

Daniel 5 ³⁰ That very night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was slain. ³¹ And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old.

Daniel 6 ¹ It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom a hundred and twenty satraps, to be throughout the whole kingdom; ² and over them three presidents, of whom Daniel was one, to whom these satraps should give account, so that the king might suffer no loss. ³ Then this Daniel became distinguished above all the other presidents and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. (NABRE 6:2–4).

DARIUS THE MEDE

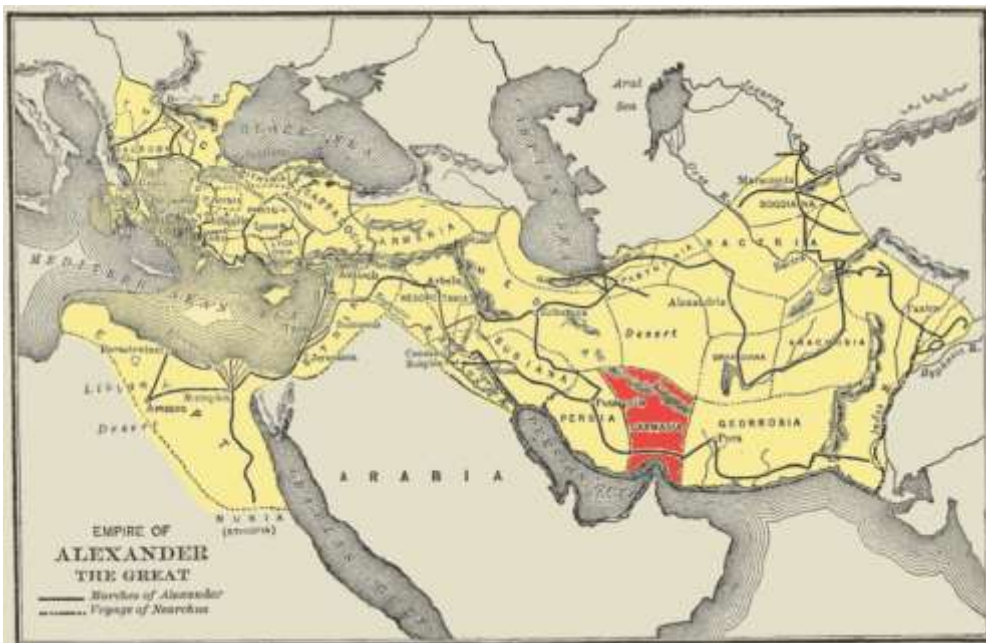
John J. Collins, *A Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Hermeneia, 1993) p. 30 • No such person as Darius the Mede is known to have existed apart from the narrative of Daniel.... Conservative scholars have labored unceasingly to identify Darius the Mede with some figure known to history by another name.

Carol A. Newsom, *Daniel: A Commentary* (OTL, 2014) Similar to the case of the Nabonidus traditions that were recast as Nebuchadnezzar stories in chs. 3–4, a faint historical memory of Darius the Persian can be discerned behind the wholly fictitious character of Darius the Mede.

George Wesley Buchanan, *The Book of Daniel* (Mellen, 1999) pp. 149, 152 • Darius the Mede is reported only here [Daniel] in all extant literature.... Darius the Mede never existed.... Nothing can be more unfortunate than the attempts of apologists to make these things appear probable.

New American Bible, Revised Edition (2011) 6:1 fn. • *Darius the Mede*: unknown outside of the Book of Daniel. The Median kingdom did not exist at this time because it had already been conquered by Cyrus the Persian. Apparently the author of Daniel is following an apocalyptic view of history, linked to prophecy (cf. Is 13:17–19; Jer 51:11, 28–30), according to which the Medes formed the second of four world kingdoms preceding the messianic times; see note on Dn 2:36–45. The character of Darius the Mede has probably been modeled on that of the Persian king Darius the Great (522–486 B.C.), the second successor of Cyrus. The Persian Darius did appoint satraps over his empire.

Valerius Harpocration, *Lexicon of the Ten Orators* (ca. A.D. 150) Δ 5 • Daric (Δαρεικός): Lysias in *Against Eratosthenes* (12.11), one of the Thirty. Darics are gold staters, and one was worth the same as what, among the Attic writers, is called the chrysous [gold coin]. They were called Darics not, as most think (cf. Herodotus, *Hist.* 4.166), after Darius [the Great], the father of Xerxes, but after another more ancient king.



