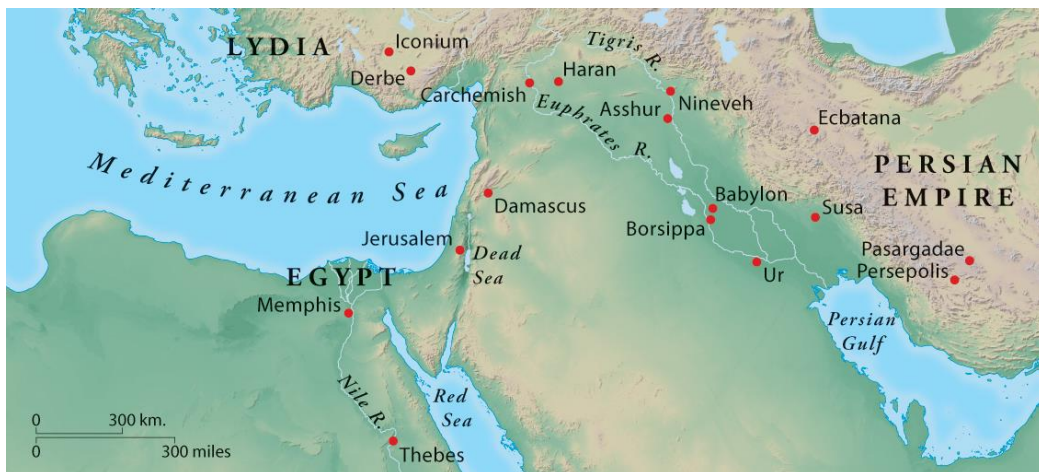


Daniel Chapter 6

The literary structure of Daniel 6 is fundamentally chiasmic, with the Passover-like deliverance at the center, as follows:

- A. Darius the Mede receives kingdom (5:31)
- B. Daniel exalted (6:1–3)
- C. Daniel attacked by “lions” (6:4–5)
- D. “Darius the king, live forever” (6:6)
- E. Decree proposed (6:7–8)
- F. Darius signs decree (6:9)
- G. Accusers of Daniel (v. 10–15)
 - a. Daniel disobeys decree (v. 10)
 - b. Accusers inquire of the king (v. 11–12a)
 - a’ King affirms decree (v. 12b)
 - c. Accusers accuse Daniel (v. 13)
 - d. King worries all day (v. 14)
 - c’ Accusers demand Daniel be judged (v. 15)
- H. Daniel commanded to be cast into lions’ den (v. 16a)
- I. Your God will deliver you (v. 16b)
- J. Daniel sealed into den (v. 17)
- K. King worries all night: PASSOVER (v. 18)**
- J’ King stands before the seal (v. 19–20a)
- I’ Did your God deliver you? (v. 20b)
- H’ Daniel commanded to be removed from den (v. 21–23)
- G’ Accusers of Daniel destroyed (v. 24)
- F’ Darius writes to all people (6:25)
- E’ Decree issued (6:26a)
- D’ God of Daniel is living God (6:26b–27a)
- C’ Daniel delivered from lions (6:27b)
- B’ Daniel prospers (6:18a)
- A’ Reign of Darius, that is, Cyrus (6:18b)¹

The Plot Against Daniel (6:1-9)



¹ James B. Jordan, *The Handwriting on the Wall: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Powder Springs, GA: American Vision, 2007), 314.

“The time-span covered by these six chapters is from 605 B.C., the year when Nebuchadnezzar became king of Babylon, to 539/538 B.C., the first year of the Persian empire. Incidents selected from three reigns depict the confrontation between polytheistic rulers and the one true God as represented by his servants at the foreign courts.”²

We note that this event was predicted by Jeremiah some years earlier.

*“Make the arrows bright! Gather the shields!
The Lord has raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes.
For His plan is against Babylon to destroy it,
Because it is the vengeance of the Lord,
The vengeance for His temple.” (Jeremiah 51:11, NKJV)*

*“Prepare against her the nations,
With the kings of the Medes,
Its governors and all its rulers,
All the land of his dominion.” (Jeremiah 51:28, NKJV)*

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

Darius.... Who was Darius the Mede?

