

Daniel 6

Teaching Notes

Chapter 6

Verses 1-3: God's Favor

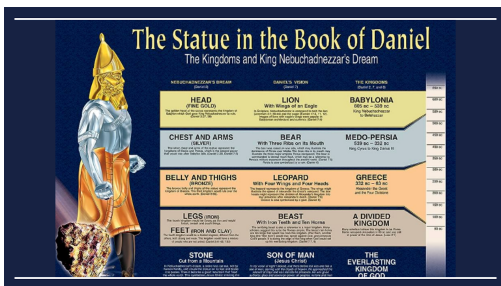
(Daniel 6:1 *It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty satraps, to be over the whole kingdom;*

Daniel 6:2 *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.*

Daniel 6:3 *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.)*

Prophetic Context:

(Graphic 1)



In chapter 2, Nebuchadnezzar had a prophetic dream, given by God that detailed the kingdoms of earth until Christ's 1,000 year kingdom. Babylon was the head of the statue. The kingdom of Babylon spanned from 605BC-539BC. In Chapter 5, revealed is the fall of Babylon to the Medo-Persians. According to the prophecy, Medo-Persia is the chest and arms of the statue.

So chapter 6 verse 1, King Darius is now the ruler of the 2nd greatest empire known to earth.

The Contextual Focus:

In light of this transition, from one earthly kingdom to the next, the Holy Spirit distinctly highlights God's favor upon one man, Daniel.

In this new empire, there are 120 satraps. A satrap was a provincial governor/local ruler. And these local governors were responsible to report to 3 governors. Daniel was 1 of those 3. Look at **God's favor**.

What set Daniel apart?

It's in that phrase: **EXCELLENT SPIRIT**.

- The first time this phrase, [*yatîr rûah*] appears is in chapter 5, as the queen tells Belshazzar of a man named Daniel who can interpret the handwriting on the wall.
- And now, Daniel is recognized in a different empire, a different race, tongue, and culture, as one with an excellent spirit.
 - On a side note, righteousness and wickedness supersedes all races, tongues, and cultures. There is no such thing as relative truth, only absolute truth. And nestled in this passage is the fact that Daniel's godly, righteous character was irresistible.

What is an excellent spirit?

- Let's read the following verses to understand this phrase.
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Verses 4-9: Blameless

(Daniel 6:4 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 6:5 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 6:6 So these governors and satraps thronged before the king, and said thus to him: "King Darius, live forever!"

Daniel 6:7 All the governors of the kingdom, the administrators and satraps, the counselors and advisors, 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. [They got to him through his ego]

Daniel 6:8 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."

Daniel 6:9 Therefore King Darius signed the written decree.)

Excellent Spirit:

To define excellent spirit in the context, we look to verse 4:

- The Hebrew word for error [*šālû - shalu*] is used as negligent in Ezra 4:22.
- The Hebrew word for fault [*šəḥat - shehaf*] is used as corrupt in Daniel 2:9.

I'd like to read verse 4 again in the CSB to capture the nuances of the word:
 CSB, (Daniel 6:4 *The administrators and satraps, therefore, kept trying to find a charge against Daniel regarding the kingdom. But they could find no charge or corruption, for he was trustworthy, and no negligence or corruption was found in him.*)

(Graphic 2)



(2 Corinthians 5:9 *Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.*)

- You and I are called to be like Daniel, men and women with an excellent spirit, men and women well-pleasing to the Lord.

As believers, “an excellent spirit” should define each one of us; and it should be something we are developing in.

Before our conversion, we were slaves to sin, incapable of pleasing God. Because of this reality, it only enslaved us into more sin; and only resulted in greater spiritual, mental, and physical ruin. **But now** that we are children of God, our Father calls us and empowers us to be holy. 2 Peter 1:3–7,

CSB, (2 Peter 1:3 *His divine power has given us everything required for life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.*

2 Peter 1:4 *By these he has given us very great and precious promises, so that through them you may share in the divine nature, escaping the corruption that is in the world because of evil desire.*

2 Peter 1:5 **For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with** goodness, goodness with knowledge,

2 Peter 1:6 *knowledge with self-control, self-control with endurance, endurance with godliness,*

2 Peter 1:7 *godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.*)

I want to stress this point:

God gave us His power that enables us to overcome all and any corrupting temptations and lusts (repeat).