Berosus, *Babylonica* (ca. 278 B.C.) When [Labashi-Marduk] too died a violent death, they proclaimed Nabannidochus [Nabonidus] as king, although he had no right to assume royal power. When Cyrus captured Babylon, he made Nabannidochus the governor of Carmania; but Darius the king took some of the territory away from him (quoted in Eusebius, *Chronicle* 1.11 [GCS 20.20]).

Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* (ca A.D. 94) 10.248–249 • When Babylon was taken by Darius, and when he, with his kinsman Cyrus, had put an end to the dominion of the Babylonians, he was sixty-two years old. He was the son of Astyages, and had another name among the Greeks. Moreover, he took Daniel the prophet, and carried him with him into Media, and honored him very greatly, and kept him with him; for he was one of the three presidents whom he set over his three hundred and sixty provinces; for into so many did Darius part them.

St. Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel* (A.D. 407) 5:1 • After [Belshazzar] had been killed by Darius, King of the Medes, who was the maternal uncle of Cyrus, King of the Persians, the empire of the Chaldeans was destroyed by Cyrus the Persian. It was these two kingdoms [the Median and the Persian] which Isaiah addresses as a charioteer of a vehicle drawn by a camel and an ass (Isa 21:7). Indeed Xenophon also writes the same thing in connection with the childhood of Cyrus the Great.

XENOPHON'S VERSION

Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* (ca. 370 B.C.) 1.2.1 • The father of Cyrus, so runs the story, was Cambyses, a king of the Persians, and one of the Perseidae.... His mother, it is agreed, was Mandane, the daughter of Astyages, king of the Medes.

1.3.1–3, 12–13 • Until he was twelve years old or more, Cyrus was brought up in the manner we have described, and showed himself to be above all his fellows in his aptitude for learning and in the noble and manly performance of every duty. But about this time, Astyages sent for his daughter and her son, desiring greatly to see him because he had heard how noble and fair he was. So it fell out that Mandane came to Astyages, bringing her son Cyrus with her. And as soon as they met, the boy, when he heard that Astyages was his mother's father, fell on his neck and kissed him without more ado, like the loving lad nature had made him, as though he had been brought up at his grandfather's side from the first and the two of them had been playmates of old. Then he looked closer and saw that the king's eyes were stenciled and his cheeks painted, and that he wore false curls after the fashion of the Medes in those days (for these adornments, and the purple robes, the tunics, the necklaces, and the bracelets, they are all Median first and last, not Persian; the Persian, as you find him at home even now-a-days, still keeps to his plainer dress and his plainer style of living). The boy, seeing his grandfather's splendor, kept his eyes fixed on him, and cried, "Oh, mother, how beautiful my grandfather is!" Then his mother asked him which he thought the handsomer, his father or his grandfather, and he answered at once, "My father is the handsomest of all the Persians, but my grandfather much the handsomest of all the Medes I ever set eyes on, at home or abroad." At that Astyages drew the child to his heart, and gave him a beautiful robe and bracelets and necklaces in sign of honor, and when he rode out, the boy must ride beside him on a horse with a golden bridle, just like King Astyages himself. And Cyrus, who had a soul as sensitive to beauty as to honor, was pleased with the splendid robe, and overjoyed at learning to ride, for a horse is a rare sight in Persia, a mountainous country, and one little suited to the breed.... Thus the boy delighted his elders in the evening, and by day if he saw that his grandfather or his uncle wanted anything, no one could forestall him in getting it; indeed nothing seemed to give him greater pleasure than to please them. Now when Mandane began to think of going back to her husband, Astyages begged her to leave the boy behind....

1.4.1–2 • At last his mother went home, and Cyrus stayed behind and was brought up in Media. He soon made friends with his companions and found his way to their hearts, and soon won their parents by the charm of his address and the true affection he bore their sons, so much so that when they wanted a favor from the king they bade their children ask Cyrus to arrange the matter for them. And whatever it might be, the kindness of the lad's heart and the eagerness of his ambition made him set the greatest store on getting it done. On his side, Astyages could not bring himself to refuse his grandson's lightest wish. For once, when he was sick, nothing would induce the boy to leave his side; he could not keep back his tears, and his terror at the thought that his grandfather might die was plain for every one to see. If the old man needed anything during the night Cyrus was the first to notice it, it was he who sprang up first to wait upon him, and bring him what he thought would please him. Thus the old king's heart was his.

