DANIEL 6

Open Mouths, Closed Mouths

Daniel 6 — A Deep Dive

> *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.*
> DANIEL 6:10

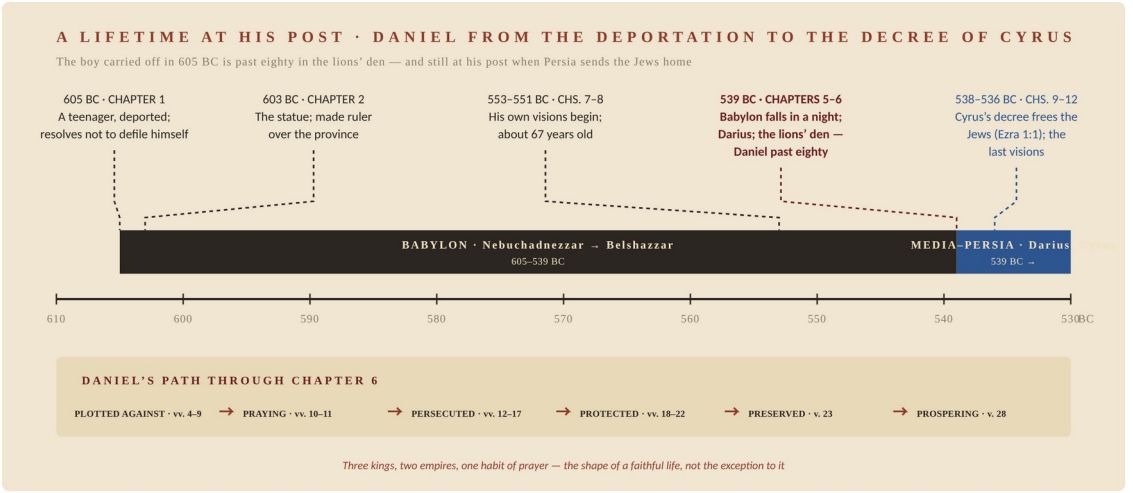
A SMITH FOR CHRIST STUDY · THREE VOICES: TSARFATI · MACARTHUR · GUZIK

Where the story stands

1. Babylon has fallen (chapter 5, verses 30 to 31).

2. The last word of chapter 5 is that “Darius the Mede received the kingdom at about the age of sixty-two,” and chapter 6 opens with him reorganizing it: a hundred and twenty satraps, three commissioners over them, “of whom Daniel was one.”

3. Daniel is past eighty.



A Man Without Fault, and a Trap

DANIEL 6:1

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

AMIR TSARFATI

Tsarfati sets the scene with the fall of Babylon still in the air: the city taken in a night, the new administration assembled, and Daniel, a survivor of the old regime, not retired but promoted. He draws the…

JOHN MACARTHUR

MacArthur makes verse 4 a mirror for the reader. Daniel's enemies audited his whole public life and found no negligence and no corruption.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik works through the identity of Darius the Mede, Cyrus under another name, Cambyses, or Gubaru the governor of Babylon, with Darius possibly a title, and notes that the structure of 120 satraps under three…

THE ORIGINAL **YATTIRA · "EXTRAORDINARY"**

A Man Without Fault, and a Trap

THE ANATOMY OF THE TRAP · DANIEL 6:4–9

They audited his work and found nothing; so they made his worship a crime — with a lie, a flattery, and a law the king could not undo

1 · THE SEARCH
vv. 4–5

Nothing to find

no negligence
no corruption — "faithful"

one handle left
"the law of his God"

→

2 · THE LIE
vv. 6–7

"All the commissioners"

came by agreement
a mob, not a committee

Daniel never asked
the chief of the three

→

3 · THE FLATTERY
v. 7

Petition only the king

thirty days
short enough to sound harmless

the lions' den
long enough to catch a habit

→

4 · THE LAW
vv. 8–9

Medes and Persians

"may not be revoked"
Esther 1:19; 8:8

the king signs
without one question

WHY THE LAW COULD NOT BE CHANGED — AND WHY THAT MATTERED

Under Medo-Persian law a signed royal decree bound the king himself (Esther 1:19; 8:8) — the "inferior" silver kingdom of Daniel 2:39, where even the throne was subject to its own rules. The king labored until sunset and could not undo his signature (v. 14) — so no one could later say he quietly let Daniel off.