“...“Darius the Mede” is in all probability to be identified with the Gobryas [Gubaru] of Herodotus’s account....

.... It was ... Gubaru whom Cyrus appointed vice-regent of the Chaldean domains on 29 October. The Nabonidus Chronicle and other cuneiform texts of that era indicate that he continued on as governor of Babylonia for at least fourteen years, even though Cyrus may have taken over the royal title at a solemn public coronation service two years later. Presumably urgent military necessity drew Cyrus away from his newly subdued territories to face an enemy menacing some other frontier. Until he could get back and assume the Babylonian crown with appropriate pomp and ceremony, it was expedient for him to leave control of Babylonia in the hands of a trusted lieutenant like Gubaru. “In his dealings with his Babylonian subjects, Cyrus was ‘king of Babylon, king of lands.’ ... But it was Gobryas [Gubaru] the satrap who represented the royal authority after the king’s departure.”

...the name “Darius” may have been a title of honor, somewhat as “Caesar” or “Augustus” became in the Roman Empire.

.... It was only natural that this honorific title be used of the official viceroy of the Medo-Persian Empire in this account, rather than his personal name. Darius the Mede “received” (Aram. *qabbēl*; NIV, “took over”) the royal authority from one who was empowered to invest him with it—presumably Cyrus himself. Daniel 9:1 states that he “was made ruler” (Heb. *homlak*) over the realm of the Chaldeans—a term never applied to one who seizes the sovereignty by force of arms but rather to one who is appointed to kingship by a higher authority. All this fits Gubaru perfectly, and it is only reasonable to conclude that he was the one referred to in Daniel 5:31 as “Darius the Mede.”

.... It would seem that after he had taken care of more pressing concerns elsewhere, Cyrus himself later returned to Babylon (perhaps a year or two afterward) and formally ascended the throne in an official coronation ceremony. It was in the third year of

² Joyce G. Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 23, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1978), 146–147.

Cyrus's reign (presumably as king of Babylon) that Daniel received the revelations in chapters 10–12. Yet it is also evident from the cuneiform records referred to above that Gubaru continued to serve as governor of Babylon even after Cyrus's decease. The tablets dating from 535 to 525 contained warnings that committing specified offenses would entail "the guilt of a sin against Gubaru, the Governor of Babylon and of the District beyond the river [i.e., the regions west of the Euphrates]"...³

Another well received option to this question on the name of Darius the Mede is that this is the throne name of Cyrus. Throne names were rather common in the near east, note, "Tiglath Pileser III (745–727 B.C.) ruled as king of Babylon from 729 as Pul; his son Shalmaneser V ruled in Babylon under the name Ululai. It was far from uncommon to adopt more than one name."⁴

"Cyrus is known to have been related to the Medes, to have been called 'king of the Medes' and to have been about sixty years old on becoming king of Babylon. The suggestion requires that 6:28 be translated, 'So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, that is, in the reign of Cyrus the Persian'."⁵

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.

"His intention in appointing overseers of his civil service is that *the king might suffer no loss*, that is, in territory due to uprisings, or in taxation due to graft. The danger was ever present ... and a senior person known to be impervious to corruption (verse 4) would be an obvious candidate for extra responsibility."⁶

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.

Daniel distinguished himself.... It is not said that Darius preferred Daniel for unknown reasons; it is said that **Daniel distinguished** himself. His administration and performance were superior to the others.

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.

Jealousy and greed were probably the driving forces behind this attempt to murder Daniel.

³ Gleason L. Archer Jr., "Daniel," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Daniel and the Minor Prophets*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelain, vol. 7 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986), 76–77.

⁴ Joyce G. Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 23, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1978).

⁵ Joyce G. Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 23, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1978), 30.

⁶ Joyce G. Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 23, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1978), 142.

he was faithful; nor was there any error or fault found in him. Daniel's behavior sets a standard for every Christian in the performance of their work. Others may do secondhand work, but believers must not.

