

Dominion
Daniel 6
The Lions Den

Introduction: Today is the last story in Daniel about how God demonstrated His glory, power and eternal Dominion to some of the Kings that ruled Babylon while the Jews were exiled. Daniel chapter one through four are about Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel chapter five is about Belshazzar and it concludes with his assassination and the end of the Chaldean rule of Babylon to the Medo-Persian Empire. This leads directly into the final story which is about Darius the Mede and it's found in Daniel chapter six.

Now, for time's sake, I'm not going to get into the debate over whether Daniel has accurately recorded Darius the Mede as the King who ruled Babylon under Cyrus the Great (King of the Medo-Persian Empire). In my notes on our website, I've included some information from some well-respected Biblical scholars. I believe the historical evidence is, **"that Ugbaru, governor of Gutium, conquered Babylon, and that Gubaru, alias Darius, was the man Cyrus appointed to rule over Babylon."**¹

Fourth, and finally, there is the problem of the identity of Darius the Mede. The identity of this man whom Daniel calls Darius, "son of Ahasuerus of Median descent" (9:1), is certainly the most controversial historical issue in the interpretation of the book. It is this man on whom the critic focuses special attention in his effort to discredit the historical authenticity and early date of the book of Daniel. The reason for this is simply that no man named "Darius the Mede" is known to history outside of what we read in the book of Daniel. According to the historical documents available to us, Babylon, whose last king was Belshazzar, co-regent with his father Nabonidus, fell to the Persians on October 11th or 12th, 539 b.c. The victorious Persian army was commanded by Ugbaru, governor of Gutium (who died within a month after the fall of Babylon). Cyrus, king of Persia, did not arrive in Babylon until Oct. 29th, at which time he appointed a man named Gubaru to rule the kingdom. Cyrus remained in power until his death in 530 b.c.²

Who is Darius the Mede?

6:1a. Critics have long questioned the historicity of Daniel. They challenge Daniel's reference to the accession of **Darius** (vv. 1, 28; 9:1; called Darius the Mede in 5:31) because there is no historical evidence outside the Bible for his reign. However, several explanations are possible: (1) Darius may have been another name for Cyrus. Daniel 6:28 may be translated, "So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius, even the reign of Cyrus the Persian." It was common for ancient rulers to use different names in various parts of their

¹ Pentecost, J. D. (1985). [Daniel](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 1347). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

² Storms, S. (2016). [Daniel](#) (Da 6:1-28). Edmond, OK: Sam Storms.

realms. Thus Darius may have been a localized name for Cyrus. (This is the view of D. J. Wiseman, "Some Historical Problems in the Book of Daniel," in *Notes on Some Problems in the Book of Daniel*, pp. 12–14.)

(2) A second explanation is that Darius was appointed by Cyrus to rule over Babylon, a comparatively small portion of the vast Medo-Persian Empire. According to Daniel 9:1 Darius "was *made* ruler over the Babylonian Kingdom." This suggests that he ruled by appointment, rather than by conquest and thus would have been subordinate to Cyrus, who appointed him. The historical situation leading to this appointment, based on the Nabonidus Chronicle, was that Babylon was conquered by Ugbaru, governor of Gutium, who entered the city of Babylon the night of Belshazzar's feast. After Ugbaru conquered Babylon on October 12, 539 B.C., Cyrus entered the conquered city on October 29 of that same year. Ugbaru was then appointed by Cyrus to rule on his behalf in Babylon. Eight days after Cyrus' arrival (Nov. 6) Ugbaru died. If Darius the Mede is another name for Ugbaru, as is entirely possible, the problem is solved. Since Darius was 62 years old when he took over Babylon (5:31), his death a few weeks later would not be unusual. According to this view (presented by William H. Shea, "Darius the Mede: An Update," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 20. Autumn 1982, pp. 229–47), Gubaru is another spelling for Ugbaru, with the name Gobryas being a Greek form of the same name and appearing in Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* 4. 6. 1–9; 7. 5. 7–34.

