

Daniel 6: Stopped the Mouths of Lions

“My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions’ mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.”

Daniel 6:22

“Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,”

Hebrews 11:33

Introduction:

1. Though the Babylonian Empire ended with Belshazzar in chapter five, Daniel is still alive and well.
2. The sixth chapter, an event during the reign of Darius, is the last event before the prophecies begin.
3. The character of Daniel is fully tested and proved in this challenging chapter for our own lives today.

I. The PROMOTION (6:1-3)

- A. Taken captive out of Israel early in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, God preserved and prospered Daniel through many changes in the monarchy and empire (1:1-7; 5:1; 6:1).
- B. Darius organized the huge Persian Empire under three presidents and 120 princes.
 1. A little later under Ahasuerus, the Empire had 127 provinces (Esther 1:1; 8:9).
 2. The presidents were responsible for the princes and integrity of the provinces.
 3. Daniel had the most important position of these three presidents (2:48-49; 5:29).
- C. When Darius saw Daniel’s superiority, he intended to promote him over the empire.
 1. Daniel had an excellent spirit, which is invaluable in commerce and politics.
 2. But this preference for Daniel raised the jealousy of the presidents and princes.
 3. An excellent spirit should be the goal of every saint (Pr 17:27), which will cause others to favor them with honor and promotion (I Sam 18; Luke 2:52; Pro 17:2).

II. The CONSPIRACY (6:4-9)

- A. The other presidents and the princes wanted to find dirt on Daniel to have him deposed.
 1. The hearts of men are instinctively envious and jealous. Let it not be true of us!
 2. We must keep God’s doctrine unspotted (II Sam 12:14; Matt 5 16; I Cor 10:32; Phil 1:27; 2:15; I Tim 5:14; 6:2; Titus 2:5,8-10; I Pet 2:12; 3:16; 4:14-16).
 3. Consider the impeccable character and performance Daniel had in his conduct.
 4. They were reduced to finding fault with him for his religion (I Peter 4:14-16).
- B. Because he was faultless in office, they conspired to pass a law against his religion.
 1. They flattered the king, though their only thoughts were envy against Daniel.
 2. They claimed a great majority, though the plot was likely far less than universal.
 3. They professed great respect for the law, though they were undermining it then.
 4. They flattered the king again by suggesting that he deify himself for thirty days.
 5. They can suggest harsh penalties when the crime is against saints and godliness.
 6. They use legal means to accomplish their wicked ends to be deceitful and sly.
 7. They request the unalterable law of the empire, though they were changing one.
 8. These actions are typical of the ungodly in their relentless hatred of the godly.
- C. No wise government would ever have laws that were unchangeable, for it is sheer folly.
 1. Wisdom and understanding are the abilities to discern changing situations.
 2. Esther asked Ahasuerus for another commandment (Esther 1:19; 8:1-14).

- D. Darius, showing the weakness of his character, signs the ridiculous provision into law.
 1. This was a horribly onerous new law, as it caused sacrilege to all worshippers.
 2. But it bought the king, for it played to his lusts and smothered his wisdom.
 3. It was not uncommon for kings of the east to take divine titles and privileges.
 4. True wisdom would include the ability to discern and perceive their evil envy.

III. The TRAP (6:10-17)

- A. When the law was in place, the presidents and princes spied on Daniel to catch him.
 1. Daniel did not alter his praying at all, though he knew the law had been signed.
 2. He prayed toward Jerusalem as Solomon had taught Israel (I Kings 8:30-50).
 3. Daniel prayed three times a day (Psalm 55:17; Acts 2:15; 3:1; 10:3,9,30).
 4. He included thanksgiving with his prayers, as we are taught (Philippians 4:6-7).
 5. He was not afraid of the king's commandment (Daniel 3:16-18; Heb 11:27).
- B. The wicked conspirators hold Darius to the new law in order to condemn Daniel.
 1. There was no fault in Daniel, so they had passed a law to condemn his religion.
 2. They have no heart for legal compliance – they only want to get rid of Daniel.
 3. Observe one race in our nation totally ignore another race living on reservations.
 4. Observe hate crimes applied only against one race and one sexual orientation.
 5. You can go to jail for killing unwanted kittens, but laws protect baby mutilators.
- C. They accuse Daniel to the king as having broken the newly established Persian law.
 1. "That Daniel" is their hateful way of introducing their victim to the king.
 2. They point out his origin as a captive Jew, rather than his character of 70 years.
 3. They twist his prayers to be a personal and aggravated attack against Darius.
 4. They twist his prayers to be a flagrant and aggravated attack the laws of Persia.
 5. They emphasize the number of prayers to exaggerate his violation of the law.
- D. Darius was ashamed and angry that he had been duped so easily by these envious men.
 1. The words of his mouth had trapped him into condemning Daniel (Prov 6:2).
 2. There will be a time of reckoning for all foolishness (Pr 14:15; 22:3; Ps 36:2).
 3. He committed himself to undo his foolishness, but that is not always possible.
- E. The evil men enforced the law against Daniel, though they did not truly reverence it.
 1. Foolish king Darius had to obey the law and have Daniel cast into the lions' den.
 2. Darius, who knew Daniel and his religion well, put his trust in Daniel's God!
 3. The lions' den was sealed with multiple signets, so Daniel could not be saved.

