DISCOVERING DANIEL

6
LESSON

WORKBOOK STUDY COMPANION · LESSON 6

Open Mouths, *Closed Mouths*

DANIEL 6

Scripture written out in the NASB95, every question answered in one sentence, cross references, verse-by-verse commentary from three trusted teachers — and for each question, a point of critical thinking and a key question to carry into the week.

Amir Tsarfati
DISCOVERING DANIEL

John MacArthur
GRACE TO YOU

David Guzik
ENDURING WORD

PREPARED FOR ED & PAUL SMITH · BIBLE STUDY

01 CAPTURE THE SCENE

What do I see?

Using my Bible, working through Daniel 6 verse by verse.

1 As Darius set up governors and administrators over the kingdom, what did he think about doing, and why (see Daniel 6:3)?

P. 113

Daniel 6:3 NASB95

Then this Daniel began distinguishing himself among the commissioners and satraps because he possessed an extraordinary spirit, and the king planned to appoint him over the entire kingdom.

IN MY WORDS

Because Daniel kept standing out above all the other officials by an extraordinary spirit, Darius planned to promote him over the whole kingdom.

CROSS REFERENCE **Genesis 41:38-39** Pharaoh said of Joseph, “Can we find a man like this, in whom is a divine spirit?”—the same recognition by a pagan king.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati points out that Daniel was now in his eighties and serving his third empire; the regime changed, the language of the court changed, but the man did not.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes that the phrase is continuous—Daniel kept on distinguishing himself. Excellence was not an event in his career; it was the texture of it.

CRITICAL THINKING

Notice that the promotion had not yet happened—it was still only the king's intention. The plot against Daniel was launched over a job he had not even been given. Envy does not wait for an injury; the mere prospect of someone else's advancement is enough.

KEY QUESTION

Whose success am I quietly resenting before it has even cost me anything?

2 How did the other governors and satraps feel about Daniel (see verses 4-5)?

P. 114

Daniel 6:4 NASB95

Then the commissioners and satraps began trying to find a ground of accusation against Daniel in regard to government affairs; but they could find no ground of accusation or evidence of corruption, inasmuch as he was faithful, and no negligence or corruption was to be found in him.

Daniel 6:5 NASB95

Then these men said, “We will not find any ground of accusation against this Daniel unless we find it against him with regard to the law of his God.”

IN MY WORDS

They resented him enough to go hunting for something to charge him with, and when a full investigation of his public life turned up no corruption and no negligence, they concluded the only way to bring him down was through the law of his God.

CROSS REFERENCE **1 Peter 2:12** "Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds… glorify God."

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur observes that these men conducted what amounts to a hostile audit of a lifetime of public service and came up empty—a record almost no official in history could survive.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik points out the backhanded compliment buried in their conclusion: the only law Daniel could be accused of keeping was God's.

CRITICAL THINKING

They did not decide Daniel was innocent; they decided he was unindictable. That is a different thing, and it is why the plot turned religious. When a man's conduct gives his enemies nothing, they must criminalize his convictions instead—which means the attack finally lands not on his failures but on his faith.

KEY QUESTION

If my life were audited the way Daniel's was, where would they find their opening?

3 Those who were plotting against Daniel were able to convince King Darius to sign a decree. What law did this decree establish (see verses 7-9)?

P. 115

Daniel 6:7 NASB95

All the commissioners of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the high officials and the governors have consulted together that the king should establish a statute and enforce an injunction that anyone who makes a petition to any god or man besides you, O king, for thirty days, shall be cast into the lions' den.

Daniel 6:8-9 NASB95

Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document so that it may not be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which may not be revoked. Therefore King Darius signed the document, that is, the injunction.

IN MY WORDS

For thirty days no one could petition any god or man except the king himself, and anyone who did would be thrown into the lions' den—sealed under the unchangeable law of the Medes and Persians.

CROSS REFERENCE **Esther 1:19** The same irrevocable Persian law—"so that it cannot be repealed"—later traps another king into a decree he regrets.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati notes the decree is a small rehearsal of the last days: a global demand for worship directed at one man, enforced by death for those who refuse.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur points out the flattery in the trap—they told Darius that "all the commissioners" had agreed, which was a lie, since the man they most wanted removed was never consulted.

CRITICAL THINKING

The decree did not outlaw prayer; it redirected it. Daniel could have kept praying for thirty days so long as he prayed to the king. That is how idolatry usually arrives—not as a demand to stop worshiping, but as a request to change the address.

KEY QUESTION

What has quietly taken God's place as the one I petition first when I need something?

4 What did Daniel do upon learning the decree had been signed (see verse 10)?

P. 116

Daniel 6:10 NASB95

Now when Daniel knew that the document was signed, he entered his house (now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem); and he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously.

IN MY WORDS

He went home and kept praying three times a day at his open windows toward Jerusalem, exactly as he had always done.