(3) A third explanation is that Ugbaru, governor of Gutium, conquered Babylon, and that Gubaru, alias Darius, was the man Cyrus appointed to rule over Babylon. (This is the view of John C. Whitcomb, Jr., *Darius the Mede*. Nutley, N.J.: Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Co., 1974.)

(4) Still others suggest Darius the Mede should be identified with Cambyses, Cyrus' son, who ruled Persia 530–522 B.C. (This view is held by Charles Boutflower, *In and Around the Book of Daniel*. Reprint. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publishing Co., 1977, pp. 142–55.) Any of these four views may be correct, but perhaps the second one is preferable.³

But, with that said; Daniel chapter six is best known for telling us the epic story of God shutting the mouths of lions! The prophet Daniel is literally put into a den with a bunch of starving lions and they never so much as touch him! It's a story that has been repeated by many, but often, the focus is on Daniel's faith, instead of the huge contrast the chapter makes about how people responded to Daniel's faith! So let me take you through this epic story and show you this stark contrast.

Proposition: Daniel 6 reveals two different responses to Daniel's sincere devotion to God and excellent work and service to others.

³ Pentecost, J. D. (1985). [Daniel](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 1347). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

The 1st response we see in Daniel 6 to Daniel's sincere devotion to God and excellent work and service to others is

(1) Envy and Hate. (Daniel 6:1-13)

A. 1 It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom satraps, to be throughout the whole kingdom; 2 and over them three presidents, of whom Daniel was one, to whom these satraps should give account, so that the king might suffer no loss. 3 Then this Daniel became distinguished above all the other presidents and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him. And the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom.

1. **“one hundred and twenty satraps** These government officials were responsible for collecting tribute and maintaining security throughout the kingdom”⁴
2. **“would not be suffering loss** Refers to both financial loss and loss incurred by security breaches—such as forfeiture of territory or personnel.”⁵
3. **“distinguishing himself** In addition to wisdom and the ability to interpret dreams, Daniel possessed great political skill. This set him apart from his colleagues (see 1:20; 5:12).”⁶
4. To understand the gravity of what just happened, we need to reflect back on the previous chapters for a minute. In Daniel 5, at the advice of the Queen, Belshazzar called up Daniel to come interpret the writing on the wall. The reason he called him up was because Daniel was in retirement and thus had not been invited to the party. Daniel ran the province of Babylon for Nebuchadnezzar, as well the very large ministry that served as spiritual advisors to the King. However, at some point after Nebuchadnezzar's death, Daniel retired. It's likely that one of Nebuchadnezzar sons-in-law that ruled the King dismissed him to put their own guy in charge. But, as promised, when Daniel interpreted the writing on the wall, Belshazzar made Daniel the third ruler of the Kingdom with he and his dad Nabonidus. Therefore, when Ugbaru came in and killed Belshazzar (Nabonidus had already fled) they (The Medes and Persians) would have immediately looked for somebody who was well aquatinted with the government structures and systems that would loyally serve him – and Daniel was the perfect guy to do that!

⁴ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (Da 6:1). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

⁵ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (Da 6:2). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

⁶ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (Da 6:3). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

Therefore, to no surprise Darius “knights” him and two others to essentially be in charge of the two most important parts of the government – collecting taxes and maintaining security!

5. We don’t know who the other two presidents were, but in hiring Daniel we know he got a man who had an “excellent spirit;” meaning he not only did things with integrity, but he also did things exceptionally well! Therefore, it didn’t take long for Daniel’s exceptional leadership to distinguish himself from the other two presidents, so much so that Darius decided to take advantage of that and create a new position for Daniel, one where Daniel led the leaders of the leaders – the presidents. Great leaders recognize great talent and then put people in the best place for that talent to impact the organization in the best way; and that’s what Darius did!
6. So, this is great leadership on Darius’s part to recognize the highly effective leadership of Daniel and restructure his government to maximize the impact on the Kingdom, however, insecure selfish people don’t appreciate great leadership nor do they care about its results! Therefore, this how some of them responded,

B. 4 Then the presidents and the satraps sought to find a ground for complaint against Daniel with regard to the kingdom, but they could find no ground for complaint or any fault, because he was faithful, and no error or fault was found in him. 5 Then these men said, "We shall not find any ground for complaint against this Daniel unless we find it in connection with the law of his God."