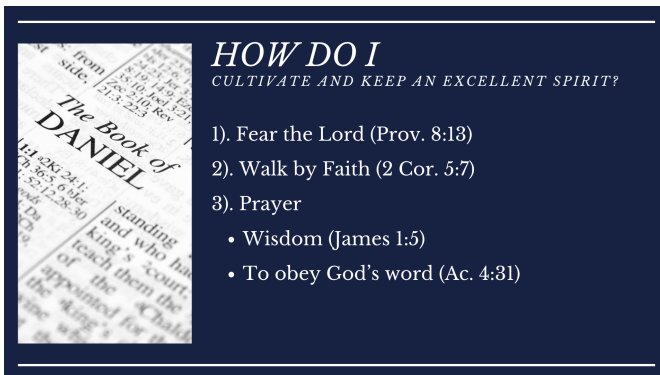
Some of us might have a really hard time believing this. Are you the person that thinks, “I don’t think I could ever be a person with an excellent spirit. I’ve sinned before conversion; and I’ve sinned after conversion. I don’t have a blameless reputation like other Christians. I consider myself a failure.

- You don’t need to raise your hands, but how many of you have thought these thoughts before, maybe and especially after you stumble into disobedience?

Here, Daniel’s life reveals: that **it is possible, by the power of God**, to be blameless, faithful, trustworthy, and to possess integrity.

It is possible only by His power.

The question then arises, (Graphic 3)



“How do I cultivate and keep an excellent spirit like Daniel?”

(1). Fear the Lord

- (**Proverbs 8:13** *The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverse mouth I hate.*)
 - Choosing to hate all things unholy. Choosing to hate all forms of pride, especially personal pride.

(2). Walk by Faith

- (**2 Corinthians 5:7** *For we walk by faith, not by sight.*)
 - Walking by faith → Obedience to God’s word.
 - Choosing to obey God’s word in faith and letting God take care of the consequences.

(3). Prayer

- For Wisdom:

- (James 1:5 *If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.*)

- To Obey God's word:

- (Acts 4:31 *And when they had prayed [for boldness to preach], the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.*)
 - The Holy Spirit will always empower you when you pray to the Lord to help you obey His word.

The Point: God gives you His power and wisdom to be an effective witness for Him.

Jealousy (vv.4-9)

Clearly, there were a few or many officials who were jealous of Daniel's favor before the king.

- Based on verse 3, maybe word got around in the corridors of the palace that the king was brainstorming a new government, giving more power to Daniel.

Reasons for Jealousy:

- (1). Possibly, it was anti-semitism. They did not want to see a "Jew" elevated to a higher position.
- (2). Possibly, because Daniel was not corrupted like the others, they found it difficult to do things, like passing laws. No doubt, Daniel was righteous and projected righteousness in the Medo-Persian government. So likely, Daniel became a threat to their wicked governmental agendas.
- Regardless of the reason, they set out to kill Daniel.

Contextual Application: The Workplace

May you and I be blameless just like Daniel in our careers and workplaces: that if we are fired or reprimanded, the only reason is because we chose to obey the word of God. In other words,

What are good reasons to get fired or reprimanded?

- You will not work on Sundays, the Lord's day, no matter the pressures of the boss or company.
- You will not lie or exaggerate personally or for the company.
- You will not participate in unholy activities.
- You will not compromise your convictions to fit into the company culture.

Daniel proved to have that "excellent spirit". Do you have that testimony of righteousness? That the only reason you will be fired or reprimanded is because you choose to obey God's word rather than man's word.