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."

"This is high testimony in favor of Daniel's integrity and piety."⁷

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

thronged.... In the chaos of the crowd, it will not be noticed that Daniel is not there.

All the governors of the kingdom.... This was not the case, Daniel was not consulted.

a firm decree.... "...the decree simply made the king the sole representative of the deity for the period of thirty days. All prayers to god, or the gods, would need to be channeled through him."⁸ "...its primary force is to forbid supplication of any god and implicitly to give the king divine status."⁹

"Such evidence of allegiance on the part of his civil servants would be wholly welcome; if it implied that he was semi-divine this too would play its part in establishing him as king (cf. 3:7)...."¹⁰

Since a new kingdom was now being formed out of an old one, this seemed like a good idea to help form new bonds of loyalty.

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."

6:9 Therefore King Darius signed the written decree.

Darius was unaware that "some ulterior motive prompted this show of loyalty.... He therefore signed the document which made him god-king for thirty days...."¹¹

⁷ Edward J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1980), 133.

⁸ John H Walton, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary (Old Testament): Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel*, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 546.

⁹ John Joseph Collins and Adela Yarbro Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, ed. Frank Moore Cross, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), 267.

¹⁰ Joyce G. Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 23, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1978), 142.

¹¹ Joyce G. Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 23, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1978), 142.

according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter.

“If it pleases the king, let a royal decree go out from him, and let it be recorded in the laws of the Persians and the Medes, so that it will not be altered, that Vashti shall come no more before King Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal position to another who is better than she.” (Esther 1:19, NKJV)

Therefore King Darius signed the written decree. It had no doubt already been prepared by these men before they arrived with all the phrases and clauses needed to spring the trap on Daniel.

Daniel in the Lions’ Den (6:10-17)

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.

These habits devotion to the God of Daniel were well known to his enemies.

It is likely that these enemies of Daniel had spies within his household staff.

They had been watching him and took notice of his religious practices. Observing this, they crafted their decree to fit the behavior of Daniel. And note, they were convinced that Daniel would not change these behaviors, not even for 30 days.

prayed and gave thanks.... Daniel’s prayers were not gimi-gimi types of prayer. The giving of thanks played a significant part in his worship.

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;” (Philippians 4:6, NKJV)

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

They may have been secretly let in the house by spies in Daniel’s house that they might catch Daniel praying.

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.”

These men first question the king on the details of the degree; they seek to tie the kings’ hands before they spring the trap.

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.”

one of the captives from Judah.... Here is a man who has served faithfully in the highest offices of government for nearly 70 years, and their description of him is as

offensive as they can make it. “They describe Daniel as an exile, rather than as the appointed head over the presidents and satraps, in order that, by calling to mind the fact that he is a foreigner, they may insinuate that he is politically unfaithful to Darius. Furthermore, they first state that Daniel has been unfaithful to the king and then that he has broken the interdict. The matter is thus presented in as bad a light as possible, a common trick of corrupt politicians.”¹² They are not only determined to remove him from office, but they also want to murder him as well.

does not show due regard for you, O king, or for the decree that you have signed.... “Apparently the enemies of Daniel had at least one informer in his household to enable them to secure his arrest and conviction, because this private practice was conclusively proven in a public hearing before Darius....”¹³

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.

“...he consulted the lawyers, he tried to browbeat the conspirators.”¹⁴ But they would not compromise, Daniel must die. Perhaps this uncompromising attitude toward Daniel was the reason Darius was later so uncompromising toward them.

“For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.” (Matthew 7:2, NKJV)

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.”

The day has passed, the sun is setting. “The tyrants would not permit the king to play for time. The sentence had to be carried out that very day....”¹⁵

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.”

“Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you.” This was the prayer of Darius’ heart.

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.

a stone was brought.... It does not appear that the opening of the pit was usually closed. But today it must be, what if someone tried to save Daniel or perhaps feed the

¹² Edward J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1980), 135–136.