1. **“They reasoned this way: “We must bring the law of Darius into conflict with the law of Yahweh. Then Daniel’s devotion to his God will give us opportunity to charge him with civil disloyalty to Darius. We must make it impossible for Daniel to be simultaneously innocent before his God and obedient to the state.””⁷**
2. This is huge and cannot be missed. The integrity of Daniel in his work life is what made these men believe the integrity of his devotion to the Lord!
3. Corruption within government bureaucracies has been commonplace through world history. So, the fact that Daniel was above reproach in his leadership within the government, validated the integrity of his love and faithfulness to God as well. Even people with no integrity understand that you can’t compartmentalize integrity. If you can’t be trusted in one thing, it’s because you can’t be trusted – period. Integrity is integrity.

⁷ Storms, S. (2016). [Daniel](#) (Da 6:5). Edmond, OK: Sam Storms.

4. So, being they couldn't find any corruption in his service to the King or anybody else, they were confident he would be even more unwilling to compromise his outspoken devotion to his God (Yahweh) that he proclaimed had dominion over everything and everybody.

5. Therefore, they devised a plan to force Daniel's hand. Here's what they did,

C. 6 Then these presidents and satraps came by agreement to the king and said to him, "O King Darius, live forever! 7 All the presidents of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the counselors and the governors are agreed that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce an injunction, that whoever makes petition to any god or man for thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. 8 Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which cannot be revoked." 9 Therefore King Darius signed the document and injunction.

1. Essentially what just happened was that, in the early stage of Darius rule, these men went and rallied all the leaders together (minus Daniel) to encourage Darius to set up a 30 day period where he was recognized as the authority between everyone in Babylon and the gods. To ask anything of the gods, or even ask a favor from any man, you would have to go through Darius. It was a tool to bring the people, who were mostly Chaldean, into submission to this Mede King who answered to a Persian King (Cyrus) who was over the entire Medo-Persian empire.

2. The key to their plan was the fact that Darius was not a totally sovereign King, he answered to Cyrus and thus he couldn't violate the Medo-Persian laws. If they could get him to establish this as an official order with his signature, Darius would be obligated to enforce it no matter what. Ironically, the Medes and the Persians had a rule to enforce integrity, but these men were using it to do something that had no integrity.

3. So, as predicted, when Darius signed the decree Daniel refuses to follow it.

D. 10 When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously.

1. "Daniel knew that the document had been signed. He understood the implications of that law. He knew that the king had been manipulated into issuing an edict aimed solely at him. Yet Daniel did not alter his prayer habit."⁸

⁸ Smith, J. E. (1992). *The Major Prophets* (p. 569). Joplin, MO: College Press.

2. "Praying toward Jerusalem symbolized praying before Yahweh."⁹
3. The prayer tradition Daniel had was semi-private. He was in his own home, but because he prayed at the open window facing westward towards Jerusalem, it was at least viewable and hearable by others if he prayed out loud. So, whether they could only see Daniel or could also hear Daniel, they knew he did it, and were ready and waiting knowing he would continue doing it.
4. HOWEVER, it also needs to be noted that nowhere in the Bible is this type of prayer routine instructed, commanded, or even recommended. This is simply what Daniel was led to do out of his love for God. This was not an act of OBEDIENCE to God, it was greater than that; it was an act of DEVOTION!!
5. Our obedience honors God in the same way the obedience of children to their parents honors them; it says I value you enough that I'm going to do what you have instructed me to do, even if it's something I don't want to do. Consequently, disobedience is the reverse. Our disobedience to God says the same thing as a child's disobedience to their parents; it says I value you as my parent less than I value my own desires and wishes.
6. But, again, Daniel hasn't been commanded by God to pray three times a day facing Jerusalem. Daniel chose to do this because of his deep love for God. Devotion is much deeper than obedience. Devotion seeks ways to serve out of gratitude and admiration. Devotion comes from love and therefore can't help but demonstrate love. Daniel's drive to pray three times a day went far beyond an act of obedience; it came from the deep inside his heart of praise for Yahweh; and that's exactly why these men did what they did! They knew Daniel enough to know there was no way Daniel was going to stop praying to Yahweh, much less direct his prayers to Darius in hopes that Darius would then voice those prayers to Yahweh on his behalf. Ironically, this is exactly what people do when they pray to people they believe are "Saints," but that's a different sermon for a different day!
7. These men set the trap and now they spring it!