1.4.7–9 • At last when Astyages saw that the lad's heart was really set on hunting in the open country, he gave him leave to go out with his uncle, taking care at the same time to send an escort of mounted veterans at his heels, whose business it was to keep watch and ward over him in any dangerous place or against any savage beast. Cyrus plied his retinue with questions about the creatures they came across, which must he avoid and which might he hunt? They told him he must be on his guard against bears and wild-boars and lions and leopards: many a man had found himself at too close quarters with these dangerous creatures, and been torn to pieces: but antelopes, they said, and deer and mountain sheep and wild asses were harmless enough. And the huntsman, they added, ought to be as careful about dangerous places as about the beasts themselves: many a time horse and rider had gone headlong down a precipice to death. The lad seemed to take all their lessons to heart at the time: but then he saw a stag leap up, and forgot all the wise cautions he had heard, giving chase forthwith, noticing nothing except the beast ahead of him. His horse, in its furious plunge forward, slipped, and came down on its knees, all but throwing the rider over its head. As luck would have it the boy managed to keep his seat, and the horse recovered its footing. When they reached the flat bottom, Cyrus let fly his javelin, and the stag fell dead, a beautiful big creature. The lad was still radiant with delight when up rode the guard and took him severely to task. Could he not see the danger he had run? They would certainly tell his grandfather, that they would. Cyrus, who had dismounted, stood quite still and listened ruefully, hanging his head while they rated him. But in the middle of it all he heard the view-halloo again: he sprang to his horse as though frenzied—a wild-boar was charging down on them, and he charged to meet it, and drawing his bow with the surest aim possible, struck the beast in the forehead, and laid him low. But now his uncle thought it was high time to scold his nephew himself; the lad's boldness was too much. Only, the more he scolded the more Cyrus begged he would let him take back the spoil as a present for his grandfather. To which appeal, says the story, his uncle made reply: "But if your grandfather finds out that you have gone in chase yourself, he will not only scold you for going but me for letting you go." "Well, let him whip me if he likes," said the boy, "when once I have given him my beasts: and you too, uncle," he went on, "punish me however you choose, only do not refuse me this." So Cyaxares was forced to yield:—"Have it your own way then, you are little less than our king already."

1.5.1–2 • Cyrus left his grandfather's court and came home to Persia, and there, so it is said, he spent one year more as a boy among boys. At first the lads were disposed to laugh at him, thinking he must have learnt luxurious ways in Media, but when they saw that he could take the simple Persian food as happily as themselves, and how, whenever they made good cheer at a festival, far from asking for any more himself he was ready to give his own share of the dainties away, when they saw and felt in this and in other things his inborn nobleness and superiority to themselves, then the tide turned and once more they were at his feet....

Now in the fullness of time Astyages died in Media, and Cyaxares his son, the brother of Cyrus' mother, took the kingdom in his stead.

3.3.61–62 • Cyrus called to his men: "Forward now, bravest of the brave! Show us what your pace can be!" They caught the word and passed it on, and in their eagerness and passion for the fray some of the leaders broke into a run, and the whole phalanx followed at their heels. Cyrus himself gave up the regular march and dashed forward at their head, shouting: "Brave men to the front! Who follows me? Who will lay the first Assyrian low?"

4.1.8–13, 21 • Meanwhile the Assyrians ... fell into utter despair, and many of them deserted during the night... Day broke, and the camp was seen to be deserted, and Cyrus, without more ado, led his Persians within the entrenchments, where they found the stores that the enemy had left: herds of sheep and goats and cattle, and long rows of wagons laden with good things. Cyaxares and his Medes followed, and all arms took their breakfast in the camp. But when the meal was over, Cyrus summoned his brigadiers and said to them: "Think what blessings we are flinging away now, spurning, as it were, the very gifts of heaven! So at least it seems to me. The enemy have given us the slip, as you see with your own eyes." ...

At that one of his officers cried, "Why not pursue at once, if such triumphs are before us?"

And Cyrus answered, "Because we have not the horses." ...

"Then," said they, "why not go and lay the matter before Cyaxares?"

So they all went together and spoke as they thought best. Now Cyaxares felt, no doubt, a certain jealousy that the Persians should be the first to broach the matter, but he may also have felt that it was really wiser to run no further risks for the present; he had, moreover, abandoned himself to feasting and merrymaking, and he saw that most of his Medes were in like case. Whatever the reason, this was the answer he gave: ... "Ah, if any will follow you of their own free will, I can but be most grateful."

