

**Daniel**  
**Chapter 6**  
**“Virtuous, Vindictive, Vanity, Victory”**

**Daniel 6**

**Daniel in the Den of Lions**

**1 It pleased Darius to appoint 120 satraps to rule throughout the kingdom, 2 with three administrators over them, one of whom was Daniel. The satraps were made accountable to them so that the king might not suffer loss. 3 Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. 4 At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent. 5 Finally these men said, “We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God.”**

**6 So these administrators and satraps went as a group to the king and said: “May King Darius live forever! 7 The royal administrators, prefects, satraps, advisers and governors have all agreed that the king should issue an edict and enforce the decree that anyone who prays to any god or human being during the next thirty days, except to you, Your Majesty, shall be thrown into the lions’ den. 8 Now, Your Majesty, issue the decree and put it in writing so that it cannot be altered—in accordance with the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed.” 9 So King Darius put the decree in writing.**

**10 Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before. 11 Then these men went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help. 12 So they went to the king and spoke to him about his royal decree: “Did you not publish a decree that during the next thirty days anyone who prays to any god or human being except to you, Your Majesty, would be thrown into the lions’ den?”**

**The king answered, “The decree stands—in accordance with the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed.”**

**13 Then they said to the king, “Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, Your Majesty, or to the decree you put in writing. He still prays three times a day.” 14 When the king heard this, he was greatly distressed; he was determined to rescue Daniel and made every effort until sundown to save him.**

**15 Then the men went as a group to King Darius and said to him, “Remember, Your Majesty, that according to the law of the Medes and Persians no decree or edict that the king issues can be changed.”**

**16 So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions’ den. The king said to Daniel, “May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!”**

**17 A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles, so that Daniel’s situation might not be changed. 18 Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating and without any entertainment being brought to him. And he could not sleep.**

**19 At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lions’ den. 20 When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, “Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?”**

**21 Daniel answered, “May the king live forever! 22 My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, Your Majesty.”**

**23 The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.**

**24 At the king's command, the men who had falsely accused Daniel were brought in and thrown into the lions' den, along with their wives and children. And before they reached the floor of the den, the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.**

**25 Then King Darius wrote to all the nations and peoples of every language in all the earth: "May you prosper greatly!"**

**26 "I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel.**

**"For he is the living God and he endures forever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end.**

**27 He rescues and he saves; he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions."**

**28 So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.**

### **Introduction**

With the city of Babylon now firmly in the grasp of the Medes and Persians, a new system government was quickly put in place to establish law and order, and to collect taxes for the empire. Cyrus the Persian had left the governance of Babylon to his uncle Darius the Mede. King Darius was well aware that the newly acquired city would be precarious at best during this transitional period, so he quickly appointed 120 Satraps (a Persian word for Governor) to oversee the day to day operations in Babylon. The Satraps responsibilities would have included tax collection from the populace. So needless to say, Darius was looking for trustworthy individuals who would remain loyal to him as well as to the kingdom. Corruption would not be tolerated for Cyrus the Great would be expecting a great return from the wealthy city that he had just personally conquered. King Darius was appointed to rule Babylon for this very purpose and he had no intentions of failing in his duties. He fully intended to see to it that Babylon remained a sparkling jewel in the crown of the empire. Under his watchful eye the city would be kept both orderly and productive. Those who proved to be rebellious or obstructionist would find themselves facing the lions.

I am certain that Darius is drawn to Daniel by the Holy Spirit when he makes the aged Hebrew one of his three top administrators over the satraps (**vs. 2**). Once again God gives Daniel favor with his captors. New regime, same old story. Daniel is entrusted with great authority in the kingdom. Just like the old saying, "the cream always rises to the top", Daniel always finds himself receiving one promotion after the other. Even though he is now most likely in his eighties, God isn't through with Daniel. That should give comfort to those of us who find ourselves ever closer to the age when society thinks we have nothing more to offer. I have learned from many years in the ministry, that the finest people on earth are older saints of God. Those who truly spend their lives walking with Christ are more like Him than anyone else, and because of that they are ALWAYS a joy to be around. I have known elderly Christians who were so precious that just being in a room with them is like standing in a kitchen where fresh bread is being baked. There is a life-giving wisdom that refreshes the spirit when they speak. I truly hope that I will mature in my faith in this way, so that when I am older I will give hope to all who meet me. A few years back I visited such a man on his deathbed. He had served Christ for many years and was in his nineties. He knew that his race was nearly run, but he spent every moment of his time with me trying to give me encouragement. He was a joy to be around, and I found myself hanging on his every word. He spoke of the love he had for all his former pastors (many of whom he had long since outlived). He had been faithful to his church for over sixty years and he spoke of his love for every member. He told me about his dear wife who had gone on to be with the Lord, and how he longed to see her again. There was no whining or complaining, just bragging on Jesus! We laugh when we see the "grumpy old men" in the movies, but as for me, I long to be a godly old man. The world has enough grumps as it is! Daniel was a godly old man, and though King Darius didn't personally know Daniel's God, he could see Him working in that old man's life. He could also see that Daniel was a cut above the rest, and could not help but like the old guy. The two became more than king and subject, they became friends. Darius trusted Daniel, and everyone in the kingdom could see it. The other administrators and satraps had to get rid of Daniel,

