

## Daniel 6 — Faithful Under Empire

### "Faith That Will Not Bend"

#### INTRODUCTION

In the early days of the Cold War, believers living behind the Iron Curtain often faced a choice remarkably similar to Daniel's. Communist governments generally allowed Christians to work, raise families, and contribute to society—as long as their highest loyalty belonged to the state. Preachers were pressured to register with government agencies, sermons were monitored, and Christians were expected to remain silent whenever God's authority conflicted with official policy. Many complied. Others quietly continued meeting, praying, and preaching, knowing that every gathering could cost them their freedom.

What distinguished these faithful believers was not political rebellion but unwavering allegiance. They obeyed every law they could, paid their taxes, worked diligently, and sought the good of their country. Yet when the state demanded what belonged only to God, they calmly answered as the apostles would later say: "We must obey God rather than men."

Daniel 6 tells the same story centuries earlier. Daniel is not punished because he is a poor citizen; he is punished because he is the empire's best servant whose first loyalty belongs to heaven. The chapter reminds every generation that faithful believers can be exemplary citizens while refusing to give any government the worship, trust, or ultimate allegiance that belongs to God alone. This is the essence of living faithfully under empire.

Empires can regulate public behavior, but they cannot rule a faithful heart. God's servants remain loyal even when obedience carries the highest earthly cost.

This chapter is the climax of the first narrative section of Daniel (chs. 1–6). Daniel has outlived the Babylonian Empire. Nebuchadnezzar is gone. Belshazzar is dead. The empire has changed, but the challenge has not. The names of the rulers change; the demand for compromise remains.

#### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

##### *Where We Are*

Babylon has fallen (539 BC). The Medes and Persians now control the empire exactly as Daniel 2 and Daniel 7 predicted.

Daniel is now probably around 80 years old.

He has served:

- \* Nebuchadnezzar
- \* Evil-merodach
- \* Neriglissar
- \* Labashi-Marduk
- \* Nabonidus
- \* Belshazzar
- \* Darius the Mede

Very few people remain influential through multiple administrations. Daniel does. That itself demonstrates God's providence.

##### *Darius the Mede*

Identity has long been debated. Possibilities include:

- \* Gubaru (Gobryas)
- \* Cyrus under another throne title

\* Another Median governor

Regardless of identification, the theological point is clear: Babylon has fallen exactly as God foretold.

Daniel's prophecy has already begun coming true before the reader's eyes.

### *The New Empire*

Persia was generally more tolerant than Babylon. Yet the same temptation appears. Government again attempts to occupy God's place. The empire changes. Human pride does not. This is an important lesson for Revelation. Rome will do exactly the same thing.

### *Theme within "Faithful Under Empire"*

Earlier chapters asked:

Can God's people survive pagan education?

Can God's people survive political promotion?

Can God's people survive persecution?

Chapter 6 asks: Can God's people remain faithful when government directly forbids obedience to God?

### I. Faithfulness Produces Enemies (6:1-5):

Daniel's Promotion - 120 satraps - Three administrators - Daniel distinguished himself. The king planned to elevate him over the kingdom. Notice: His enemies cannot accuse his work. Only his religion.

Verse 4 - "They could find no ground of accusation..." Integrity became his greatest defense. The attack becomes personal rather than professional.

### *The Strategy*

"If we do not find something against him concerning the law of his God..." This is remarkable. Daniel had lived decades in pagan government. The only predictable thing about him... was his obedience to God.



"An excellent spirit" - Not describing the Holy Spirit. Hebrew idiom for exceptional wisdom, character, and ability.

#### *Law of Moses*

Daniel's prayer life reflects: Deuteronomy 6, 10, 11

His loyalty to Yahweh outweighs loyalty to kings.

#### *Jeremiah*

Jeremiah 29 - The exiles were told: Seek the welfare of Babylon. Daniel did exactly that. But Jeremiah never commanded compromise.

Daniel serves Babylon...without becoming Babylonian.

#### *Ezekiel*

Ezekiel repeatedly condemns corrupt shepherds and dishonest rulers. Daniel provides the opposite model: A righteous administrator.

Faithfulness often creates opposition because it exposes corruption.

*Discussion* - Why do honest people often become threats to dishonest systems?

#### *Christian*

Integrity is evangelistic. People should know Christians cannot be bought.