Verses 10-12: Daniel, Caught for Obedience

(Daniel 6:10 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 6:11 *Then these men assembled and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God.*

Daniel 6:12 *And they went before the king, and spoke concerning the king's decree: "Have you not signed a decree that every man who petitions any god or man within thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?" The king answered and said, "The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter.")*

The more you study the book of Daniel, the more you love Daniel - such an impressive believer.

- The first thing he does after hearing the decree is disobey the decree.

He is told, "You cannot pray." So he prays.

- Remember when the California government said, "you cannot sing" on July 1, 2020? So what did churches across America do on July 5, 2020 Sunday morning? **We sang** (likely more passionately than we ever did before)!

The Strategy:

How did these men know that this particular tactic would work?

It says in verse 5, they sought to charge Daniel with wrong according to the law of God. In other words, they didn't just make a decree against prayer because they saw Daniel pray previously.

- Here's the question: What Bible verse did they use to trap Daniel?

The answer is 1 Kings 8 (among others), where King Solomon commands future exiled Jews to pray facing Jerusalem, confessing and repenting, asking for God's mercy to bring them back to the land of Israel.

1 Kings 8 details the instructions given at the Temple Dedication by King Solomon. Quoting King Solomon,

- CSB: (1 Kings 8:46 *When they [the Jews] sin against you— for there is no one who does not sin— and you are angry with them and hand them over to the enemy, and their captors deport them to the enemy's country— whether distant or nearby— 1 Kings 8:47 and when they come to their senses in the land where they were deported and repent and petition you in their captors' land: "We have sinned and done wrong; we have been wicked," 1 Kings 8:48 and when they return to you with all their heart and all their soul in the land of their enemies who took them captive, and when they pray to you in the direction of their land that you gave their ancestors, the city you have chosen, and the temple I have built for your name, 1 Kings 8:49 may you hear in heaven, your dwelling place, their prayer and petition and uphold their cause.*)

Application: Strategies of Satan

In regards to spiritual warfare, understand that this is one of the tactics of Satan, especially by those used by Satan: to tempt you to disobey God's word. 1 Peter 5:9 says to **resist the devil and remain firm in your faith**. Daniel resisted the devil's temptation and remained firm in the faith.

Verse 12:

As you can see, not even the king was able to change the decree. That was how the Medo-Persian government, particularly the legislative branch, was set up. It was unalterable.

Verses 13-14: The King's Mistake

(Daniel 6:13 *So they answered and said before the king, "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 6:14 *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.)*

I think it's worth pointing out that although the king realized he made a huge mistake, he exhausted every means possible to help save Daniel. He truly cared about Daniel.

Verses 15-17: The Faith of the King

(Daniel 6:15 *Then these men approached the king, and said to the king, "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 6:16 *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 6:17 *Then a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signets of his lords, that the purpose concerning Daniel might not be changed.)*

It's not clear if King Darius was converted by this point or not, but he clearly believed in God and God's power. He believed that the Lord was able to rescue Daniel.

How did King Darius know that Daniel's God could deliver him?

- Did he know about the fiery furnace miracle with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego?
- Did he start to read the Old Testament scriptures?
- Did he begin to seek the Lord because of Daniel?

The scriptures do not suggest these things.

There is **only one, contextual reason** that suggests to us why King Darius believed in the Lord and the Lord's power. What is it? Daniel's excellent spirit.

Verses 18-23: Daniel's Deliverance

(Daniel 6:18 *Now the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; and no musicians were brought before him. Also his sleep went from him. [Imagine having a personal concert every evening? / On a different note, reflect on those times you made decisions that have detrimentally affected those around you.*

There's no doubt that someone who loves the person they unintentionally hurt will mentally suffer, especially causing sleeplessness.]