for Darius was poised to make him the second highest ruler in the land. This Jewish eunuch had to be stopped. His integrity would not allow him to take a bribe, nor would he allow those under him to do so. He didn't seem to care how ambitious they were, his administration would not allow them to feather their nest with dishonest gain. They HATED Daniel, but were powerless to stop him. They needed a plan. How could they get rid of someone that close to the king without any repercussion falling back on their own heads? Their's was a dilemma that, if handled incorrectly, would spell their doom. They met in secret, and devised what they thought to be the perfect means of entrapment.

### The Virtuous

For many years I was a minister in a denomination that would screen all its candidates for leadership roles based on the criteria for elders and deacons found in **1 Timothy 3**. I believe this to be a worthy method given in scripture to guide the church in selecting its overseers. Those who are seeking to be pastors, elders, and deacons SHOULD, be carefully examined before they are chosen to direct church affairs. Unfortunately, in my experience, most of the time candidates were only disqualified based upon the last half of **1 Timothy 3:2**, the **"husband of one wife"** verse. I can't tell you how many times I have heard, "Oh Mr. Smith, I see here you have been divorced! Sorry, you can't serve in the church". I am convinced that when the Apostle Paul said, **"he must be the husband of one wife"**, he was referring to the simple truth that a pastor/elder cannot be a womanizer. That being said, I realize that God hates divorce (**Malachi 2:16**), and we should not take this truth lightly. There are however, scriptural grounds for a divorce (such as adultery **Matt: 5:32**), and I refuse to believe that God disqualifies someone whose actions have been justified by scripture. I am writing this because I believe many churches would install an axe-murderer as a church leader, provided he had not been divorced! We SHOULD give closer attention to the FIRST part of that same verse: **"Now an overseer must be above reproach..." (1 Timothy 3:2)**. ABOVE REPROACH. This means that if people were to examine your life under a microscope as it were, they would find NOTHING with which you could be charged. Not sinless perfection, because no one except Christ can make that claim, but rather complete moral integrity. In other words, to lead God's people, you must live what you believe. Your "walk" needs to match your "talk" in such a way, that if people wish to discredit you, they will be forced to falsely accuse you because no fault can be found in the way you live. This is exactly what the Pharisees did when they brought accusations against Christ Himself (**Matt. 26:57-61**). When you are above reproach people will have a difficult time bringing you down. Daniel was just such a man. After carefully examining his life, his enemies concluded the only way to entrap him would have to be **"something to do with the law of his God" (vs. 5)**. His virtue was intact. There were no skeletons in Daniels closet, and therefore nothing to bring before the king as an accusation. Daniel must have found it quite easy to sleep at night knowing his heart was clean before God. It is important for us to live like that as well. It is equally important to confess our sins and repent from them as quickly as possible when we do fall short. We must keep our "sin account" paid off by the grace of God, and not allow any outstanding balances to remain long upon the books. **"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9)**. Daniel lived a "purified" life, and this made his jealous enemies hate him all the more. Daniel's faith was about to be severely tested, but he was ready for the test! In like manner, Christ could return for US at any moment, so let us strive to live a virtuous life so we will not be ashamed at His coming (**1 John 2:28**).

### The Vindictive

The world hates godly people, and it is the Devil who fuels this hatred. Since the Garden of Eden, Satan has been the driving force behind every wicked scheme to devour the righteous. It was Satan, who incited Cain to kill his brother Abel (**Genesis 4:8**). It was Satan, who inspired Pharaoh's plan to kill the male children of the Hebrew slaves in the time of Moses (**Exodus 1:16**). It was Satan, who plotted with King Herod to murder the new born Messiah (**Matthew 2:16**), and the list goes on. We should therefore be able to recognize once again the work of Satan at the center of the satrap's Machiavellian ploy to rid the world of Daniel. Daniel would not allow any hint of corruption on his watch, and therefore the satraps and administrators under his supervision found themselves unable to thrive in their self-seeking greed for dishonest gain. And if that wasn't enough, Daniel was about to be promoted to an even

higher position in the government. A position that was no doubt coveted by every government official in the new Babylon. Daniel found himself in the cross hairs of the satrap's visceral hatred through no fault of his own. He was just an old man trying to do his job with integrity. Just the kind of life that is sure to draw the attention of the Devil himself.

