

When Government Attempts to Take The Place of God

Dan. 6:1-3 Daniel in the government of Darius.

“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 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 distinguished himself: Daniel was one of three leaders directly under Darius, and he shined above the other two leaders because he had **an excellent spirit**. Daniel had a good attitude in his work and life, and this made him the object of attack.

Colossians 3:23-24 “Whatever you do, work at it from the soul, as for the Lord and not for people. ²⁴ For you know that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as a reward. It is to the Lord Messiah you are giving service.” TLV

Matthew 5:14-16 ¹⁴ “You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.” NLT

Dan. 6: 4-9 The plot against Daniel is conceived and initiated.

“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. 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.” So, these governors and satraps came to the king, and said to him: “King Darius, live forever! 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. 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.”

They could find no charge or fault, because he was faithful: Daniel was such a **faithful** man that those who looked for a flaw in his actions or his character came up empty.

Today a candidate or nominee for political office is under great scrutiny, but imagine looking as hard as you can at a public servant in office for 50 years and finding ***nothing wrong***:

- No fraudulent expense accounts.
- No intern scandals.
- No questionable business deals.
- No gifts from lobbyists. No accusations from his staff.
- There were no skeletons in Daniel's closet. His enemies examined his life and found nothing to attack – so they had to ***make up*** something.

“Nor was there any error or fault found in him”:

- This wasn't to imply that Daniel was sinless, but that he was a man of great integrity.
- Daniel was especially blameless in the conduct of his professional life.

“We shall not find any charge against this Daniel unless we find it against him concerning the law of his God”:

- These men knew Daniel well. They knew he could not be trapped into evil, but they also knew that he would be faithful to **his God** in all circumstances.

Every Christian should consider if others could say the same about them.

The world may not know the details of your doctrine or how passionately you worship God, but they can tell a bad temper, selfishness, conceitedness, or dishonesty when they see it.

The False charges against a true follower:

“Whoever petitions any god or man for thirty days, except you, O king”:

- If the enemies of Daniel knew him, they also knew Darius.
- They knew they could appeal to Darius' pride and his desire for a kingdom in subjection to him.

“The suggested mode of compelling every subject in the former Babylonian domain to acknowledge the authority of Persia seemed a statesmanlike measure that would contribute to the unification of the Middle and Near East. The time limit of one month seemed reasonable.”

What pretense could they urge for such an ordinance?

- To **flatter** the ambition of the king, they pretend to make him a god for thirty days; so that the whole empire should make prayer and supplication to him and pay him Divine honors!
- This was the bait; but their real object was to destroy Daniel.

“All the governors of the kingdom, the administrators and satraps, the counselors and advisors, have consulted together”:

Daniel's enemies also knew that people could be persuaded to do things they wouldn't normally do if they thought ***everyone else*** approved of that thing.

Of course, they lied when they said **all the governors... have consulted together**. We know it was a lie because Daniel was one of the **governors** and he was not **consulted**.

“So that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians”:

It was an established principle in the Medo-Persian Empire that when a king formally signed and instituted a decree, it was so binding that not even the king himself could change it.

“Therefore, King Darius signed the written decree”:

Suppose the law of the land was proclaimed today:

No one can pray in public, at school, at work, or at Congress.

No one can pray for a month – on the threat of being arrested, fined, censored –

How Many Of You Would Continue to Pray?

There’s some confusion about our adherence to governmental laws and Kingdom of God commands:

Rom. 13:1-5 “Every person must obey the leaders of the land. There is no power given but from God, and all leaders are allowed by God. ² The person who does not obey the leaders of the land is working against what God has done. Anyone who does that will be punished. ³ Those who do right do not have to be afraid of the leaders. Those who do wrong are afraid of them. Do you want to be free from fear of them? Then do what is right. You will be respected instead. ⁴ Leaders are God’s servants to help you. If you do wrong, you should be afraid. They have the power to punish you. They work for God. They do what God wants done to those who do wrong. ⁵ You must obey the leaders of the land, not only to keep from God’s anger, but so your own heart will have peace.”

So how does that square with God’s Word found in Act 4:1-3; 17-20?

“While Peter and John were speaking to the people, they were confronted by the priests, the captain of the Temple guard, and some of the Sadducees. ² These leaders were very disturbed that Peter and John were teaching the people that through Jesus there is a resurrection of the dead. ³ They arrested them and, since it was already evening, put them in jail until morning.

But to keep them from spreading their propaganda any further, we must warn them not to speak to anyone in Jesus’ name again.” ¹⁸ So they called the apostles back in and commanded them never again to speak or teach in the name of Jesus.

¹⁹ But Peter and John replied, “Do you think God wants us to obey you rather than him?”

²⁰ We cannot stop talking about everything we have seen and heard.”

You are to obey the civil laws of the land of where you live unless those laws ask or demand you to violate or disobey the higher law of God.

We are commanded to **GO, Testify – Preach – Be Witnesses** to what the Lord has done for us and will do for others.

Dan. 6: 10-15 Daniel's faithfulness to God causes him to be condemned.

"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 on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days. Then these men assembled and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. 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." 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." 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. 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."

When Daniel knew that the writing was signed:

- Daniel was confronted with a test of loyalty.
- He was a loyal subject of his king, yet he knew that the King of Kings deserved higher loyalty. **Daniel refused to give to the government the measure of obedience that belonged to God alone.**
- Daniel knew that the safest thing he could do was radically obey God.
- It isn't hard to see why people are men-pleasers; it seems as if people have the power to hire or fire us, to break our hearts, to slander us, to make our lives miserable. **The power to obey God and stand for Him comes from a settled understanding that God is really in control.**
- "Unless you are prepared to be in the minority, and now and then to be called 'narrow,' 'fanatic,' and to be laughed at by men because you will not do what they do, but abstain and resist, then there is little chance of your ever making much of your Christian profession."

