***Daniel 6:1-15 It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty satraps, to be over the whole kingdom; 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. 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. 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. 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.” 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. 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.” 9 Therefore King Darius signed the written decree. 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. 11 Then these men assembled and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. 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.” 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.” 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. 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.”***

We’re in Babylon tonight, sometime soon after Cyrus and his army walked under the wall in the Euphrates River. Finding two gates left open, the Medo-Persian army overwhelmed the city and executed Belshazzar. As Daniel interpreted the writing on the wall, God had numbered Babylon’s days, weighed the kingdom in His scales, and found it wanting. It has now been divided into pieces.

 Little is known of Darius, the new king. We know he’s 62 years old when he assumes the throne. He’s uncle to Cyrus and, together, they’ve overthrown the Babylonian empire – not by their might, but by God’s favor. Darius will rule for 2 years and die following an unidentified illness. Cyrus will assume the throne thereafter.

Daniel 6:1-3 *It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty satraps, to be over the whole kingdom; 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. 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.*Darius rules between 538 and 536 BC. Herodotus, writing is the 5th century BC, told the story of the overthrow of Babylon. His writing pinpoints the overthrow in 538 BC.

 Darius assigns satraps, also called princes. In 538 BC there were 120 provinces in the Medo-Persian empire. We know that in Esther 1:1, that there will be 127 provinces. The additional 7 came as a result of victories over future adversaries. One satrap or prince was assigned for each province and then three governors, or presidents, to oversee these 120 princes. The purpose of this ruling structure and hierarchy is to oversee the affairs of the kingdom and keep the king from suffering loss.

 After a period of time, Daniel, having been one of the three governors, distinguishes himself… because an excellent spirit was in him. We know what this excellent spirit is from previous descriptions of Daniel. Daniel 5:14 *I have heard of you, that the Spirit of God is in you, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in you.* Once again, God establishes Daniel in favor before the king. Now, Darius makes Daniel the head governor, as he sees this excellent spirit, no doubt seeing honesty and integrity in Daniel.

Daniel 6:4-5 *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. 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 is being considered for the head of the governors. As Darius is king and Cyrus is king in waiting, this makes Daniel 3rd in the kingdom – not unlike the position he was promised by Belshazzar. Because of this notice, the other governors are jealous and seek to find any fault in him, so they might accuse Daniel to Darius. But, they could find no charge or error or fault – because **he was faithful**… Daniel was faithful to Almighty God and, when he, or we, are faithful to the commandments of God, it follows that we will be honest and trustworthy in all the affairs of man. Ecclesiastes 9:10 says “*whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might*”. 1 Corinthians 10:31 “*whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*” Daniel is faithful.

When no charge of an earthly kind can be found, the conspirators take a different approach. *We shall not find any charge against this Daniel unless we find it against him concerning the law of his God.* The only place of vulnerability the conspirators can imagine is in Daniel’s complete dedication and surrender to God. By making a law contrary to the law of God, they hope to trap a man sold out in Faith. In Acts 4:19 we see Peter and John give this answer about speaking for Jesus - But Peter and John answered and said to them, *“Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge.”* In the end times, laws contrary to God will be made, marks will be required to buy and sell, the faithful will suffer because they refuse to listen to man more than God.

Daniel 6:6-9 *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. 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.” 9 Therefore King Darius signed the written decree.* The governors and satraps gather before the king. Thronging, meaning pressing close in a very agitated fashion. By doing so, they’re hoping to impress upon the king the importance of what they are about to propose.

The different levels of the government have all consulted together and crafted this royal statute to propose to the king. Understand what Darius is seeing here. 2 governors, 120 satraps, administrators, counselors, advisors. Daniel alone seems missing… again, like in earlier times. Their aim is to outlaw Daniel’s worship of God flying under the cover of a royal statute against petitioning any god or man other than the king for 30 days. Notice, they include even their own false gods. They’re willing to throw their own beliefs under the bus to achieve worldly gain. And so it is today with craving power and status. Willing to sell their soul for a taste of power.

The punishment for refusing to follow this statute is being cast into the den of lions.

Pride is now threatening to be the undoing of Darius. The group appeals to the power of the king, and he signs it, drunk on his own power and lost in his pride. The law of the Medes and Persians, as in many other ancient kingdoms, cannot be altered. Once signed, it is the law. We see this later in Esther when the order to exterminate the Jews is signed and cannot be altered. Darius is deceived.

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.* This is one of my favorite verses in the whole Bible – Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed. What wonderful faith! Gives me shivers! He didn’t belly ache about how unfair, or try to get it changed, or talk to all his friends about the mean people and king. He did what we all must do in times of trial. He went home, went to his upper room – his prayer closet, and with his windows open toward Jerusalem, knelt 3 times that day and prayed and gave thanks… ***as was his custom since early days***. The world did not change Daniel. This was not defiance… this was relationship. What did he pray for? Maybe strength, endurance, forgiveness of his enemies? Daniel understood that God must be honored above all. To change his faithful habit would have certainly altered his relationship with God.

Of course, the enemies knew Daniel’s customary prayer time. A change would have been a message to the enemy that he could be impacted by wickedness. Further, changing what was his custom may have been interpreted as praying to the king as the decree instructed. No. Daniel remained faithful in the face of this new threat, knowing that God would handle this threat perfectly, just as He had all the others.

Daniel 6:11-13 *Then these men assembled and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. 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.” 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.”* The haters assemble and wait. They didn’t have to wait long. Not surprisingly, they found him praying where, when, and how he customarily did, to God. So these men went before the king – *Have you not signed a decree?* They ask. They remind the king of the decree and the punishment, trapping him in his own prideful decision. This reminds us of the wise men doing the same to Nebuchadnezzar in chapter three, around Meshach, Shadrach, and Abednego. The king acknowledges their point. Now they get to the target of their hate – That Daniel shows no regard for you or your decree. Now we’re to the bitter bottom of the whole matter. King, you said this and now Daniel must be thrown to the lions!!

Verses 14-15 *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. 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 king realizes what has happened and is very displeased – with himself. He understands that his pride is at the root. He has allowed this to happen to Daniel. He sets his heart on Daniel to deliver him. He knows the law. He knows the rules. Yet, he makes all efforts, and this says much about the respect Darius has for Daniel. He labors and agonizes till the going down of the sun and finds all of his efforts to deliver Daniel fail. Then, the conspirators return and remind Darius of the law of the Medes and Persians, like Darius needs reminding.

Oh what a tangled web we weave when we first practice to deceive. Darius finds himself caught in a tangled web, Daniel finds himself in a tangled web, all woven by these deceitful men. As we leave Daniel, we see that Darius has failed at every human effort to deliver Daniel. Daniel’s only hope is God.

Once again, we find Daniel Faithful, Fearless, and Focused. He never hesitates. When he knew the decree was signed, he went home and worshipped God. Now, the God Daniel worships will deliver him in a mighty way! May we, when we know persecution and deceit is afoot, faithfully continue our worship of God, knowing He will deliver in a mighty way those called according to His purpose.