

**Darius' New Government (November 7–24, 539 BC)**

Daniel 6:1–2

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

**Daniel Set Above All the Governors (November 25, 539 – February 21, 538 BC)**

Daniel 6:3

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.

**Daniel and the Lion's Den (February–March, 538 BC)**

Daniel 6:4–28

**The Plot**

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.  
 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."  
 6 Then these commissioners and satraps came by agreement to the king and spoke to him as follows: "King Darius, live forever!  
 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.  
 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."  
 9 Therefore King Darius signed the document, that is, the injunction.

**The Accusation and Condemnation of Daniel**

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

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.

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.

### **The Deliverance of Daniel**

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

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?"

21 Then Daniel spoke to the king, "O king, live forever!

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."

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.

### **The Accusers Killed and Daniel's God Honored**

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.

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!

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.

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."

### **Daniel Prospers in the Medo-Persian Empire**

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

*Scripture quotations are from the New American Standard Bible, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation La Habra, Calif. Used by permission. All rights reserved. For Permission to Quote Information visit <http://www.lockman.org>.*

## **Chronological Notes**

### 1) Historical Setting of Daniel 6.<sup>1</sup>

- A) In Daniel 5:31, Darius the Mede (Cyrus the Persian) "received the kingdom," and in Daniel 6:1, Darius decides to place satraps over the conquered kingdom of Babylon. It is obvious that Daniel 6 took place shortly after the fall of Babylon to the Persians.

<sup>1</sup> Sourced from Andrew E. Steinmann, *Daniel*, Concordia Commentary (Concordia Publishing House, 2008): 301–303.

- B) The city of Babylon was entered by the Persian commander Gubaru on 16 Tishri 539 BC (October 12, 539). The Persian king Cyrus arrived in Babylon on 3 Heshvan 539 (October 29, 539). He appointed Gubaru governor and other officials were appointed under Gubaru. However, Gubaru died on 11 Heshvan (November 6, 539). Babylonian records do not reveal who was ruler of Babylon under Cyrus between 11 Heshvan 539 and the beginning of Cyrus' first official year on 1 Nisan 538 (March 24, 538). However, almost thirty cuneiform tablets from Cyrus' first year speak of "Cyrus, king of lands, Cambyses, king of Babylon," indicating that Cyrus' son Cambyses was placed on the throne of Babylon as coregent with his father. Moreover, Cambyses took part in the New Year's festival honoring the patron god of Babylon, Marduk (Bel)—a privilege reserved for Babylon's king. However, probably due to the difficulty Cambyses had working with Babylonian officials, he was removed from the throne nine months later and replaced by a governor named Gubaru (a different man than the now-deceased Persian commander by the same name). Beginning with the tenth month of his first year, Cyrus is called "king of Babylon, king of lands." Gubaru remained governor beyond Cyrus' death until Cambyses' fifth year as king over the Persian Empire.
- C) We should note that Daniel was Cyrus' presumptive choice to be the person placed over the entire kingdom of Babylon (6:2). However, nowhere does Daniel 6 say that he was placed in that position. Instead, we are only told that Daniel "prospered" during the reign of Cyrus (6:28) and lived until at least Cyrus' third year (10:1). Given the trouble Cyrus had with jealousy among officials in Babylon (as evidenced by the account in Daniel 6), it appears that he decided instead to place his son Cambyses in charge. Therefore, Daniel was probably not promoted to the position of governor, though he appears to have retained important influence in the affairs of the kingdom.
- D) Thus the events of Daniel 6 take place between Cyrus' arrival in the city of Babylon in October 539 and the naming of Cambyses as king of Babylon in late March 538. We can construct a possible chronology for the events in Daniel 6 as follows:
- 3 Heshvan (October 29) 539 BC – Cyrus arrived in Babylon and appointed Gubaru governor.
  - 4–10 Heshvan (October 30–November 5) 539 – Gubaru began appointing satraps.
  - 11 Heshvan (November 6) 539 – Gubaru died.
  - 12–29 Heshvan (November 7–24) 539 – Cyrus completed appointing satraps and placed three overseers (including Daniel) over the satraps (instead of a new governor; Daniel 6:1–2).
  - Kislev 539–Shebta 538 (November 25, 539–February 21, 538) – Daniel distinguished himself; Cyrus planned to appoint him as governor of the kingdom of Babylon (Daniel 6:3).
  - Late Shebat–Adar 538 (Late February–March 23, 538) – The plot against Daniel was hatched. Daniel rescued from the lions' den.
  - 1 Nisan (March 24) 538 – At the beginning of Cyrus' first official year, Cambyses was made king of Babylon and took part in New Year's festival in Babylon.