"Send someone with me then," said Cyrus, "from these trusty men of yours, to carry your commands."

"Take whomever you like," he answered, "and begone."

4.4.8–10 • Cyaxares, the king of the Medes, on the very night when Cyrus set forth, drank himself drunk in company with the officers in his own quarters to celebrate their good fortune. Hearing uproar all about him, he thought that the rest of the Medes must have stayed behind in the camp, except perhaps a few, but the fact was that their domestics, finding the masters gone, had fallen to drinking in fine style and were making a din to their hearts' content, the more so that they had procured wine and dainties from the Assyrian camp. But when it was broad day and no one knocked at the palace gate except the guests of last night's revel, and when Cyaxares heard that the camp was deserted—the Medes gone, the cavalry gone—and when he went out and saw for himself that it was so, then he fumed with indignation against Cyrus and his own men, to think that they had gone off and left him in the lurch. It is said that without more ado, savage and mad with anger as he was, he ordered one of his staff to take his troopers and ride at once to Cyrus and his men, and there deliver this message: "I should never have dreamed that Cyrus could have acted towards me with such scant respect, or, if he could have thought of it, that the Medes could have borne to desert me in this way. And now, whether Cyrus will or no, I command the Medes to present themselves before me without delay."

4.5.27–28, 32–33 • "Cyrus to Cyaxares, greeting. We do not admit that we have deserted you; for no one is deserted when he is being made the master of his enemies. Nor do we consider that we put you in jeopardy by our departure; on the contrary, the greater the distance between us the greater the security we claim to have won for you. It is not the friend at a man's elbow who serves him and puts him out of danger, but he who drives his enemies farthest and furthest away.... I would advise you, though I am younger than yourself, not to take back with one hand what you give with the other, or else you will win hatred instead of gratitude; nor to use threats if you wish men to come to you speedily; nor to speak of being deserted when you threaten an army, unless you would teach them to despise you. For ourselves, we will do our best to rejoin you as soon as we have concluded certain matters which we believe will prove a common blessing to yourself and us. Farewell."

5.5.1, 5–8, 35–40 • And now that his expedition was completed, Cyrus sent to Cyaxares and urged him to come to the camp.... And when Cyrus knew of his approach he took his Persian cavalry, who were now a large body of men, and all the Medes, Hyrcanians, and Armenians, and the best-mounted and best-armed among the rest, and so went out to meet Cyaxares and show the power he had won. But when Cyaxares saw so large a following of gallant gentlemen with Cyrus, and with himself so small and mean a retinue, it seemed to him an insult, and mortification filled his heart. And when Cyrus sprang from his horse and came up to give him the kiss of greeting, Cyaxares, though he dismounted, turned away his head and gave him no kiss, while the tears came into his eyes. Whereupon Cyrus told the others to stand aside and rest, and then he took Cyaxares by the hand and led him apart under a grove of palm-trees, and bade the attendants spread Median carpets for them, and made Cyaxares sit down, and then, seating himself beside him, he said: "Uncle of mine, tell me, in heaven's name, I implore you, why are you angry with me? What bitter sight have you seen to make you feel such bitterness?"

And then Cyaxares answered: "Listen, Cyrus; I have been reputed royal and of royal lineage as far back as the memory of man can go; my father was a king and a king I myself was thought to be; and now I see myself riding here, meanly and miserably attended, while you come before me in splendor and magnificence, followed by the retinue that once was mine and all your other forces.

But while he was still speaking Cyrus broke in on his words, crying: "Uncle of mine, by the heaven above us, if I have ever shown you any kindness, be kind to me now. Do not find fault with me any more, wait, and put me to the test, and learn how I feel towards you, and if you see that what I have done has really brought you good, then, when I embrace you, embrace me in return and call me your benefactor, and if not, you may blame me as you please."

"Perhaps," answered Cyaxares, "you are right. I will do as you wish."

"Then I may kiss you?" said Cyrus.

"Yes, if it pleases you. "And you will not turn aside as you did just now?" "No, I will not turn aside." And he kissed him.