E. 11 Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and plea before his God. 12 Then they came near and said before the king, concerning the injunction, "O king! Did you not sign an injunction, that anyone who makes petition to any god or man within thirty days except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?" The king answered and said, "The thing stands fast, according to the law of the Medes and

⁹ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (Da 6:10). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

Persians, which cannot be revoked." 13 Then they answered and said before the king, "Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or the injunction you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day."

1. Notice the ethnic arrogance that is brought up again. The man we are speaking of is not a Chaldean, Mede or Persian. They are saying, we are the proud races among men with power and wealth, but, this Daniel, he is of a race that are nothing more than exiles. He is of the people who don't belong here or anywhere other than in service to us, but especially to you the King!
 - a. **from the exiles of Judah** Ethnic distinction was commonplace; this is to be understood as an insult (see Dan 2:25; 5:13). Their envy is partly due to his being a foreigner and an exile. No doubt his piety and righteousness also aggravated their jealousy.¹⁰
 - b. "They contemptuously referred to Daniel, not by his proper title as the presiding commissioner, but as "that Daniel, one of the exiles of Judah." Perhaps they were suggesting that such misconduct as they were about to."¹¹
2. This is also the same egocentric appeal that was made by King Nebuchadnezzar's counselors when they accused Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. They said,
 - a. **"12 There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These men, O king, pay no attention to you; they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up." (Daniel 3:12)**
 - b. Their refusal to bow down and worship the 90-foot-tall golden obelisk Nebuchadnezzar built was vocalized as a blatant disregard for Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar was infuriated at **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego** and ended up throwing them into the furnace that he first ordered to be heated to the hottest temperature they could make it.
 - c. So fast forward, these men are now appealing to that same motive within Darius to try and rid themselves of Daniel, whom they hated. They hated this man who constantly outperformed them. Even more so,

¹⁰ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (Da 6:13). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

¹¹ Smith, J. E. (1992). [The Major Prophets](#) (p. 569). Joplin, MO: College Press.

they hated this Jewish exile who continued to receive wealth, power and prestige in their mostly Chaldean culture. Even though they were now ruled by the Medo-Persian Empire they still very much considered Babylon to be Chaldean.

- d. Furthermore, I think they hated Daniel because they saw within Daniel a characteristic, they didn't see within themselves – sincere love and devotion. They saw Daniel sincerely serve Nebuchadnezzar, the people around him and Yahweh and now they are witnessing Daniel do the same thing with Darius. I believe at the core; it was this uncompromising love for God and others that confronted them more than anything. The beauty and glory of the fruit of Daniels life was the fruit of God Himself living through Daniel, and when it was set beside their selfish, jealous, deceitful hearts the contrast was uncomfortably unmistakable!
- e. You know what I mean? Last week we voted in a new person on our pastoral staff – Jason Gilbert. I'm not a short person. I'm somewhere between 6' 1" and 6' 2" (I'm at the age now that I'm shrinking!). So, I feel somewhat tall around most people, but when I stand beside somebody like Jason who is 6' 10", I feel like I'm the shortest person in the world! I believe this is the effect Daniel was having on these men. I'm not suggesting they were in any way loving or sincere (they couldn't be given what they were doing), but rather I'm suggesting that having sincere love and selfless excellent service right beside them in the form of Daniel exposed them for just how weak, and selfishly pathetic they were! These men were so arrogant and weak as human beings that they lacked the ability to even see their response to Daniel for the wickedness that it was!

