophecy

12 Week Discipleship Course

The Writing on the Wall: Daniel 6

Objectives

- Recognize God's Sovereignty
- Acknowledge the Power of Prayer
- Submit all glory and honor to God
- Be willing to "Pay the Price" for God

Chapter Outline

- Daniel's Excellent Spirit (Daniel 6:1-3)
- A Plot Against Daniel (Daniel 6:4-5)
- The Royal Decree (Daniel 6:6-9)
- Daniel Continues to Worship (Daniel 6:10-15)
- Daniel Cast into the Lion's Den (Daniel 6:16-20)
- Daniel's Protection (Daniel 6:21-24)
- Darius' New Decree (Daniel 6:25-28)

Review

- Daniel one begins with the history that leads up to this point in history.
- Daniel two discussed the dream of Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel's interpretation of it, both historically and futuristic.
- Daniel three discussed the King's image of gold and the faith of the three Hebrew boys.
- Daniel four discussed the King's dream of God's judgment against him. The 7 years of judgment upon Nebuchadnezzar occurs.
- Daniel five discussed the hand-writing on the wall.
- Each chapters common thread is that Yahweh is the only true God.
- Chapters 1-4 each end with worship and adoration directed towards Yahweh.
- Chapter 5 ends with the downfall of a wicked pagan king.
- Chapter 6 returns to the end theme of chapters 1-4, in which Yahweh is given honor and glory.

Daniel, the Royal Decree, & the Eternal Importance of Prayer (Daniel 6:1-15)

- Darius set up 120 sub-rulers to govern the newly conquered land of Babylon.
 - Over the 120 sub-rulers was 3 presidents.
 - Daniel was the main president. This made Daniel third in command in Babylon (King Cyrus #1, Darius #2, and then Daniel #3).
 - This led to jealousy that a once Hebrew slave is now ruling over these presidents and sub-rulers (princes).
 - HISTORICAL NOTE CONCERNING DARIUS:
 - It may be that Darius was an ancient official known as *Gubaru* in ancient documents, whom Cyrus appointed as ruler over Babylon immediately after its capture. It is the opinion of this commentator that this *Gubaru* was the same person as Darius. In fact, “Darius” may be an honorific title meaning, “holder of the scepter.”
 - Ancient documents show that the man Gubaru had the power to make appointments, to assemble an army, to levy taxes, and to possess palaces. Gubaru was in a very real sense the king over Babylon.
- Daniel was known as having “no fault.” In other words, there were no skeletons in Daniel’s closet that could be used as blackmail.
- Speaking about the pure spirit of Daniel, the Biblical scholar and leader John Calvin once stated, “Daniel here is not the herald of his own virtue, but the Spirit speaks through his mouth.”
- The evil presidents and princes concocted an idea and plan to harm Daniel. Simply put, anyone that prayed to another god other than King Darius for the next 30 days would be put to death. The style and type of death was clear, the lions den.
- Notice the wording of verse 7. The presidents and princes stated to the king that “ALL THE PRESIDENTS OF THE KINGDOM, THE GOVERNORS, AND THE PRINCES, THE COUNSELORS, AND THE CAPTAINS, HAVE CONSULTED TOGETHER.”
 - Is this true?
 - Of course not. They did not counsel with Daniel. This was a direct plot against and mutiny against Daniel.
- It was an established principle in the Medo-Persian Empire that when a king formally signed and instituted a decree, it was so binding that not even the king himself could change it. The decrees of a Persian king were unchangeable because he was thought to speak for the gods, who could never be wrong and thus never needed to change their minds.

