

DANIEL 6: DANIEL IN THE LION'S DEN

Text: Dan. 6:1-2

INTRO: Daniel, chapter 6 tells one of the most familiar stories in the Bible – the story of Daniel in the lions' den. What relatively few people realize is that the prophet Daniel was around 90 years old when this incident occurred. In this lesson, we will examine some of the details of the prophet's account of his experience.

I. IDENTIFYING "DARIUS THE MEDE."

A. As with many other aspects of the book of Daniel, Bible critics have questioned the accuracy of the Biblical account. No ruler of Babylon or Persia was known in history as "Darius the Mede." Conservative scholars, however, have been able to identify the individual with a great degree of certainty.

B. Let's take a moment to consider what we are able to learn about his identity.

1. He was known by Daniel as "Darius the Mede." His rule over "the Chaldeans" began soon after the demise of Belshazzar, Dan. 5:31.
2. His rule began about 538 B.C. He was 62 years old at the time, so he would have been born about 600 B.C.
3. By nationality, he was a Mede. "Of the lineage of the Medes," 9:1.
4. He is not to be confused with the Darius mentioned in Neh. 12:22, who did not begin to rule until several years later. Neither should he be confused with the Persian king known in history as Darius, I, who served as emperor from 522-486 B.C.
5. He did not "seize" or "take" the kingdom, but "received" it, Dan. 5:31. He was "made" king, 9:1.
6. The evidence of history strongly points to a man known historically as Gubaru, who was appointed by the emperor Cyrus to rule over Babylon and a few other provinces of the Persian empire. Gubaru ruled for 14 years. He was NOT an

emperor, but was a lesser “king,” like the Herods in the times of the Roman empire.

NOTE: One of the apocryphal writings added in Catholic Bibles identifies “Darius the Mede” as being the same person as Cyrus the Persian. It is virtually certain that identification is erroneous.

- II. DANIEL’S STERLING CHARACTER, vs. 1-3
 - A. He had served in the courts of Nebuchadnezzar from almost the beginning of the Babylonian empire. Because of his wisdom, he had been sent for by the last Babylonian ruler, Belshazzar.
 - B. After the fall of Babylon and the rise of the Persian empire, he was once again called upon to exercise a place of authority and leadership, 6:1-3, even though by now, he must have been around 90 years of age.
 - C. Persian politicians envied Daniel & hoped to rise in power by making Daniel to fall, vs. 4.

- III. SETTING THE TRAP, vs. 4-9.
 - A. The “worst” thing they could find in Daniel was his faithfulness to God. They had observed that Daniel would put God ahead of King Darius, or Cyrus, or even his own personal safety, vs. 4-5
 - B. So, they made a proposal to Darius, vs. 6-9.

- IV. AS HIS ENEMIES HAD FORESEEN, DANIEL PROVED STEADFAST TO GOD, EVEN IN THE FACE OF “CERTAIN DEATH.”
 - A. Daniel did not “go out of his way” to antagonize the Persian authorities. He simply continued to serve God as he had served God through the years, vs. 10.
 - B. The trap had been set. Now the trap is sprung, vs. 11-16a.
 - C. Evidently, the king regretted the decree he had signed. He knew he had been “used” by Daniel’s enemies. And evidently, he had been aware of Daniel’s background & that of Daniel’s friends. He KNEW that Daniel’s God had to power to deliver Daniel from this trap – and believed that God would do so, vs. 16b.

D. Darius carried out the decree he had signed, but he took no pleasure in doing so, vs. 17-20.

V. THE TRAP HAS BACKFIRED.

A. Daniel was delivered by God because of His unfailing faith & trust in Him, vs. 21-23.

Heb 11:33, [mentions] the prophets: who thru faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

B. King Darius then ordered that those who had tried to destroy Daniel must pay with their own lives, & the lives of their families, vs. 24.

Finally, Darius wrote another decree and caused it to be observed throughout the area of his rule – & once again God brought prosperity to Daniel during the reign of Darius & Cyrus, vs. 25-28.

CONCLUSION: This pretty well closes the historical section of the book of Daniel. In our next lesson, we will begin to look at the visions that God gave to Daniel during his long lifetime, to show things that would come to pass, soon and in succeeding generations.

Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, May 25, 2003