The 2nd response we see in Daniel 6 to Daniel's sincere devotion to God and excellent work and service to others is

(2) Respect and Love. (6:14-28)

- A. **14 Then the king, when he heard these words, was much distressed and set his mind to deliver Daniel. And he labored till the sun went down to rescue him. 15 Then these men came by agreement to the king and said to the king, "Know, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no injunction or ordinance that the king establishes can be changed."**
 - 1. Darius' was in between a rock and a hard place! He wasn't intimidated by Daniel, he was going to promote him! Darius was inspired by Daniel's love and devotion. Darius saw within Daniel something praiseworthy. Darius was a direct benefactor of Daniels ability to sincerely love and serve others with excellence and as such he trusted Daniel as a true friend!

2. Therefore, to no surprise he spent the entire day trying to figure out some way to get Daniel out of the consequence – “he set his mind to deliver Daniel.” Seeing this, the men came back to the King and reminded him that he can’t go back on his decree. It was a reminder that Darius was a subordinate King to Cyrus just as they were subordinates to Darius. Darius knew what he had to do, and he may have even possibly already figured out this was a set up to get Daniel. Therefore,

B. 16 Then the king commanded, and Daniel was brought and cast into the den of lions. The king declared to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, deliver you!" 17 And a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet and with the signet of his lords, that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel.

1. Verse 16 is not a statement of sarcasm but of sincerity. As you will see in a second, Darius truly hoped Daniel’s God would rescue him. But nonetheless, because Darius was a man of his word and sincerely loyal to Cyrus, he had to fully enact the sentence.
2. Darius seals the entrance with his own signet. This did a couple things. They first would have poured wax along the edge of the stone that they put over the entrance and then Darius would have stamped the wax with his custom signet ring. This would declare this was being sealed by his order and therefore the stone cannot be moved without his order. It also formed a seal that if broken can’t be replicated without his ring, which is on his finger. Doing this guaranteed the integrity of the action.
3. However, Darius does something very interesting. He required all the “lords” involved in this to put their seal on it as well. This made it clear they were culpable. They were the reason this was happening and there was no getting out of it. The law was their idea, they reported Daniel, and instead of helping Darius find a solution they insisted on forcing the hand of Darius to kill Daniel. Darius therefore refused to let them deny their responsibility.
4. So the King has done his job, but it tore him to pieces. The Bible says,

C. 18 Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; no diversions were brought to him, and sleep fled from him.

1. “Darius spent a miserable night in his palace. He fasted and canceled the evening’s “entertainment.” Although the precise meaning of this word is not known, the best suggestion is that it refers to entertainment provided by concubines or dancing girls. Darius wanted none of that. His mind was so

tormented by the day's events that he could not sleep the entire night (6:18)."¹²

2. It says a ton about the testimony of Daniel and his genuine love and service to Darius, when Darius is GRIEVING this deeply over this!!! Kings issued death sentences all the time. But this one tore him apart! Why? Well, there is only one explanation. Darius truly admired and loved Daniel as a friend and brother. He was so grieved over this that he refused the sexual pleasures offered to him that night. Darius doesn't just see Daniel as a convenient tool in his government, he truly looks up to, admires and trusts Daniel as a sincere friend – something a King would have very few of.
 3. To no surprise, as soon as the sun came up, Darius ran to the lions' den. Daniel writes,
- D. **19 Then, at break of day, the king arose and went in haste to the den of lions. 20As he came near to the den where Daniel was, he cried out in a tone of anguish. The king declared to Daniel, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?"**
1. "Perhaps we should see the king's hasty return early the next morning in the perspective of the ancient Babylonian custom that the victim would be pardoned if he were tortured and had not died by the following day" (Lacocque, 118)."¹³
 2. To Darius's surprise, this is what happens next
- E. **21 Then Daniel said to the king, "O king, live forever! 22 My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm."**
1. Verse 22 has very important implications to the Gospel, so we need to take a minute and flesh out what Daniel just said.
 2. Daniel didn't claim to be blameless by his works, but rather, in the court of God, he was declared "righteous;" that is, he was not deserving of punishment (what Darius had done to him), but rather salvation.
 3. But does that mean if we are faithful enough to God, He will keep us from all harm? Even bigger, do I have to be as faithful to God as Daniel in order to be

¹² Smith, J. E. (1992). *The Major Prophets* (p. 570). Joplin, MO: College Press.

