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DANIEL THE MAN – LESSON 12

THE EVIL PLOT

The Babylonian Empire under the prideful and arrogant King Belshazzar fell to Persia the same night that Daniel interpreted the handwriting on the wall. The king immediately rewarded Daniel for the interpretation just as he had promised, with royal garments, a gold ring around his neck signifying authority, and proclaimed Daniel to be the number three ruler of the kingdom under King Belshazzar and his father King Nabonidus.

Darius, the Medo-Persian became King. Belshazzar was dead, Nabonidus (in retirement) was no longer king. This meant Daniel immediately became the top man from the former Babylonian regime. Now it was up to Darius to set order in the new Persian regime over Babylon.

This takes us into chapter six of the Book of Daniel. Darius set 120 districts in Babylon with a prince ruling over each district. Darius initially set three presidents over the 120 princes, most likely forty princes under each president.

It was not long before King Darius saw that Daniel had a more excellent spirit in him than the other two presidents and all of the princes. Darius pondered setting Daniel over everybody, even over the other presidents. This stirred up much envy and jealousy in the other presidents and in the princes. There was no corruption in Daniel, so the princes knew they could not bribe him for favors.

Consequently, they plotted a scheme against him. Knowing that three times daily Daniel opened a window toward Jerusalem and prayed to God, they used that against him. They convinced Darius to sign a decree that any person who would ask a petition (prayer) of any god or man for 30 days from anyone other than the King would be cast into the den of lions (reserved for criminals). Darius signed it, and Daniel, as president, knew of it.

Nevertheless, Daniel still prayed three times daily. The men who plotted the plan witnessed it and took the matter to Darius to insist that Daniel be thrown to the lions.

Darius loved Daniel and this grieved him sorely. He had not considered this to even be a possibility when he was duped into signing the decree. However, the law did not allow for any exceptions, or for the decree to be cancelled or altered. He would have to commit Daniel to the hungry lions.

As they prepared to take Daniel away to the lion's den, King Darius made a most remarkable statement of faith to come from the mouth of a pagan ruler. He spoke to Daniel in 6:16, saying, ***"Thy God whom thou servest continually, He will deliver thee."***

Daniel was cast into the den and a stone sealed the entrance that held Daniel and the lions. Darius went to his palace and spent the whole night fasting on Daniel's behalf. He slept not a wink.

The first thing in the morning he went to the lion's den. He called out in vs. 20, *"Oh Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God...able to deliver thee from the lions?"* Daniel replied that he was unharmed. He was released.

Darius immediately rounded up Daniel's accusers who were then cast into the den of very hungry lions along with their wives and children. No family member was left alive.

Darius sent a decree throughout his entire kingdom declaring in vs. 26 that Daniel's God is *"...the living God..."* and every person must have fear and trembling before the God of Daniel. This decree went to all the Persian empire. I personally believe that the decrees about Daniel's God, given by both Nebuchadnezzar early on, and Darius at this later time, had much to do with the rise of monotheism in Persia under religious philosopher Zoroaster who decried the paganism of Persia and espoused a single living creator God of the universe. Zoroaster was a contemporary of Daniel.

Daniel's integrity was without question as was his diligent faithfulness to pray and seek God even under the threat of death. May we be that faithful in the coming tribulation.