Prov 29:25 "The fear of man brings a snare, But whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe." NKJV

Mark 8:38 “If anyone is ashamed of Me and My message in these adulterous and sinful days, the Son of Man will be ashamed of that person when He returns in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.”

Matt 16:24-26 “Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If any of you wants to be My follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow Me. ²⁵ If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for My sake, you will save it. ²⁶ And what benefit do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul?

Daniel and our response to unbiblical commands:

- **Prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom:**
- Daniel didn’t let the decree change his actions one way or another.
- He didn’t do more praying or less; he simply continued his excellent prayer life.
- There was danger in both directions. It would have been compromise to do less or pride to do more.
- This was not the act of a person courting martyrdom but the continuation of a faithful ministry in prayer which had characterized his life.

Acts 4: 21-31

“The council then threatened them further, but they finally let them go because they didn’t know how to punish them without starting a riot. For everyone was praising God ²² for this miraculous sign—the healing of a man who had been lame for more than forty years. ²³ As soon as they were freed, Peter and John returned to the other believers and told them what the leading priests and elders had said. ²⁴ When they heard the report, all the believers lifted their voices together in prayer to God: “O Sovereign Lord, Creator of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them— ²⁵ you spoke long ago by the Holy Spirit through our ancestor David, your servant, saying, ‘Why were the nations so angry?

Why did they waste their time with futile plans? ²⁶ The kings of the earth prepared for battle; the rulers gathered against the LORD and against his Messiah.

²⁸ But everything they did was determined beforehand according to Your will.

²⁹ **And now, O Lord, hear their threats, and give us, your servants, great boldness in preaching your word. ³⁰ Stretch out your hand with healing power; may miraculous signs and wonders be done through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”**

³¹ **After this prayer, the meeting place shook, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Then they preached the word of God with boldness.**

Daniel knelt down on his knees,

- As Jesus did, (Luke 22:41), as Stephen (Acts 7:60), as Peter (Acts 9:40), as Paul and other leaders in the church (Acts 20:36), and as Luke (Acts 21:5).

- “Kneeling is a petitioning posture, and we must all come to God humbly. He prayed **three times that day**, Often! He **prayed and gave thanks** because great prayer is filled with thanksgiving. **His enemies Found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God:** They found Daniel just as they knew they would – deep in prayer.

They charged Daniel with not showing regard to the king:

- This was not true. Daniel intended no disrespect for the king, only a higher respect for God.

“The king, when he heard these words, was greatly displeased with himself”:

He realized he’d been manipulated by the other governors and leaders and knew he’d messed up.

Instead of blaming others, he knew that he was at fault.

“He labored till the going down of the sun”: This means that he worked to find a reason/a loophole to void the degree he’d made – to no avail!

- According to ancient Eastern customs, the execution was carried out on the evening of the day that the accusation was made and found valid.

Dan. 6:16-18

Daniel’s time in the lion’s 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.” 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. Now the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; and no musicians were brought in before him. Also, his sleep went from him.

“Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you:”

Darius had faith, and it was faith born out of Daniel’s trust in the Lord.

The idea was, “I tried my best to save you Daniel, but I failed. Now it is up to your God.”

The worldly king recognized Daniel testimony:

You serve continually: This made Daniel’s testimony.

Daniel’s testimony was made by continual service.

**“When our lives are centered in God, we can never afford to leave circumstances to the compulsion of the One in Whom we trust.
The occasional is always affected by the habitual.”**

Dan 6:19-23 Daniel is found alive after the night in the lion’s den.

“Daniel said to the king”: When Darius heard Daniel’s voice he knew that he had survived through the night. The lions would not or could not touch this servant of God.

“God sent His angel to shut the lions’ mouth”:

We don’t know if Daniel *saw* an angel or not, but he certainly knew that **God sent His angel** to rescue him.

- Hebrews 1:14 angels are “**ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation.**”

I have done no wrong before you: Daniel did break the king’s law, but he did not go *against* the king or against the king’s *best interests*.

Daniel is an example of obedient disobedience.

“Because he believed in his God”:

Daniel was preserved through faith. Though his cause was righteous and he was unjustly accused, those things alone did not protect him before the lions.

- Daniel needed a living, abiding faith in God, even in the most difficult circumstances.

The point is plain: when we stand firm in godly convictions and honor God **even when it costs something**, others will see the testimony and be won to Him.

Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian:

Daniel’s path: Plotted against - he Prayed - he Praised – he Persistently served – he was Persecuted – he was Protected – he was Preserved – he was Preferred – he Prospered.

“So Daniel prospered:” One of the greatest blessings to come from Daniel 6 is to see the story unfold and point to Jesus Christ. **Consider this:**

- A man without blame, faithful to God in all his ways, a man noted for prayer, was sent to his death because of the jealousy of those who wanted to prevent his exaltation.
- He was condemned to death by plotting of his enemies and the law of the land and thrown into a stone room meant to be his tomb.
- A stone was rolled over the opening. But in all its power and ferocity, death couldn’t touch him.
- On a morning the stone was rolled away, he came out victoriously; he glorified God, the pagans gave honor to God, and his enemies were judged.

This the story of both Daniel 6 and Jesus the Messiah.