- Concerning the threat of the lions den, the Biblical Scholar Spurgeon stated, “Suppose the law of the land were proclaimed, ‘No man shall pray during the remainder of this month, on pain of being cast into a den of lions,’ – how many of you would pray? I think there would be rather a scanty number at the prayer-meeting. Not but what the attendance at prayer-meetings is scanty enough now! But if there were the penalty of being cast into a den of lions, I am afraid the prayer-meeting would be postponed for a month, owing to pressing business, and manifold engagements of one kind and another.”
- Verse 10 reveals the attitude and belief of Daniel about prayer. Even when the decree was signed by the King and he knew it, Daniel immediately went to his knees. Not only was he praying in his house, but he opened the windows and faced Jerusalem.
 - To open the windows showed a spirit of bravery and commitment to Yahweh.
 - To face Jerusalem dictated to those that saw and heard that Daniel was being specific as to which God he was praying. The very opposite direction of Persia and Babylon, rather he faced the West, toward Jerusalem and prayed toward the holy city and the holy temple (the place of sacrifice, even when there was no sacrifice.)
 - “Unless you are prepared to be in the minority, and now and then to be called ‘narrow,’ ‘fanatic,’ and to be laughed at by men because you will not do what they do, but abstain and resist, then there is little chance of your ever making much of your Christian profession.” (Maclaren)
- The conspirators found Daniel praying. This was no secret. They knew this was the only thing they would be able to catch him doing. It is as though they laid the trap and sent spies to watch his window, waiting for his faithfulness to his God to entrap him.
- The conspirators tried to frame Daniel as someone who did not “regard the king” (verse 13).
- In verse 14 we see Darius’ feelings toward Daniel. As soon as he heard what the conspirators stated he was displeased. He tried all day to find a way around his decree. Yet, he was unsuccessful.

The Lion’s Den & God’s Protection (Daniel 6:16-28)

- The king had to honor the word of his own decree. The power structure of the Medes and Persians was set up that the king spoke as a god. Therefore, if he tried to alter the word, then his word would not be any good. He had to follow through.
- Notice that upon throwing Daniel into the lion’s den that the statement of faith actually came from King Darius.
 - “Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee” (Daniel 6:16, KJV).

- It is good to note that Daniel is believed to have been about 80 years old when this occurred.
- A stone was laid upon the mouth of the den and it was sealed with the King's signet and with the signet of the other Lords.
- King Darius could not sleep all night. He fasted and meditated. He hoped that Daniel would be alive. The fact that he was so anxious and wanting the next day to begin shows some element of faith. He must have believed deep down that the God that revealed things to Daniel could do preserve him.
- The lions would have been very hungry. It was known that the Persians would starve the lions to make them hungry and more fierce.
 - Yet, a hungry lion is no match for an all-powerful God.
 - Hebrews 11:33 recognizes Daniel as one who by faith stopped the mouths of lions.
- When Darius called out to Daniel whether or not he was alive, the princes and presidents were probably sneering and hopeful that they had gotten rid of this Hebrew. Their excitement throughout the night was about to be dashed to pieces.
 - This was obviously severe, but it was also according to ancient customs among the Persians. An ancient writer named Ammianus Marcellinus wrote of the Persians, "The laws among them are formidable... by which, on account of the guilt of one, all the kindred perish."
 - Darius was not happy with these men. He probably would have cast these accusers to the lions even if Daniel had perished in the lion's den.
- Darius put Daniel's salvation in the hands of God when he stated, "is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?" (Daniel 6:20).
- Daniel responded in the affirmative. He told the king that the Lord had sent an angel to protect him.
- Darius was excited for Daniel's outcome. However, do to their treacherous act, the conspirators, their children, and their wives were all thrown into the lions den.
 - Their deaths would have opened up a power vacuum.
 - Others would now be elevated to their roles.
 - No doubt, Daniel would have had a hand in picking their successors.
- Darius decrees that honor is to always be given to the God of Daniel.
 - What if we could transform other people's opinion about our God?
 - We can, if we are faithful, then we show God's faithfulness. People will always look to Christians as the hands and feet of Christ.
- Daniel's ability to prosper is the last link in a long chain set through this chapter. We can see Daniel progressing along this path: Plotted against, Praying, Praising, Persistently serving, Persecuted, Protected, Preserved, Preferred, and Prospered.
- One of the greatest blessings to come from Daniel 6 is to see the story unfold and point to Jesus Christ. Consider this:

- A man without blame, faithful to God in all his ways, a man noted for prayer, was sent to his death because of the jealousy of those who wanted to prevent his exaltation.
- He was condemned to death by plotting of his enemies and the law of the land, and thrown into a stone room meant to be his tomb.
- A stone was rolled over the opening. But in all its power and ferocity, death couldn't touch him.
- On a morning the stone was rolled away, he came out victoriously; he glorified God, the pagans gave honor to God, and his enemies were judged.