And when the Medes saw it and the Persians and all the allies—for all were watching to see how matters would shape—joy came into their hearts and gladness lit up their faces. Then Cyrus and Cyaxares mounted their horses and rode back, and the Medes fell in behind Cyaxares, at a nod from Cyrus, and behind Cyrus the Persians, and the others behind them. And when they reached the camp and brought Cyaxares to the splendid tent, those who were appointed made everything ready for him, and while he was waiting for the banquet his Medes presented themselves, some of their own accord, it is true, but most were sent by Cyrus. And they brought him gifts; one came with a beautiful cup-bearer, another with an admirable cook, a third with a baker, a fourth with a musician, while others brought cups and goblets and beautiful apparel; almost every one gave something out of the spoils they had won. So that the mood of Cyaxares changed, and he seemed to see that Cyrus had not stolen his subjects from him, and that they made no less account of him than they used to do.

8.5.1, 17–20 • But now that all was well in Babylon and Cyrus felt he might leave the land, he began to prepare for a march to Persia, and sent out orders to his men. And when he had all he needed, the steeds were yoked, and he set off. ...

And now when the march had brought them into Media, Cyrus turned aside to visit Cyaxares. After they had met and embraced, Cyrus began by telling Cyaxares that a palace in Babylon, and an estate, had been set aside for him so that he might have a residence of his own whenever he came there, and he offered him other gifts, most rich and beautiful. And Cyaxares was glad to take them from his nephew, and then he sent for his daughter, and she came, carrying a golden crown, and bracelets, and a necklace of wrought gold, and a most beautiful Median robe, as splendid as could be. The maiden placed the crown upon the head of Cyrus, and as she did so Cyaxares said: "I will give her to you, Cyrus, my own daughter, to be your wife. Your father wedded the daughter of my father, and you are their son; and this is the little maid whom you carried in your arms when you were with us as a lad, and whenever she was asked whom she meant to marry, she would always answer 'Cyrus.' And for her dowry I will give her the whole of Media: since I have no lawful son."

So he spoke, and Cyrus answered: "Cyaxares, I can but thank you myself for all you offer me, the kinship and the maiden and the gifts, but I must lay the matter before my father and my mother before I accept, and then we will thank you together."

That was what Cyrus said, but nonetheless he gave the maiden the gifts he thought would please her father. And when he had done so, he marched on home to Persia.

HERODOTUS' VERSION

Justin, *Epitome of the Philippic Histories* (ca. A.D. 150) 1.4 • After several kings, the crown, by order of succession, descended to Astyages. This prince, in a dream, saw a vine spring from the womb of his only daughter, with the branches of which all Asia was overshadowed. The soothsayers being consulted concerning the vision, replied, that he would have a grandson by that daughter, whose greatness was foreshown, and the loss of Astyages's kingdom portended. Alarmed at this answer, he gave his daughter in marriage, not to an eminent man, nor to one of his own subjects (lest nobility on the father or mother's side should rouse the spirit of his grandson), but to Cambyses, a man of mean fortune, and of the race of the Persians, which was at that time obscure. But not having, even thus, got rid of his fear of the dream, he sent for his daughter, while she was pregnant, that her child might be put to death under the very eye of his grandfather. The infant, as soon as it

was born, was given to Harpagus, a friend of the king's,... to be killed. Harpagus ... gave the infant to the herdsman of the king's cattle to be exposed. The herdsman, by chance, had a son born at the same time; and his wife, hearing of the exposure of the royal infant, entreated, with the utmost earnestness, that the child might be brought and shown to her. The herdsman, overcome by her solicitations, went back into the wood, and found a dog by the infant, giving it her teats, and protecting it from the beasts and birds of prey. Being moved with pity, with which he saw even a dog moved, he carried the child to the cattle-folds, the dog vigilantly following him. When the woman took the babe into her hands, it smiled upon her as if it knew her; and there appeared so much vivacity in it, with a certain sweetness in its smile as it clung to her, that the wife at once entreated the herdsman to expose her own child instead of the other, and to allow her to bring up the royal infant.... Thus the lot of the children being changed, the one was brought up as the shepherd's son, and the other exposed as the king's grandson....