¹³ Rousas John Rushdoony, *Thy Kingdom Come: Studies in Daniel and Revelation* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1998), 43.

¹⁴ James A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1927), 275.

¹⁵ Joyce G. Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 23, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1978), 144.

lions so that they would show no interest in him? That will not do, so **a stone was brought**.

sealed it.... Around the edges of the stone wax or soft clay was packed, and the seal of the king and the signets of the accusers are pressed upon it. No one must disturb the work of the lions.



Gold Signet Ring

“The seal was not the effective way of closing the den but a way of checking whether it was opened during the night.”¹⁶ Presumably, Daniel had friends, and this was a way to keep them from acting on Daniel’s behalf—perhaps by feeding the lions.

Daniel Saved from the Lions (6:18-23)

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.

“No prayer of Daniel is recorded, but he is less concerned for himself and his safety than is the king, who spent a sleepless night and refused both food and *diversions....*”¹⁷

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

No doubt, the conspirators were there as well.

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?”

The king’s “voice is full of anxiety and concern as he desires to know whether the living God (the God who preserves life) has been able to deliver Daniel.”¹⁸ “In his question he speaks of *the living God* of Daniel....”¹⁹ This king shows unusual faith.

¹⁶ John Joseph Collins and Adela Yarbro Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, ed. Frank Moore Cross, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), 270.

¹⁷ Joyce G. Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 23, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1978), 144.

¹⁸ Edward J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1980), 137.

¹⁹ Joyce G. Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 23, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1978), 145.

6:21 Then Daniel said to the king, “O king, live forever! 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.”

“The reply of Daniel proves that his God is indeed living, and has been able to deliver him.”²⁰

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.

no injury whatever was found on him....

“And the satraps, administrators, governors, and the king’s counselors gathered together, and they saw these men on whose bodies the fire had no power; the hair of their head was not singed nor were their garments affected, and the smell of fire was not on them.” (Daniel 3:27, NKJV)

Darius Honors God (6:24-28)

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—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.

Darius was enraged at those that had deceived him. He now sentenced them to what they had determined upon Daniel. There are apocryphal stories of these men complaining that the lions did not eat Daniel because they had been so well fed. The king tests this hypothesis by casting these very men into the pit to see if that was true. It turned out that it was not true—they actually were hungry.

“And the judges shall make careful inquiry, and indeed, if the witness is a false witness, who has testified falsely against his brother, then you shall do to him as he thought to have done to his brother; so you shall put away the evil from among you.” (Deuteronomy 19:18–19, NKJV)

| |
|---|
| Darius’s decree had been fulfilled; Daniel had been thrown into the lion’s den. There were now no more outstanding charges against him. |
|---|

6:25 Then King Darius wrote:

It is possible, if not probable, that the king gave Daniel the responsibility of preparing this document. Daniel would have written something Darius would have been able to sign, and something that would not interfere with his own worship of his god.

**To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth:
Peace be multiplied to you.**

6:26 I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom men must tremble and fear before the God of Daniel.

²⁰ Joyce G. Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 23, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1978), 145.

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.
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.

And so, Daniel enters the great hall of faith:

“and the prophets, who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,” (Hebrews 11:33, NKJV)

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

“This can be translated as “the reign of Darius, **that is**, the reign of Cyrus.” Note the similar construction in 1 Chronicles 5:26, “Pul king of Assyria, **that is**, Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria.” Kings in the ancient Near East usually had more than one “throne name.” Since Cyrus took over the Median Empire and had a Median mother, he could be called “a Mede,” even “king of the Medes.””²¹

“The chapter ends with an enigmatic note connecting the reign of Darius with that of Cyrus. ... the word *and* here ... has the force of ‘namely,’ or ‘that is,’ so being used explicatively. The writer is explaining that the two names belong to the same person and that the reader needs to note the fact (cf. 1:21; 10:1).”²²

This would explain the name Darius the Mede as there was at this time no known king by this name.

²¹ John H Walton, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary (Old Testament): Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel*, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 547.

²² Joyce G. Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 23, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1978), 146.