IV. The DELIVERANCE (6:18-23)

- A. Darius spent the night fasting and grieving for his faithful and loyal servant Daniel.
 1. When it was morning, Darius went very early to check on the status of Daniel.
 2. This great king cried with a lamentable voice to his faithful servant Daniel.
 3. He asks if the living God, whom Daniel served faithfully, had saved him.
 4. And from the dark recesses of the lions' den comes Daniel respectful answer!
- B. Daniel explained to the king that God's angels had shut the lions' mouths against him.
 1. Daniel confessed his innocence before God, which had brought His deliverance.
 2. And he confessed his innocence before the king, which the Lord well knew also.
 3. Daniel is saved from the lions' den without harm, by his faith (Hebrews 11:27).

V. The PUNISHMENT (6:24)

- A. The wicked men, who had conspired mischief in the kingdom, were thrown to the lions.
 - 1. The laws of the Medes and Persians were not so inviolate as you might think!
 - 2. So was fulfilled God's rule about punishing false witnesses (Deut 19:18-20).
 - 3. So was fulfilled God's wisdom of hurt on your own head (Ps 7:16; Pr 26:27).
 - 4. Do you remember Haman's death by another Persian king (Esther 7:10)?
- B. Their wives and children were thrown in with them to magnify the lesson to all citizens.
 - 1. Those little wives and children should have thought to tell Darius of the plot.
 - 2. Typical of eastern despots, it was also Scriptural (Num 16:23-24; Josh 7:24-25).
 - 3. God only condemned the practice for ordinary and personal sins (Deut 24:16).
 - 4. This punishment is fitting for aggravated offences – as the Flood (Gen 7:21-22), Egypt (Ex 11:1-6), Canaan (Deut 2:34; 3:6), and Jerusalem (Luke 23:27-31).
 - 5. Do you remember the death of Haman's sons by a Persian king (Esther 9:13-14).
- B. The lions destroyed these sinners by breaking every bone before they hit the bottom.
 - 1. Maybe Daniel's enemies excused his rescue by claiming the lions were full!
 - 2. These lions were neither weak, nor faint, nor full, nor distracted from their work.
 - 3. Sounds just like what happened to the mightiest men in the army (Dan 3:20-22).
 - 4. The lion is one of the LORD's greatest creations (Pr 30:30). Give Him glory!
 - a. A male lion may be 10 feet by 4 feet and 500 lbs (largest: 11 x 700)!
 - b. A male lion has a vertical jump of 12 feet and horizontal of 36 feet!
 - c. Lions have 30 teeth and can hit 50 mph for short distances! Look out!
 - d. A lion's forebody is so strong that its forepaws can break a zebra's back!
 - e. Its roar is so loud that it can be heard five miles away! It will scare you!
 - f. A lion can hear prey one mile away, and they have eyesight 5 times ours!
 - g. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Revelation 5:5).

VI. The CONCLUSION (6:25-28)

- A. King Darius wrote a new decree to the Persian Empire exalting Daniel's God.
 - 1. Consider this proclamation going forth in all the known world for a witness!
 - 2. He made a commandment to tremble and fear before the God of heaven!
 - 3. He described Him as the living and perpetual God with eternal dominion!
 - 4. He described His glorious power to rescue and deliver in heaven and earth!
 - 5. He told of His power to rescue Daniel even from the Persian lions' den! Glory!
- B. God blessed Daniel to continue prospering in the reigns of Darius and of Cyrus (10:1).

Conclusion:

- 1. The excellent spirit of Daniel, so that strangers promoted him, should be our constant and exciting goal.
- 2. The integrity of Daniel, so that no fault could be found in him, should be our constant and exciting goal!
- 3. The courage of Daniel, so he would not compromise his religion, should be a constant and exciting goal.
- 4. The faith of Daniel, believing he would be delivered from lions, should be a constant and exciting goal.
- 5. The envy of evil men and their false pretensions to destroy the godly should not surprise us at all.
- 6. The value of wisdom and prudence, which Darius lacked, should cause us to always be circumspect.
- 7. God will turn the way of the wicked upon their own heads some day, so let us leave vengeance to Him!