1.5 • The boy after a time, while he was among the shepherds, received the name of Cyrus. Subsequently, being chosen by lot king among his play-fellows, and having boldly scourged such of them as were disobedient to him, a complaint was made to the king by the parents of the boys, who were angry that free-born youths should be lashed with servile stripes by the king's slave. Astyages having sent for the boy and questioned him, and the boy replying, without any change of countenance, that "he had acted as a king," was struck with his high spirit, and reminded of his dream and its interpretation. In consequence, as both the resemblance of his features, the time of his exposure, and the confession of the herdsman, concurred exactly, he acknowledged him as his grandson. And since he seemed to have had his dream accomplished, by the boy's exercise of rule among the shepherds, he subdued his feelings of animosity; [but] being incensed with his friend Harpagus, [Astyages], in revenge for the preservation of his grandson, killed [Harpagus'] son, and gave him to his father to eat. Harpagus, dissembling his resentment for the present, deferred showing his malice towards the king, until a proper time for vengeance should occur. Some time having elapsed, and Cyrus being grown up, Harpagus, prompted by his resentment for the loss of his child ... exhorted him to raise an army, and march directly to seize the throne, promising that the Medes should join him....

1.6 • Cyrus ... was exhorted in a dream to make the same attempt,... and made war upon the Medes. Astyages, forgetting his treatment of Harpagus, entrusted him with the management of the war. Harpagus immediately delivered up the forces, which he had received from Astyages, to Cyrus, and took revenge for the king's cruelty by a treacherous desertion of him. Astyages, hearing of this occurrence, and collecting troops from all quarters, marched against the Persians in person.... In this battle Astyages was taken prisoner; from whom Cyrus took nothing but his kingdom, and, acting towards him the part rather of a grandson than of a conqueror, made him ruler of the powerful nation of the Hyrcanians; for to the Medes he was unwilling to return. Such was the termination of the empire of the Medes, who had ruled three hundred and fifty years.

Cyrus Cylinder (after 539 B.C.) 20–22 • I am Cyrus, king of the world, great king, legitimate king,... son of Cambyses, great king, king of Anshan, grandson of Cyrus, great king, king of Anshan, descendant of Teispes, great king, king of Anshan, of a family (which) always (exercised) kingship.

Nabonidus Chronicle (after 539 B.C.) ii.1–4 • [The sixth year (550–549 B.C.): [Astyages] mustered (his army) and marched against Cyrus, king of Anshan, for conquest [...] The army rebelled against Astyages and he was taken prisoner. Th[ey handed him over] to Cyrus. [...] Cyrus marched to Ecbatana, the royal city. The silver, gold, goods, property, [...] which he carried off as booty (from) Ecbatana, he took to Anshan (Persia).

Nabonidus Dream Text (after 539 B.C.) i.15, 24–29 • At the beginning of my everlasting reign, [Marduk] caused me to see a dream.... Marduk said: "The Medes you mentioned, their country, and the kings who walk at their side will cease to exist." In the third year, Cyrus, king of the land of Anshan, his young servant, rose against them, who with his few troops scattered the extensive Median forces. He captured Astyages, king of the Medes, and took him captive to his own land.

Daniel 6 ¹ It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom a hundred and twenty satraps, to be throughout the whole kingdom; ² and over them three presidents, of whom Daniel was one, to whom these satraps should give account, so that the king might suffer no loss. ³ Then this Daniel became distinguished above all the other presidents and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. ⁴ Then the presidents and the satraps sought to find a ground for complaint against Daniel with regard to the kingdom; but they could find no ground for complaint or any fault, because he was faithful, and no error or fault was found in him. ⁵ Then these men said, "We shall not find any ground for complaint against this Daniel unless we find it in connection with the law of his God."

⁶ Then these presidents and satraps came by agreement to the king and said to him, "O King Darius, live for ever! ⁷ All the presidents of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the counselors and the governors are agreed that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce an interdict, that whoever makes petition to any god or man for thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. ⁸ Now, O king, establish the interdict and sign the document, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which cannot be revoked." ⁹ Therefore King Darius signed the document and interdict.

Esther 1 ¹⁹ If it please the king, let a royal order go forth from him, and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes so that it may not be altered, that Vashti is to come no more before King Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal position to another who is better than she.

Daniel 6 ¹⁰ When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem; and he got down upon his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously. ¹¹ Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and supplication before his God.

Psalm 137

¹ By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept,
when we remembered Zion.

² On the willows there
we hung up our lyres.

³ For there our captors
required of us songs,
and our tormentors, mirth, saying,
"Sing us one of the songs of Zion!"

⁴ How shall we sing the LORD's song
in a foreign land?

⁵ If I forget you, O Jerusalem,
let my right hand wither!