The satraps and administrators came to realize that the only possible way to get rid of Daniel was to somehow devise a scheme to trap him with his own faith. Much in the same way that a liberal reporter will try to trap a Christian political candidate with "gotcha" questions about controversial issues such as gay marriage, or abortion. The hope is, that if the candidate will stand by his biblical convictions, he will pay the price politically. Ever wonder why our government is becoming more and more corrupt? It is because few godly men ever survive the gauntlet of the ungodly who will do anything to further advance the agendas of the wicked. In short, the U.S., as President Obama once stated, "is no longer a Christian nation". I fear that soon, it will not be a nation at all. We glorify every vestige of immorality known to man, while unashamedly singing "God bless America". May God have mercy on us all, but more than likely, we too will go the way of Sodom and Gomorrah. The good news in all of this, is that just as Daniel was delivered from his enemies, Christ is soon coming to deliver us from ours as well. I don't know about you, but I find myself looking forward to the rapture more and more every day. I have come to understand what Peter was saying when he describes how Lot was so distressed while living in Sodom ([2 Peter 2:7](#)). We don't belong here. I want to go home.

The vindictive collection of satraps must have thought themselves brilliant when they finally agreed on their plan to destroy Daniel. The simplicity of it all was bordering upon genius. They would devise a law that by nature would appeal to the vanity of King Darius, enabling them to have Daniel executed for simply praying! Yes, you heard it correctly, PRAYING. No one would be able to request anything from any god or man save the king for a month. What a ridiculous edict. In its strictest interpretation, even a child could not ask its parents for a glass of milk. He would only be able to ask the king himself. I imagine that would have made for a tremendously long line around the palace at supper time! Surely king Darius would see through this stupid legislation and throw it into the chamber pot where it belonged. It should have been so obvious to the king to see through this little ruse, but the egos of men are ripe for delusion when it comes to the glorification of self. When the wisest man in the kingdom was conspicuously absent from the discussion when the decree was presented for his approval, Darius should have waited for his top advisor to seek his counsel, but instead, he found himself trapped by his own foolish pride. The ridiculous decree was signed into law. And Daniel was soon to become a wanted man... for being a prayer warrior!

### The Vanity

One can only speculate as to what was going through King Darius' mind when this hoard of vindictive politicians entered his throne room to propose such a ridiculous law. The only reasonable conclusion for his approving such a bizarre request is that it appealed to his own vanity. One would think that Darius, being newly appointed to the throne in a city that had witnessed such upheaval, would realize the prudent thing to do would be to lay low for a while. This was no time to make waves that might stir up a religious fervor, but Darius must have been intrigued with the thought of being the only "god" in town, even if just for thirty days. His vanity outweighed his good judgement.

Cyrus the Great would have never fallen for such a scheme, but Darius jumped into it with reckless abandon. The decree was issued and sealed into law. The satraps urged Darius to put the decree in writing because they were well aware that Medo-Persian laws could never be changed once they had been formally documented. It was believed in those days that the kings of the empire were infallible for they were looked upon as gods. To repeal a law would be admitting to an error in judgement and this was strictly forbidden. This national policy only served to multiply the vanity of its monarchy, leaving the Medo-Persian rulers to "believe their own press" as it were. They ruled from the mindset that they were always right, unflinching in their governance, and flawless in their every whim. This mindset, as King Darius would soon learn, was fraught with peril, for it would have cost him his dearest friend had God not intervened. Daniel's life was placed in grave danger by the reckless vanity and pride of the petulant king, for he also set in writing that failure to comply with the law would be punishable by death in the lions den. Praying in Babylon for the next thirty days would earn the petitioner the death penalty.