The strength of the law was the weakness of the king — and the stage for an unmistakable deliverance (vv. 16–17, 22).

As He Had Been Doing Previously

DANIEL 6:10

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.

AMIR TSARFATI

Tsarfati stays on the open windows. Daniel could have shut them and kept praying; no one would have known.

JOHN MACARTHUR

"Three times a day… as he had been doing previously." MacArthur calls this the most important phrase in the chapter for the Christian life.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik quotes G. Campbell Morgan, "The occasional is always affected by the habitual", and lays out Daniel's choices: he did not stop praying, did not hide, and did not stage a protest.

THE ORIGINAL **KOL-QOVEL DI · "AS HE HA.D. BEEN DOING PREVIOUSLY"**

As He Had Been Doing Previously

"AS HE HAD BEEN DOING PREVIOUSLY" · DANIEL 6:10 — FIVE DETAILS OF ONE HABIT

Daniel did not pray more to make a point or less to avoid trouble; he kept the habit of a lifetime — and the habit was visible

WINDOWS OPEN

toward Jerusalem

Solomon's prayer for exiles: pray toward the temple and God will hear from heaven (1 Kings 8:46–50)

ON HIS KNEES

berak — also "to bless"

The posture of a beggar before a King (Luke 22:41; Acts 7:60; Ephesians 3:14)

THREE TIMES A DAY

the habit of a lifetime

"Evening and morning and at noon … He will hear my voice" (Psalm 55:17)

GIVING THANKS

with a death sentence signed

Not only petition but praise — a man who has settled who holds his life (Philippians 4:6)

AS BEFORE

kol-qovel di

No crisis prayer, no protest, no hiding — the same routine as when nothing was wrong

THE OCCASIONAL IS ALWAYS AFFECTED BY THE HABITUAL — G. CAMPBELL MORGAN, IN GUZIK

The night in the den was won in sixty years of mornings, noons and evenings on his knees. The crisis is met with whatever habit a man already has — and the king noticed the habit before the lions did: "your God whom you constantly serve" (vv. 16, 20).

My God Sent His Angel

DANIEL 6:18

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.

AMIR TSARFATI

Tsarfati reads verse 22 as the heart of the book: the God of Israel sends His angel into a Persian execution chamber and closes the mouths of lions, and the one He rescues is an old Jew who would not stop…

JOHN MACARTHUR

"O king, live forever!" MacArthur hears courtesy from the lions' den.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik calls Daniel's stance "obedient disobedience": he broke an unjust law without rebelling against the king, which is exactly Acts 5, verse 29 held together with Romans 13. He draws attention to the king's…

THE ORIGINAL **ELAHA CHAYYA · "THE LIVING GOD"**

My God Sent His Angel

THE DEN AND THE TOMB · DANIEL 6 BESIDE THE PASSION OF CHRIST

Guzik: it is hard to read Daniel 6 without thinking of the tomb. A picture, not a prophecy — the shape of the Gospel seen in a Persian execution.

DANIEL IN THE DEN	DANIEL 6	JESUS IN THE TOMB
A righteous man, no fault found in him	6:4–5	*"I find no guilt in Him"* **Luke 23:4; John 19:4**
Condemned by jealous rulers	6:4–7	*"because of envy they had handed Him over"* **Matthew 27:18**
Through a law the ruler could not change	6:12–15	*Pilate washes his hands; "we have a law"* **Matthew 27:24; John 19:7**
A ruler who tried to release him, and could not	6:14	*"Pilate made efforts to release Him"* **John 19:12**
A stone over the mouth, sealed with a signet	6:17	*"they set a seal on the stone"* **Matthew 27:66**
Alive at dawn; brought up out of the den	6:19–23	*"very early … on the first day of the week"* **Mark 16:2–6**
His accusers judged; the nations told	6:24–27	*"All authority has been given to Me … go therefore"* **Matthew 28:18–19**

The Decree of Darius

DANIEL 6:25

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!

