

Daniel 6:1–28

“Faithful When It Costs You Everything”

A New Empire, Same Faithful Man

“It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty satraps, to be over the whole kingdom; and over these, three governors, of whom Daniel was one, that the satraps might give account to them, so that the king would suffer no loss. Then this Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm.” (Daniel 6:1–3 NKJV)

The Babylonian Empire has fallen. The Medo-Persian Empire now rules. Yet Daniel, who had served faithfully under Babylon, is immediately recognized by the new regime and promoted to one of the highest positions: one of three top administrators over 120 regional rulers—and even above them, he stands out.

Why? Because “an excellent spirit was in him.” Daniel’s character, wisdom, and consistency shine in every season and under every king. God has not changed, and Daniel has not changed, even though the political landscape has.

The king plans to put Daniel over the entire realm. That is when opposition rises.

Jealousy, Corruption, and a Plot

“So the governors and satraps sought to find some charge against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find no charge or fault, because he was faithful; nor was there any error or fault found in him.” (Daniel 6:4 NKJV)

Daniel’s integrity becomes a problem for those who want power through corruption. They dig into his life and work, looking for a mistake, a scandal, some failure they can exploit. But they find nothing. He is not perfect in an absolute sense, but in his public life he is trustworthy. He does his job well and walks uprightly.

“Then these men said, ‘We shall not find any charge against this Daniel unless we find it against him concerning the law of his God.’” (Daniel 6:5 NKJV)

They realize there is only one way to trap him: make loyalty to God illegal. They are confident that if Daniel must choose between obedience to God and obedience to a king, he will choose God—every time.

A Law That Cannot Be Changed

“So these governors and satraps thronged before the king, and said thus to him: ‘King Darius, live forever! All the governors of the kingdom... have consulted together to establish a royal statute and

to make a firm decree, that whoever petitions any god or man for thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions.” (Daniel 6:6–7 NKJV)

They play on Darius’ pride. “For thirty days, King, let everyone pray only to you. Let all petitions, all requests, all appeals, go through you alone. It will show how great you are.” Flattery does what it usually does—it blinds.

“Now, O king, establish the decree and sign the writing, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter.’ Therefore King Darius signed the written decree.” (Daniel 6:8–9 NKJV)

Unlike Nebuchadnezzar’s absolute rule, Persian kings are bound by the laws they sign. Once written and sealed, a decree cannot be revoked—even by the king.

Daniel’s Response: Prayer as Usual

“Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.” (Daniel 6:10 NKJV)

This is one of the most beautiful and challenging verses in Daniel.

- Daniel **knows** the decree has been signed.
- He knows the penalty: the lions’ den.
- He does not panic, negotiate, or hide.
- He simply does what he has always done—he prays.

His windows are open toward Jerusalem. This is not showmanship; it is obedience rooted in Scripture. When Solomon dedicated the temple, he prayed that if Israel ever turned away and was taken captive, then:

“If they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their captivity... and pray toward their land which You gave to their fathers, the city which You have chosen and toward the temple which I have built for Your name; then hear from heaven Your dwelling place...” (paraphrasing 2 Chronicles 6:38–39 NKJV)

God responded to Solomon’s prayer by promising:

“...if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven...” (Second Chronicles 7:14 NKJV)

Daniel takes these promises seriously. Even in exile, he turns toward Jerusalem and prays three times a day. This was his pattern for decades. The decree does not change his habits. His loyalty to God is not negotiable.

“Then these men assembled and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God.”
(Daniel 6:11 NKJV)

They knew exactly where to find him.

The Trap Springs Shut

The conspirators rush to the king and remind him of his unchangeable law (Daniel 6:12–13). Then they accuse Daniel:

“That Daniel, who is one of the captives from Judah, does not show due regard for you, O king, or for the decree that you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day.” (Daniel 6:13 NKJV)

Notice their contempt: “That Daniel... one of the captives.” They diminish his identity as a servant of the living God and frame his faithfulness as disrespect.

“And the king, when he heard these words, was greatly displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him; and he labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him.” (Daniel 6:14 NKJV)

Darius realizes he has been manipulated. He respects Daniel and wants to save him, but he is trapped by his own law.

The accusers press their advantage:

“Know, O king, that it is the law of the Medes and Persians that no decree or statute which the king establishes may be changed.” (Daniel 6:15 NKJV)

His hands are tied—or so it seems.

Into the Lions’ Den

“So the king gave the command, and they brought Daniel and cast him into the den of lions. But the king spoke, saying to Daniel, ‘Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you.’”
(Daniel 6:16 NKJV)

Darius must carry out the sentence, yet he speaks words of hope. He has seen enough of Daniel’s life to know that Daniel’s God is real.

A stone is laid over the mouth of the den, and it is sealed with the king’s seal and that of his nobles, so that the verdict cannot be altered (Daniel 6:17).

That night, the king fasts. No entertainment. No sleep (Daniel 6:18). The most powerful man in the empire is restless, while the servant of God sleeps in a lions’ den.

A Living God in a Deadly Place

“Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions. And when he came to the den, he cried out with a lamenting voice to Daniel.

The king spoke, saying to Daniel, ‘Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?’” (Daniel 6:19–20 NKJV)

The question reveals both hope and fear. He believes it might be possible, but he is not certain.

Then a voice responds from the darkness:

“Then Daniel said to the king, ‘O king, live forever!

My God sent His angel and shut the lions’ mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you.’” (Daniel 6:21–22)

God sends His angel to protect Daniel. The lions are still lions—but they cannot touch him. Daniel is not delivered from the lions’ den; he is delivered **in** it.