## II. Empire Attempts to Replace God (6:6-9):

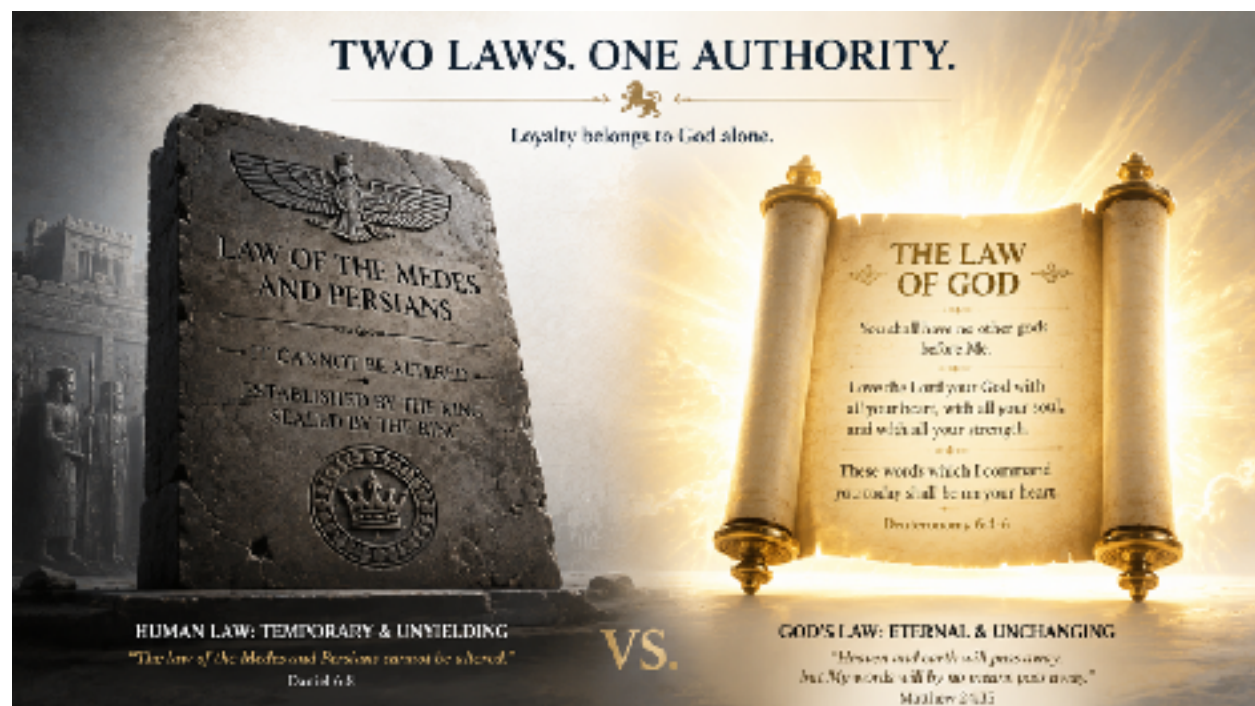
The officials flatter Darius. Appeal to vanity. Thirty days. No prayer. Only petitions through the king.

#### *What Is Happening?*

This is more than politics. It is state-sponsored idolatry. The king becomes mediator. Only God deserves that position.

#### *Law of the Medes and Persians*

Irrevocable law. Ironically, human kings become slaves to their own legislation. Only God speaks laws He may also mercifully forgive.



"The law cannot be altered." - Hyperbole expressing legal permanence. Not divine inability. Human governmental procedure.

#### *Law of Moses*

First Commandment: No other gods: Exodus 20; Deuteronomy 5 - Prayer belongs exclusively to God.

#### *Revelation*

The Beast demands universal allegiance. Economic and political coercion enforce worship. Daniel becomes an Old Testament picture of faithful resistance.

*Discussion* - Why do governments repeatedly seek ultimate loyalty from citizens?

#### *Christian*

Christians honor government.

Christians never worship government.

### III. Faith Continues Despite the Cost (6:10-17)

Daniel learns the decree. Immediately... he prays. Nothing changes.

#### *Why Open Windows?*

Toward Jerusalem. Direct connection to Solomon's prayer.



#### *Law of Moses*

Not commanded explicitly. Instead rooted in: 1 Kings 8. When Israel repents toward this city... hear from heaven. Daniel believes God's covenant.

#### *Jeremiah*

Jeremiah predicted seventy years. Daniel believes restoration is coming. His direction toward Jerusalem is hope. Daniel Did Not Protest  
No rebellion.  
No political campaign.  
No secret meetings.  
Simply faithful worship.

"Kneeling" - Physical expression of humility.

*Darius*

Deeply distressed.

Unlike Nebuchadnezzar, he actually likes God's servant. Yet he cannot save him. Earthly kingdoms always have limits.

*Discussion*

Why is ordinary consistency often more powerful than dramatic heroics?

*Christian*

Most faithfulness is simply refusing to quit ordinary obedience.