AMIR TSARFATI

Tsarfati reads the decree as the purpose of the whole night. God did not shut the lions' mouths only to save Daniel; He did it so that a Medo-Persian king would write to "all the peoples, nations and men of…

JOHN MACARTHUR

MacArthur hears in verse 26 the one thing a sovereign God is after in every one of these stories: that men would fear Him. Not that Daniel would be comfortable, not that the law would be fair, but that a pagan…

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik traces Daniel's path through the chapter: plotted against, praying, persecuted, protected, preserved, prospering, and notes that the sequence is the normal shape of a faithful life, not the exception. He…

THE ORIGINAL **DI-LEHEVON ZA'IN VE-DACHALIN · "FEAR AND TREMBLE"**

The Decree of Darius

TWO DECREES · DANIEL 6:7 AND 6:26 — THE SAME KING, THIRTY DAYS APART

The empire that outlawed prayer for a month is told to fear the God of Daniel forever — and the decree echoes Nebuchadnezzar's and anticipates the Son of Man's

THE DECREE OF THE PLOTTERS · v. 7

signed by Darius, v. 9

Who may be petitioned
no god or man besides the king

For how long
thirty days

The penalty
the lions' den

Who wrote it
the commissioners and satraps — by a lie

What it produced
one man on his knees, as before (v. 10)

→

THE DECREE OF DARIUS · vv. 25–27

to all peoples, nations and languages

Who is to be feared
the God of Daniel — "the living God"

For how long
"enduring forever … His dominion will be forever"

His kingdom
"one which will not be destroyed" (4:34; 7:14)

What He does
"delivers and rescues … signs and wonders"

What it produced
the news of the den in every nation's mail

A decree against prayer became a decree to fear the God who answers it — the empire's postal system turned into a pulpit (Tsarfati)

Compare Nebuchadnezzar's confession (4:3, 34–35) and the kingdom given to the Son of Man (7:14): three kings, one sentence

What to carry from this chapter

1

Chapter 6 mirrors chapter 3.

A royal decree, a faithful refusal, a sentence carried out, a deliverance inside the sentence, and a pagan king confessing the God of Israel, under Babylon and now under

2

Found is the spine of the chapter.

No ground of accusation found (verse 4); found praying (verse 11); found innocent before God (verse 22); no injury found (verse 23).

3

The only handle on a faithful man is his faithfulness.

“We will not find any ground… unless… with regard to the law of his God” (verse 5).

4

“As he had been doing previously” is the whole sermon.

Daniel met the crisis with the prayer he prayed when there was no crisis.

More to carry

5

The king was bound by his law; Daniel was not bound by the king.

The most powerful man alive could not save his friend, and the man in the den was never helpless, because his confidence was never in the king

6

The seal certified the miracle.

Stone, signet, nobles (verse 17): no pardon, no tampering, no finishing-off.

7

Deliverance was for the decree.

God shut the lions' mouths so a Persian king would tell every nation that the God of Daniel is the living God whose kingdom will not be destroyed (verse 26; compare 4, ve

8

Daniel outlasted the empire.

"In the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus" (verse 28): the man who prayed toward the ruined temple for seventy years lived to see the decree that sent his people

Talk it through

1. Daniel's enemies searched his whole public life and found no negligence and no corruption. If hostile men audited your work, your money and your words this month, what would they find, and would "he serves his God" be the only charge left?

2. The decree was dressed as loyalty and signed without a question. Where are you being asked to go along with something because "everyone agrees", and what question should you be asking before you sign?

3. "As he had been doing previously." What is your habit of prayer when nothing is wrong, and is it strong enough to carry you when the law changes against you?

CLOSING

They searched Daniel for a fault and found only his God. He kept his windows open and his knees on the floor, as he had been doing previously, and the God who was in the den with him shut the lions' mouths, opened a king's, and sent the news to every nation.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

Full Deep Dive, O·I·A study, reflection journal and film: see the Daniel study page.