

## Daniel 6-Knowing our limits



Living in the most civilised period in history, with advances in telecommunication, medicine, engineering, etc., it's easy to think that it's now possible for us to achieve anything we want. It's easy to leave God's sovereignty to one side, and naively believe that we're in control. Yet, as civilized we may be, we are still limited, and the results can be very disturbing when our limitations come crashing down around us.

Such is the case in Daniel 6 at the height of Persian power, where we read the disturbing account of an innocent man, who is diligent and faithful in his work, conspired against, and thrown to the lions to be torn limb from limb. All from a pen of a King who thought he was sovereign, and yet, in some ways, as much a victim of the conspiracy as Daniel.

This account closes the argument of who really is sovereign, and serves as an introduction to the dreams and visions in the second half of the book.

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### **The promotion (vv1-4)**

What does the King do, and what was his motivation? (vv1-2).

From your wider reading of the book of Daniel, who is Daniel, and why would the other officials complain against him?

Was this concern reasonable? (vv3-4, 13. Cf. 1:2-4, 6).

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### **Think it through**

How might non-believers be threatened (hopefully unintentionally) by Christians?

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## **The decree (vv5-9)**

On the surface, the administrators and satraps appeared concerned for their country. But what was their real intention? (v5).

What was their method in achieving this? (vv6-8).

What impressions do you have of King Darius?

Is he worthy of being the recipient of prayer? (v9).

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## **Think it through**

In what ways do you see reactions against an alleged 'Christian threat' today?

How do they compare against the events in Daniel's time?

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## **The snare (vv10-13)**

Consider how Darius' decree was different from Nebuchadnezzar's (cf. 3:4-6).  
Discuss: Could Daniel have kept this decree?

How did Daniel respond, and why? (v10).

How would you describe Daniel's devotion to God? (v10-11).

How did the administrators and satraps ensure that Daniel would be caught in their snare with no way out? (v12).

How do the administrators and satraps portray Daniel? (v13).

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## Think it through

How are Christians sometimes portrayed today?

How are attempts made today to ensnare Christians?

Have you ever felt ensnared yourself?

What actions did you take?

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## The hope for deliverance (vv14-18)

What was Darius' immediate response? (v14).

By being the recipient of prayers, Darius is making himself out to be sovereign. Just how sovereign is Darius really? (vv14, 17).

What was working against Daniel's deliverance? (vv15, 17).

What is Daniel's only hope for deliverance?

Who recognises this? (v16).

How would you describe Darius' mood?

Do you find this ironic? (v18).

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### Think it through

Has worldly power ever failed you?

How did you respond at such a time?

Where did you invest your hope?

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### The witness of deliverance (vv19-23)

Do Darius' actions seem out of place?

What can he 'realistically' expect to find? (v19).

How does Darius describe Daniel and God?

How does this compare to the decree that he signed (v20. Cf. v7).

What were the reasons for God sparing Daniel's life? (vv22-23).

How does this reflect on the administrators and satraps who put him there in the first place?

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### Think it through

Have you been in a situation with no solution, and yet it's been resolved at the very last minute?

How does this reinforce what you've been learning about God?

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What implication does this have for your obedience?

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### **The snare backfires (v24)**

Darius' actions against the administrators and satraps seem pretty drastic especially for their kids! What might Darius be thinking at this point? (v24).

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### **Think it through**

Have you seen plots against Christians, or even yourself, backfire?

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### **A new decree (vv25-27)**

Discuss: To what extent does Darius genuinely repent?

How do Darius' words compare with Nebuchadnezzar? (vv26-27).

Is Darius only concerned with what God can do? (vv26-27).

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### **Think it through**

How does Darius' response compare with community and world leaders today?

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### **Promotion (v28)**

Being conspired against, having worldly powers fail, and spending a night as lion bait would be a harrowing experience for anyone. Yet, what was the result of Daniel's trust in God (v23)? (v28).

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### Think it through

It would be nice to think we go through all our trials unscathed. But this isn't true. Sometimes, remaining faithful to God can be very costly. For Daniel, remaining faithful to God meant the prospect of losing his life.

Yet, other times, God does bring us through trials unscathed, and even better off, as Daniel experienced.

What does this tell us about God's plans for our lives?

How should we respond to life's interruptions, even opposition?

Where do we have a tendency to look for solutions to our problems?

What reasons can we see in the chapter to trust God rather than our ability to exercise control?

How can we ensure we put our hope in God's deliverance?