“So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no injury whatever was found on him, because he believed in his God.” (Daniel 6:23 NKJV)

The king is overjoyed. Daniel’s faith is vindicated. God’s power is displayed. “Because he believed in his God”—trust that led to obedience, even when obedience was costly.

Justice and a New Decree

“And the king gave the command, and they brought those men who had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions—they, their children, and their wives; and the lions overpowered them, and broke all their bones in pieces before they ever came to the bottom of the den.”
(Daniel 6:24 NKJV)

This is hard to read. The entire families of the conspirators are thrown in. This reflects the harsh justice of ancient empires, not the mercy and justice we see fully revealed in Jesus Christ. Scripture records what happened; it does not endorse every aspect of Persian law.

But it does make one thing clear: the lions were real. They were not tame or weak. The miracle was real. God truly preserved Daniel.

Then Darius issues a proclamation:

“I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom men must tremble and fear before the God of Daniel.

For He is the living God,

And steadfast forever;

His kingdom is the one which shall not be destroyed,

And His dominion shall endure to the end.

He delivers and rescues,

And He works signs and wonders

In heaven and on earth,
Who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.” (Daniel 6:26–27 NKJV)

A pagan king confesses that Daniel’s God is **living**, unchanging, sovereign, and able to deliver.
Daniel’s faithfulness under pressure has become a platform for the glory of God.

“So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.” (Daniel 6:28)

Empires rise and fall. Kings come and go. Daniel remains faithful, and God remains in control.

Practical Application for Believers

1. Integrity in a crooked world.

Daniel’s enemies had to admit that they could find no fault in him regarding his work. He was faithful, diligent, and trustworthy. The only way to attack him was through his devotion to God.

Challenge:

If someone examined your work, your speech, your private life, what would they find? Ask the Lord to shape you into a person whose conduct adorns the gospel.

2. Spiritual habits before the crisis.

Daniel did not begin praying when the decree was signed. He continued the pattern he had already established: three times a day, praying and giving thanks.

Challenge:

Do not wait for a crisis to build a prayer life. Establish habits of seeking God now—daily, consistently. When testing comes, you will not be starting from scratch.

3. Obedience when it costs.

Daniel knew the law and its penalty, yet he refused to compromise his devotion to God. He did not hide. He did not adjust, “just for thirty days.”

Challenge:

Are you willing to obey God when obedience may cost you reputation, opportunity, or even safety? Ask the Holy Spirit for courage to remain faithful in the small things and the big things.

4. Trusting God with outcomes.

Daniel believed God could protect him, but he did not dictate how God must do it. His part was obedience; the outcome belonged to God. Sometimes God shuts the lions’ mouths. Sometimes faithful people suffer and die. In all cases, God remains just and will set all things right in His time.

Challenge:

Entrust your life, your reputation, and your future to God. Seek to be faithful, not famous; obedient, not comfortable.

5. **A life that points others to God.**

Darius was moved to honor the God of Daniel because Daniel honored God under pressure. Our faithfulness in trials can become a testimony that points others to the living God.

Challenge:

Ask God to use your trials and testings as a platform to show others who He is. Pray that your response to hardship will make people ask about your hope.

Invitation to Non-Believers: Your Lion's Den and Your Deliverer

Daniel's story is not just about ancient Persia and hungry lions. It points us to a greater reality.

Every one of us faces a coming "lion's den"—the reality of death and the judgment of God. Like Daniel's enemies, we have all sinned. We have not honored God as we should. Measured by His holiness, we all fall short.

The good news is that God has already acted to rescue us.

He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into this world. Jesus lived a sinless life, fully obedient to the Father. Then, in love, He went to the cross and **shed His blood** for our sins. On that cross He bore the judgment we deserve. He died, was buried, and on the third day **rose again**. His resurrection declares that He is **God, Savior, and Lord**.

Daniel was saved from the lions because God sent His angel. You can be saved from judgment because God sent His Son.

God does not force Himself on you. He calls you to respond—to turn from sin and trust in Jesus. This is not about joining a religious club or trying to be "good enough." It is about admitting your need, trusting the One who died and rose again, and surrendering your life to Him.

If your heart is stirred, you can respond to God with a sincere prayer like this:

"Lord Jesus, I know that I have sinned against You.

I believe that You died on the cross and shed Your blood for my sins.

I believe that You rose again from the dead and that You are God, Savior, and Lord.

I turn from my sin and my self-rule, and I surrender my life to You.

Forgive me, cleanse me, and make me new.

Help me to follow You from this day forward. Amen."

The words themselves are not magic. What matters is your heart turning to Jesus in repentance and faith. If you truly call on Him, He will hear you.

Closing Prayer

Father,

We thank You for the example of Daniel, a man who remained faithful in a changing world, who prayed when it was dangerous, and who trusted You when obedience could have cost him his life.

We praise You that You are the living God, that Your kingdom will never be destroyed, and that Your dominion endures. We thank You above all for Your Son, Jesus Christ, who shed His blood on the cross for our sins and rose from the dead, declaring that He is God, Savior, and Lord.

For those who know You, strengthen our resolve to live with integrity, to pray faithfully, and to obey You even when it is costly. Teach us to trust You with the outcomes and to let our lives point others to You.

For those who do not yet know You, draw them by Your Spirit. Let them see their need and the greatness of Your love in Christ. May they turn to Jesus and find forgiveness, hope, and new life.

We commit ourselves afresh to You. Use us for Your glory, and keep us faithful until we see our Lord face to face.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.