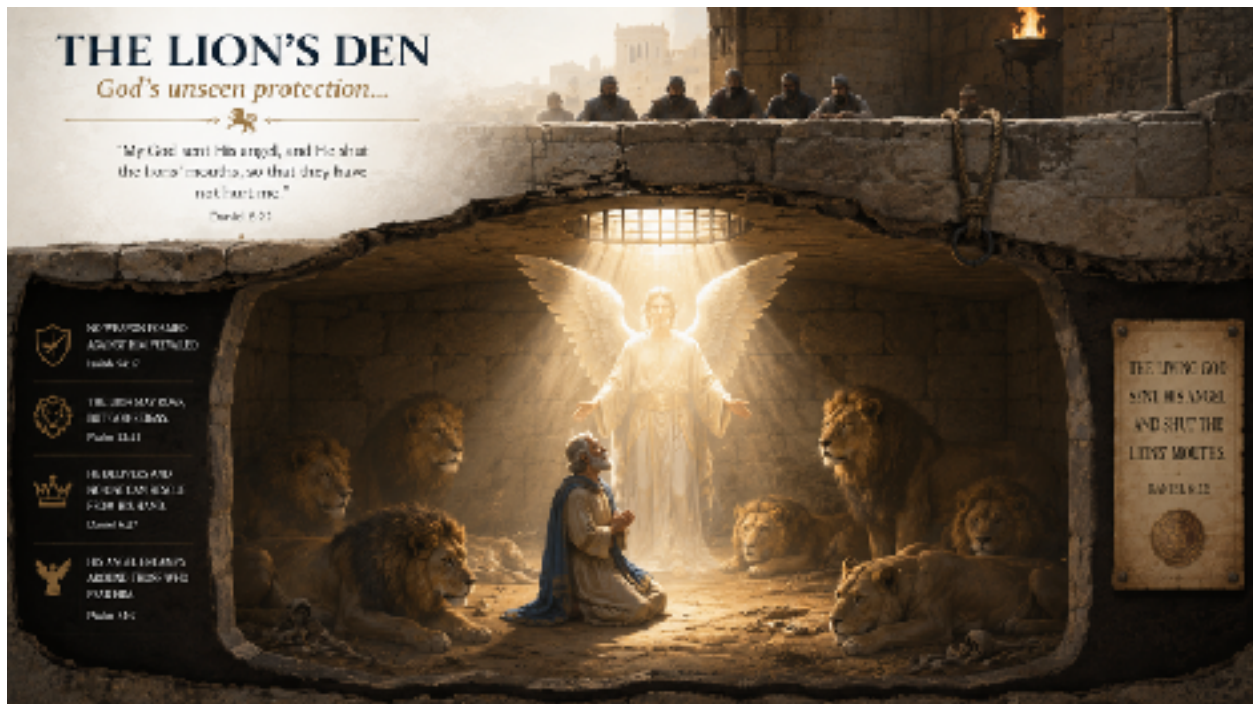
#### IV. God Shuts the Lions' Mouths (6:18-24)

The king fasts. Sleepless night. Runs to the den.

*Daniel's Response*

"My God sent His angel."

God never abandoned His servant.



"Shut the lions' mouths." - Literal miracle. Also symbolic. God silences the forces of death.

*Psalm Connections*  
Psalm 22, 57, 91, 124

Repeated imagery of God's people surrounded by beasts.

*Law of Moses*

Deuteronomy repeatedly promises God's protection for covenant faithfulness. Daniel illustrates that promise. Not always by preventing suffering... sometimes by preserving within suffering.

*New Testament*

Hebrews 11:33 - "...stopped the mouths of lions." Daniel is explicitly remembered.