⁶ Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth,
if I do not remember you,
if I do not set Jerusalem
above my highest joy!

St. Jerome, Comm. Dan. 6:10 • And so Daniel in this case, despising the king's commands and reposing his confidence in God, does not offer his prayers in some obscure spot but in a lofty place, and he opens up his windows toward Jerusalem, from whence he looked for the peace [of God]. He prays, moreover, according to God's behest and according to what Solomon had said when he admonished the people that they should pray in the direction of the Temple (1 Kings 8:29). Furthermore, there are three times in the day when we should bow our knees to God, and the tradition of the Church understands them to be the third hour, the sixth hour and the ninth hour. Last, it was at the third hour that the Holy Spirit descended on the apostles (Acts 2:15). It was at the sixth hour that Peter, purposing to eat, ascended to the upper room for prayer (Acts 10:9). It was at the ninth hour that Peter and John were on their way to the Temple (Acts 3:1).

6:11 • From this passage we learn that we are not to expose ourselves rashly to danger, but so far as it lies in our power, we are to avoid the plots of our enemies. And so in Daniel's case, he did not contravene the king's authority in a public square or out in the street but rather in a private place, in order that he might not neglect the commands of the one true God almighty.

Daniel 6 ¹² Then they came near and said before the king, concerning the interdict, "O king! Did you not sign an interdict, that any man who makes petition to any god or man within thirty days except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?" The king answered, "The thing stands fast, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be revoked." ¹³ Then they answered before the king, "That Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no heed to you, O king, or the interdict you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day." ¹⁴ Then the king, when he heard these words, was much distressed, and set his mind to deliver Daniel; and he labored till the sun went down to rescue him. ¹⁵ Then these men came by agreement to the king, and said to the king, "Know, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no interdict or ordinance which the king establishes can be changed."

Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica* (ca. 33 B.C.) 17.30.1–2, 4–7 • [Darius III] called a session of his Council of Friends and laid before them the alternatives, either to send generals with an army down to the coast or for himself, the king, to march down with all his armed forces and fight the Macedonians in person. Some said that the king must join in battle personally, and they argued that the Persians would fight better in that event. Charidemus, however, the Athenian ... recommended that Darius ... should keep in his own hands the reserve strength and the control of Asia while sending to the war a general who had given proof of his ability....

The king was moved by his arguments at first but his friends opposed them stoutly, and even brought Charidemus into suspicion of wanting to get the command so that he could betray the Persian Empire to the Macedonians. At this, Charidemus became angry and made free with slurs on Persian lack of manliness. This offended the king, and as his wrath blinded him to his advantage, he seized Charidemus by the girdle according to the custom of the Persians, turned him over to the attendants, and ordered him put to death. So Charidemus was led away, but as he went to his death, he shouted that the king would soon change his mind and would receive a prompt requital for this unjust punishment, becoming the witness of the overthrow of the kingdom....

Once the king's passion had cooled he promptly regretted his act and reproached himself for having made a serious mistake, but all his royal power was not able to undo what was done.

Daniel 6 ¹⁶ Then the king commanded, and Daniel was brought and cast into the den of lions. The king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, deliver you!" ¹⁷ And a stone was brought and laid upon the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet and with the signet of his lords, that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel. ¹⁸ Then the king went to his palace, and spent the night fasting; no diversions were brought to him, and sleep fled from him.

Aphrahat the Persian Sage, *Demonstrations* (ca. A.D. 337) 4.9 • Daniel prayed, and his prayer closed the mouths of the lions. Their hungry mouths were closed to the flesh and bones of the righteous man. The lions stretched out their paws and received Daniel so that he might not fall on the ground. They held him in their limbs and kissed his feet. When Daniel rose to pray in the den, they stretched out their paws to heaven after the example of Daniel. The one who receives prayers came down to them, and he closed the mouths of the lions. For Daniel said to Darius, "My God has sent his angel to close the mouths of the lions, and they have not done me any harm" (Dan 6:22) The den, certainly, was covered and sealed, but the light shone inside. And the lions were happy, since they had seen the light because of Daniel. Then, when Daniel grew sleepy and wanted to lie down, the lions lay flat, so that he might lie down on them and not on the ground. The den was illuminated more than an upper room with many windows, since there he multiplied his prayers more than in his upper room, where he only prayed three times a day.... His prayer caused the return from the captivity in Babylon at the end of seventy years.