Daniel 6:19 *Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions.*

Daniel 6:20 *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?"*

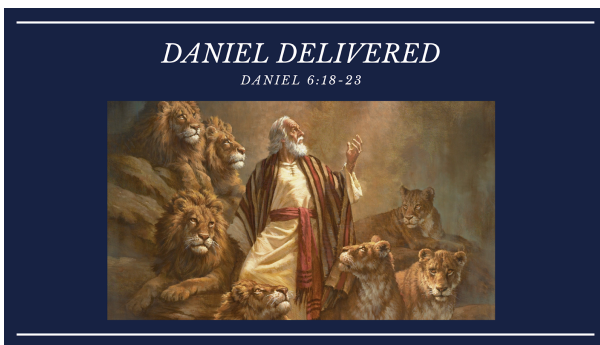
Daniel 6:21 *Then Daniel said to the king, "O king, live forever!*

Daniel 6:22 *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 6:23 *Now the king was exceedingly glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no injury whatever was found on him, because he believed in his God.)*

What an amazing miracle!

(Graphic 4)



I find it to be simply remarkable.

Insight #1:

God did not preserve His servant Daniel from difficulty, but brought him through it safely. Clearly, God had a good plan in all of this, which we'll fully see in just a moment. A good verse to insert here,

(Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.)

Insight #2:

Why was Daniel delivered?

From Daniel's lips in the moment:

- (1). Innocent before God (v22)
- (2). Innocent before man, King Darius (v22)

From Daniel when he wrote this portion:

- (3). He believed (csb - trusted) in the Lord (v23)

So... Which one is it? **Each of them and all of them.**

Verse 24: The Command

(Daniel 6:24 And the king gave the command, and they brought those men who had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions—them, 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.)

There are two things to point out here:

(1). The tamed nature of the lions was truly miraculous.

(2). The king realized who the bad guys were. And he was not going to let those men move forward for they were poisonous to his government.

- Whether you agree with King Darius' decision or not, there is valuable wisdom in dealing with poisonous people who possess ulterior, self-seeking motives. The only way you can fix the problem is by separation: in this case, he chose eradication.
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Verses 25-28: The Blessing

(Daniel 6:25 Then King Darius wrote: To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you.

Daniel 6:26 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.

Daniel 6:27 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 6:28 So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.)

This is one of the most impactful evangelistic efforts in one generation to ever exist. Imagine if this happened today?

Remember, there was just a decree that for 30 days everyone had to worship and pray to King Darius. When you recall that in verses 7-9, you can now see that this personal decree written by King Darius is not only an evangelistic decree, it's an apologetic decree.

As you look at Darius's letter, I want to point out that it is **good theology**. There's nothing in there where we can say, Darius is mostly accurate but partially inaccurate. No, he gives a clear, scriptural command to believe in the Lord, the God of Israel (Maybe before he distributed it for printing, he had Daniel look it over to make sure it was solid theology)

Application:

There's a question that all of us will think about from time to time. "How is the Lord going to spread His word, especially to unreached people groups?"

- First, John 1:9 says that every man receives God's light. So we know that God will ultimately reach the 8 billion people on planet earth today.
- Second, it's important to remember that God can use anyone at any time to spread the truth of God. He can use King Darius if He so wills.
- Third, it's lastly important to remember that today, God uses His church to spread the truth of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Look at the sequence of events, from end to beginning:

There is the greatest gospel tract in this generation written by King Darius. That came about because King Darius was brought to faith by Daniel. And what did God use to bring King Darius to the faith?

It all started because Daniel had an excellent spirit that attracted King Darius to Daniel and to the Lord. The king saw a righteous man before his eyes, unlike any other man in his kingdom. God used Daniel's faithfulness, trustworthiness, blamelessness, holiness - "his excellent spirit" - to attract King Darius to the Lord.

(2 Corinthians 2:14 Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place.

2 Corinthians 2:15 For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.

2 Corinthians 2:16 To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things?

2 Corinthians 2:17 For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.)

- Note the Apostle Paul said he was not sufficient to be an effective fragrance (an effective witness for God) in his own power, but only by the grace of God.

I close with this question:

Has the potency of your fragrance waned in recent days and weeks?

Today can be a new beginning, where you surrender your heart again to the Lord and His call to be holy so that others may see the Lord through your life.