As soon as Daniel learned of the edict and the subsequent penalty for its infraction, he prayed (**vs.10**). He began his prayer as always by giving thanks to God! Faith, unmovable, unshakeable faith. How many Christians today upon hearing that prayer had been banned, not just from schools mind you, but everywhere including in their own homes, would fall to their knees and begin their prayer by THANKING GOD? Faith prays like that. Faith caused a young man named David to write psalms of praise to God while living in caves on the run from King Saul. Faith, kept the spirit of Joseph intact as he awaited for God to remember him in prison. Faith never doubts in the dark what God has taught in the light. Darius had his vanity, but Daniel had his faith. The king would walk the floor that night, hoping that Daniel's God would prevail, but Daniel would calmly sleep among the lions, **for without faith, it is impossible to please God! (Hebrews 11:6).**

### **The Victory**

The satrap's were only too happy to stake out Daniel's house to catch him in prayer. The old man did not disappoint, for just as he had always done, he prayed three times a day. The Bible says that these evil men went as a group and found Daniel on his knees asking God for help (**vs. 10-11**). They most likely went as a group so they would have plenty of eyewitnesses to run to Darius with their testimony. I'm certain that it was all these men could do to contain their sadistic pleasure in regards to Daniel's demise. They must have coached one another not to look too happy, for King Darius would not be pleased to hear the news that his top advisor and friend would soon be thrown to the lions. Some people just seem to rejoice at the misfortunes of others. I am reminded of a pastor that I served with who fell into immorality and had to resign his position in the church. The people who came forward with the news of this mans sin, shared their tale with a sickening glee that I have never forgotten. What kind of person enjoys the downfall of another? **Proverbs 24:17** admonishes us, **"Do not gloat when your enemy falls; when he stumbles, do not let your heart rejoice, or the Lord will see and disapprove and turn his wrath away from him"**. We should never be happy about anyone's demise. God expects His children to be compassionate, not vindictive. Needless to say, these wicked satraps would've have to work hard to hide their joy in the presence of the king. I once asked a funeral home director (who was well known by his twisted sense of humor) what the hardest part of his job was. He smiled and answered, "Trying to look sad at a twenty thousand dollar funeral!" I would imagine the satraps knew just how he felt as they argued their case to have Daniel thrown to the lions.

Darius was furious with himself for being tricked in such a manner. In the Babylonian empire it would have been a simple fix. Nebuchadnezzar had absolute power when he ruled Babylon. He could have simply pardoned Daniel. Darius however, was bound by Medo-Persian law. He had no choice but to comply with the law, for his authority was not absolute. Remember Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the great statue in **Daniel 2**. Each successive empire was of lesser authority than the golden head of Babylon. As the kingdoms progressed in a downward decline, the rule of law became more and more powerful than the monarch. Darius was a ruler in a divided kingdom (Medes and Persians). He could not set aside a law when it became inconvenient for him. He was bound to uphold it. Daniel was placed in the lions den, and the stone over the opening was sealed by the kings own seal (**vs. 17**).

Before Daniel was thrown to the lions, Darius prayed for Daniel's God to rescue him. He must have whispered it in Daniels ear, for by doing so, he was breaking his own law! By all rights he should have had to accompany Daniel to face the lions. I do believe that of the two, Darius did have the worst night. He walked the floor and fasted while Daniel slept with a lion's mane for a pillow, for God had closed the mouths of the lions! I imagine Daniel calmly walked into the lions den, like a man taking an evening stroll. After all, at eighty plus years old, it's not like he was planning to live forever. God would either spare his life, or Daniel would soon see Him face to face. For the believer, life or death is a win-win situation, **for to be absent from the body, is to be present with The Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8).**

At first light, King Darius rushed to the tomb to see about his friend. The sound of Daniel's voice must have been a healing ointment to soothe the guilt of Darius' foolish pride. His vanity had almost consumed his best friend. Darius would learn both humility, and faith in Daniel's God in one night. Daniel's accusers, however, did not find nearly as happy an ending. They were thrown to the lions along with their wives and children. It is never wise to persecute the people of God. Many years later, another empire would rise. The mighty Roman empire. This kingdom would feed many of God's people to the

lions as well, simply for confessing Christ as Lord. Empires rise and fall, but the kingdom of God endures forever.

I am reminded of the great martyr Polycarp, who studied at the feet of John the disciple. He was the Pastor of the church in Smyrna during the first century. The people of Smyrna were fiercely loyal to the old Roman gods and called for Polycarp's execution. He was subsequently arrested, and taken to the city for trial. He was told that if he did not renounce Christ that he would be burned at the stake for his treason. To which Polycarp replied, "These eighty-six years I have served Him, and He has never done me hurt. How then, can I now blaspheme my King and Savior"? He went on to say that the flames that the Romans would use to burn him, would eventually die out, but the flames for those who reject Christ as Lord would burn for eternity. It is said, that when the fire was set to burn Polycarp, that he appeared to be glowing within the flames. A soldier came forward and pierced him with a spear for the fire seemed to have no effect upon him. Polycarp left this wicked world of sin that day to be present with the Lord. I imagine that he and Daniel had much to discuss when the angels carried him to glory. As John, Polycarp's mentor and friend would say, **"This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4).**

And all God's people say... Amen!