Daniel 6 ¹⁹ Then the king rose in the morning with the daylight and went quickly to the lions' pit. ²⁰ And as he came near the pit, he cried out in a strong voice, "O Daniel, the slave of the living God, has your God whom you continually serve been able to deliver you from the mouth of the lions?" ²¹ And Daniel said to the king, "O king, live forever! ²² My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they did not hurt me, because uprightness was found in me before him, and also before you, O king, I have done no wrong."



Briton Rivière, *Daniel's Answer to the King* (1890)

Daniel 6 ²³ Then the king was exceedingly buoyed over him and said to bring up Daniel out of the pit. And Daniel was brought up out of the pit, and there was not any harm found on him, because he had believed in his God. ²⁴ And the king spoke, and they brought the men who had slandered Daniel, and they were thrown into the lions' pit—they and their sons and their wives. And before they reached the bottom of the pit the lions overpowered them and pulverized all their bones.

Esther 7 ⁸ And the king returned from the palace garden to the place where they were drinking wine, as Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was; and the king said, "Will he even assault the queen in my presence, in my own house?" As the words left the mouth of the king, they covered Haman's face. ⁹ Then said Harbona, one of the eunuchs in attendance on the king, "Moreover, the gallows which Haman has prepared for Mordecai, whose word saved the king, is standing in Haman's house, fifty cubits high." ¹⁰ And the king said, "Hang him on that." So they hanged Haman on the gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the anger of the king abated.

Andrew Steinmann, *Daniel* (ConC, 2014) p. 301 • The Christian reader of Daniel 6 may notice a number of parallels between Daniel and the life of Jesus Christ. Both prayed regularly (Dan 6:10; Lk 5:16). Malicious accusers sought to entrap each by means of his worship practice and fidelity to God's Word (Dan 6:5; Mt 4:6–10; 22:15–46). An unruly crowd brings him to a pagan ruler and accuses him of violating the law (Dan 6:11–13; Mt. 26:47–50; 27:1–2, 11–14; Jn 18:1–19:15). [One might even compare the citation of Darius' law in order to get Darius to condemn Daniel (6:13) to the citation of Caesar by Jesus' opponents in order to get Pilate to condemn Jesus (Jn 19:15–16).] The ruler, deeming him innocent, seeks to set him free, but eventually gives in to the crowd's desire and condemns him to death (Dan 6:14–16; Mat 27:18–26; Jn 19:8–16). Both Daniel and Jesus are said to have "trusted in (his) God" (Dan 6:23; Mt 27:43). A rock is placed over the opening of the pit or tomb and sealed with a royal seal (Dan 6:17; Mt 27:66) At dawn the king hurries to the pit (Dan 6:19), as the women did to the tomb on Easter dawn (Mt 28:1). Both emerge alive: Daniel, who served "the living God" (Dan 6:20, 26; cf. Mt 26:63), and the risen Jesus, who is himself "the living one" (Lk 24:5).

Daniel 6 ²⁵ Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: "Peace be multiplied to you. ²⁶ I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel,

²⁶ for he is the living God,
enduring for ever;
his kingdom shall never be destroyed,
and his dominion shall be to the end.

²⁷ He delivers and rescues,
he works signs and wonders
in heaven and on earth,
he who has saved Daniel
from the power of the lions."

²⁸ So this Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

Josephus, *A.J.* 10.263–266 • When, therefore, those that had intended thus to destroy Daniel by treachery were themselves destroyed, King Darius sent throughout the entire country, and praised that God whom Daniel worshipped, and said that he was the only true God, and had all power. He also showed Daniel very great honor, and made him the principal of his friends. And Daniel, being now so renowned and distinguished because of his reputation as a man beloved of God, built a tower at Ecbatana, in Media: it was a most elegant building, and wonderfully made, and it is still standing, and preserved to this day: and to such as see it, it appears to have been newly built, and to have been no older than that very day when anyone looks upon it, it is so fresh, flourishing, and beautiful, and no way grown old in so long time; for buildings suffer the same as men do, they grow old as well as they, and by numbers of years their strength is dissolved, and their beauty withered. Now they bury the kings of Media, of Persia, and Parthia, in this tower to this day; and he who is entrusted with the care of it is a Jewish priest; which thing is also observed to this day....

While he was alive he had the esteem and applause both of the kings and of the multitude; and now that he is dead, he retains a remembrance that will never fail.