¹³ Storms, S. (2016). *Daniel* (Da 6:19–20). Edmond, OK: Sam Storms.

saved from the curse of sin and receive eternal life? Doesn't the New Testament teach the exact opposite? Doesn't the Bible say we all fall short of the glory of God and that nobody meets God's expectations? Doesn't the Bible teach that nobody is found blameless before God? Well, yes it does. Nobody loves the way God demands. Everybody, including Daniel, has a sinful heart that naturally does selfish sinful things all the time. So how then was Daniel declared blameless?

4. When we sincerely submit ourselves to know and follow God, as in, it's not a religious statement or just an action to try and appease God, but it truly becomes the new posture of our heart because we have repented from not living our lives to know and follow Him, and as such, have turned our heart and lives around to now seek to know and follow Him; the Bible says that act of faith, as weak and failing as it may be at times, is still accounted to us as righteousness! For instance,
5. **"And he [(Abraham)] believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness." (Genesis 15:6)**
6. Now if you know the story of Abraham, this was the starting point of his faith, not the pinnacle! The very next thing Abraham did, was ask God for an assurance of what God just told Abraham He was going to do! Then, in the very next chapter, after God gave Abraham a supernatural sign of his covenant with him, Abraham and his wife both figured they needed to come up with a plan for God, because they believed God's plan wasn't going to work. God had promised Abraham offspring, but he and his wife were both very old and his wife Sarah (still name Sarai at that time) had been barren her entire life. God had made it clear they were going to have a child together. But, because they didn't believe God could do it, they decided Abraham should sleep with Hagar, Sarah's servant, and let Hagar have a child for them and as such for God! The results of this deed bore a son named Ishmael, and the rest is unfortunately terrible history and a perfect example of the fruit of unfaithfulness!
7. My point in telling you that, is because God counted Abraham's very weak faith as worthy! He responded to it by declaring Abraham righteous, that is He was worthy of belonging to God! It was at that point that Abraham truly began his journey with God. His faith was still very weak but, because his heart was now given to God, He kept following Him. Even when he failed, he still got up and kept following God, and as a result, his faith continued to grow until one day we see Abraham's faith at a level that trusted God with the life of his only son by Sarah – Isaac. It's what led Paul to write this in Romans 4,
8. **20 No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, 21 fully convinced**

that God was able to do what he had promised. 22 That is why his faith was "counted to him as righteousness." 23 But the words "it was counted to him" were not written for his sake alone, 24 but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, 25 who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification. (Romans 4:20-25)

9. Therefore, God, whether it be with Daniel, Abraham or you and me, responds to our sincere faith in Him the same way,

10. **"8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast."** (Ephesians 2:8-9)

11. In this case, God decided to demonstrate this truth of his grace by how He miraculously saved Daniel from the mouth of the lions! God chose to respond with GRACE to Daniels faith, which was likely far more mature than mine, but still very much short of God's expectations; but he nonetheless counted it as worthy and as such God is the one who get's praised by Darius!! Watch what happens. It starts with Darius issuing judgement on all those who manipulated him into almost successfully killing his most trusted leader.