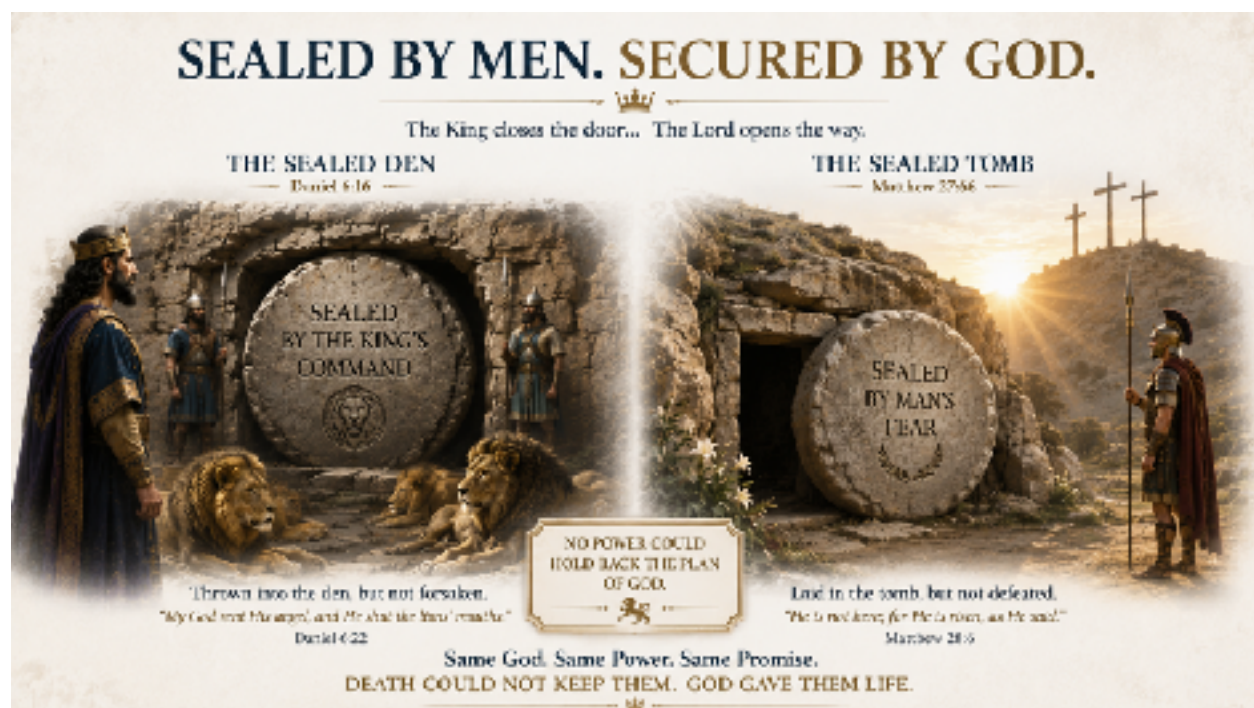
*Christological Pattern*

Many parallels:  
False accusation  
Governmental weakness  
Sealed stone  
Innocent servant  
Delivered from apparent death  
Vindication  
Not direct prophecy... but a remarkable foreshadowing.

*Discussion*

Why does God sometimes deliver His people from suffering... and other times through suffering?

*Christian*



Faith trusts God's presence... not guaranteed outcomes.

#### V. God's Kingdom Triumphs Over Every Empire (6:25-28)

Darius issues another decree. Entire empire acknowledges Daniel's God. Notice the irony. The decree meant to stop worship... creates worldwide testimony.



#### Theology

"He is the living God."

"He endures forever."

"His kingdom shall never be destroyed."

This intentionally echoes Daniel 2.  
The stone continues advancing.

### *Revelation*

Exactly the conflict:  
Temporary empire vs Eternal kingdom  
Human ruler vs Living God  
The Beast falls. God reigns.

### *Jeremiah*

Jeremiah repeatedly contrasts idols that cannot speak... with the living God.  
Darius finally confesses the difference.

### *Christian*

Empires write temporary laws. God rules eternal history.

### *Major Lessons*

#### *What Was God Teaching Pagan Rulers?*

Power belongs to God.  
Kings cannot become mediators.  
Justice matters.  
God protects His servants.  
Empires are temporary.  
God's kingdom is permanent.



#### *What Was God Teaching Faithful Jews?*

Remain loyal.  
Government may change.  
God does not.

Prayer matters.  
Integrity matters.  
God remembers covenant faithfulness.

*What Were Later Jews to Learn?*

Exile does not prevent faithfulness.  
Foreign governments cannot prevent covenant obedience.  
Hope remains because God's promises remain.  
The seventy years will end.  
God is still directing history.

*Jeremiah Illuminates Daniel 6*

Jeremiah 24 - God preserves faithful exiles.  
Jeremiah 29 - Seek Babylon's good.  
Do not become Babylon.  
Jeremiah 32-33 - Future restoration.  
Daniel's prayers face Jerusalem because Jeremiah's promises are true.

*Ezekiel Illuminates Daniel 6*

Ezekiel repeatedly portrays Israel among lions and hostile nations (e.g., Ezekiel 19; 22).  
God preserves a faithful remnant.  
Daniel personifies that remnant.

*New Testament Fulfillment*



Matthew 5:10-12 - Blessed are persecuted saints.

Acts 4-5 - "We must obey God rather than men."

Romans 13 - Honor government. Never worship government.

Hebrews 11:33 - Direct reference.

1 Peter 2 - Excellent conduct among pagans.

Revelation 13 - Empire demanding worship. Faithful saints refusing compromise.

Revelation 14 - Endurance of the saints.

Daniel 6 teaches that faithful servants of God remain loyal when earthly governments demand the allegiance that belongs only to God, because the everlasting kingdom of God will always outlive every human empire.