F. **23 Then the king was exceedingly glad, and commanded that Daniel be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no kind of harm was found on him, because he had trusted in his God. 24 And the king commanded, and those men who had maliciously accused Daniel were brought and cast into the den of lions--they, their children, and their wives. And before they reached the bottom of the den, the lions overpowered them and broke all their bones in pieces.**

Note: "Darius then vented his anger on the nobles who had accused Daniel. ... These nobles could not deny their involvement in the plot since their seals appeared on the rock. The conspiracy boomeranged on them. True to Persian custom, both the nobles and their families were thrown to the lions. Before these victims had reached the bottom of the den, the lions overpowered and crushed them. The ravenous appetites of the lions underscored the miracle of Daniel's deliverance (6:24)."¹⁴

G. **25 Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: "Peace be multiplied to you. 26 I make a decree (A formal statement that would necessarily be read aloud in public), that in all my royal dominion people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for he is the living God (in contrast to the gods they had never witnessed do**

¹⁴ Smith, J. E. (1992). *The Major Prophets* (p. 571). Joplin, MO: College Press.

a thing nor demonstrate any concern for them at all!), enduring forever; his kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion shall be to the end. 27 He delivers and rescues; he works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, he who has saved Daniel from the power of the lions." 28 So this Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

1. Did Darius just get saved? Was this Darius's Genesis 15:6 moment? Most commentators don't believe so, however, I'm not sure I agree.
2. The basic call to faith in the Old Testament was that a person sincerely believes **"that there is none besides me; I am the Lord, and there is no other." (Isaiah 45:6)**. In addition, a person had to act on that belief with a life committed to love and serve God. **"4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. 5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."** (Deuteronomy 6:4-5)
3. Most scholars believe Nebuchadnezzar truly repented and believed in God. To me, Darius's confession in Daniel 6 is as strong as Nebuchadnezzar's in Daniel 4. Darius confessed that Yahweh is "THE living God" which goes beyond simply implying that Yahweh is the god of gods. By saying Yahweh is THE God who is living, he is consequently saying the others do not!
4. Darius's proclamation appears to me to be as heart felt and as sincere of a statement of faith in God as one could have! He was sadly mistaken in thinking he could order people to have the same heart felt response that he had, but what can't be missed is the sincere passionate belief in God that led him to issue this proclamation! Prior to Darius tossing Daniel in the Lion's den, he was already acknowledging God as the Living God, but afterwards it moved from what some would say was nothing more than an honest acknowledgement of Daniel's faith, to what is clearly and very matter of fact, a statement of Darius's personal faith in God as THE Living God worthy of all praise, honor and obedience!

So, the obvious first challenge in this passage is this,

Challenge 1 - Have you come to the place of acknowledging Jesus as God and as such surrendered your life to Him?

We actually have a greater testimony of God's glory than Darius witnessed in Daniel. We have the resurrection of Christ. God didn't keep Jesus from dying – He died to pay the penalty of our sin, to die eternal death for us! So then, the Father raised Christ from the grave not just for Himself but for us as well! No man has power over eternal death, but GOD does and if you will repent, believe and follow His eternal son Jesus, He will save you! One of the most well-known verses in all the Bible is John 3:16, Jesus said,

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

So, that's the obvious and most important challenge from this passage, especially to anybody who has yet to respond in faith to Christ! However, to those that have, let me ask you this question,

Challenge 2 – What conclusions are people making about God as they observe your relationship with Christ?

Everything Darius learned about God he learned from what Daniel had told him and how Daniel lived his life!!! Daniel lived his life in a way that demonstrated God was enough! Daniel lived his life in a way that said obeying God was worth it. Think about this,

- (1)** When people see peace, joy and confident humility in your life, some will hate you and try to discredit you for essentially having something they don't, while others will conclude God must be powerful enough to overshadow the trials and stress in your life and want to know more about the God you know!
- (2)** When people see your commitment to obey God, some will be offended and assume you think you are better than they are; however others will conclude God must truly be glorious for you to choose obeying Him over serving your flesh. In the end the people who respond like that will want to know more about the God you know!

Finally,

- (3)** When people see you extend grace and forgiveness to others, some will think you are weak and pathetic and seeking acceptance and approval; but others will conclude that God must have been incredibly gracious to you for you to be that way to others; and if He was that way to you then He might just be that way to them – which we know He will!

So as one who claims to follow Jesus, be honest about the conclusions people are making about Jesus as they watch you!