CROSS REFERENCE **1 Kings 8:48-49** Solomon asked that exiles who pray "toward their land" and toward the temple be heard from heaven—Daniel was praying the prayer Solomon had anticipated.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik draws attention to the two words "giving thanks." Daniel had just been condemned to death by legislation, and he thanked God—this was not a protest prayer, it was his ordinary prayer offered on an extraordinary day.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati notes the windows faced Jerusalem, a city that had lain in ruins for decades. Daniel prayed toward a promise rather than toward a skyline.

CRITICAL THINKING

The text says "as he had been doing previously"—the crisis changed nothing because the habit was already fixed. Daniel did not summon courage at the moment of testing; he simply declined to invent a new routine. That is why the decree could not move him: there was nothing to decide.

KEY QUESTION

Which of my spiritual habits are strong enough that a threat would not have to be argued with, only ignored?

5 What did Daniel's accusers catch him doing (see verse 11)? And what did they say to the king (see verses 11-14)?

P. 117

Daniel 6:11 NASB95

Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and supplication before his God.

Daniel 6:13 NASB95

Then they answered and spoke before the king, "Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the injunction which you signed, but keeps making his petition three times a day."

IN MY WORDS

They came as a group and caught him praying, then went to the king and reported that Daniel—"one of the exiles from Judah"—was ignoring both him and his signed injunction three times a day.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 3:12** The same accusation pattern: "There are certain Jews… these men, O king, have disregarded you."

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur points out that they first got the king to reaffirm the decree in principle before naming the man—a legal trap sprung in the right order, so Darius condemned Daniel before he knew whom he was condemning.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati marks the phrase "one of the exiles from Judah." After decades of faithful service, the charge is still framed around his people—the oldest accusation in the book.

CRITICAL THINKING

They described a crime of insult—"pays no attention to you"—not a crime of prayer. Persecution rarely presents itself as opposition to God; it presents itself as a matter of loyalty, respect, and public order. That framing is what makes it persuasive to decent men like Darius.

KEY QUESTION

When my obedience to God is called disrespect toward someone else, can I tell the difference?

6 What was the king's reaction when he realized a trap had been set for Daniel (see verse 14)?

P. 117

Daniel 6:14 NASB95

Then, as soon as the king heard this statement, he was deeply distressed and set his mind on delivering Daniel; and even until sunset he kept exerting himself to rescue him.

IN MY WORDS

He was deeply distressed and spent the rest of the day, right up to sunset, working to find some way to rescue Daniel.

CROSS REFERENCE **Matthew 27:24** Pilate "washed his hands"—another ruler who knew the accused was innocent and still handed him over.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik observes that Darius was the second most miserable man in the empire that day—and unlike Daniel, he had no peace at all, because he had signed the thing himself.

CRITICAL THINKING

Darius exerted himself all day and accomplished nothing, because the trap had been built out of his own vanity. He was not fighting his enemies; he was fighting a decree he had been flattered into signing. Pride is the only cage a king can lock himself into and then lack the authority to open.

KEY QUESTION

What am I still paying for today because it flattered me at the time?

7 Because the law could not be retracted, what was the king forced to do (see verses 15-17)?

P. 118

Daniel 6:16 NASB95

Then the king gave orders, and Daniel was brought in and cast into the lions' den. The king spoke and said to Daniel, "Your God whom you constantly serve will Himself deliver you."

Daniel 6:17 NASB95

A stone was brought and laid over the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signet rings of his nobles, so that nothing would be changed in regard to Daniel.

IN MY WORDS

He had to order Daniel thrown into the lions' den, and then a stone was laid over the mouth of the den and sealed with his own signet ring and those of his nobles.

CROSS REFERENCE **Matthew 27:66** "They went and made the grave secure, and along with the guard they set a seal on the stone."

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur notes the irony of the seal: it was meant to keep men from tampering with Daniel, and it ended up guaranteeing that no man could take credit for the rescue.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik points out that the nobles' seals were there to keep the king from quietly reversing himself in the night—they trusted him no more than he trusted them.

CRITICAL THINKING

A sealed stone over a pit, a helpless man inside, powerful men certain the matter is closed, and a morning that undoes all of it. The chapter is a rehearsal of a Sunday still centuries away, and the sealing that was meant to end the story is what makes the ending unmistakable.

KEY QUESTION

What situation have I already sealed off in my own mind as finished?

8 What happened to the king during the night, and what did he do first thing in the morning (see verses 18-20)?

P. 118

Daniel 6:18 NASB95

Then the king went off to his palace and spent the night fasting, and no entertainment was brought before him; and his sleep fled from him.

Daniel 6:19-20 NASB95

Then the king arose at dawn, at the break of day, and went in haste to the lions' den. When he had come near the den to Daniel, he cried out with a troubled voice. The king spoke and said to Daniel, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you constantly serve, been able to deliver you from the lions?"

IN MY WORDS

The king fasted all night, refused any entertainment, and could not sleep—then hurried to the den at first light and called out to ask whether Daniel's God had been able to deliver him.

CROSS REFERENCE **Psalm 4:8** "In peace I will both lie down and sleep, for You alone, O LORD, make me to dwell in safety."

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik makes the comparison plain: the man in the palace could not sleep and the man in the den almost certainly did. Circumstances do not determine rest; conscience and trust do.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati highlights the king's own words—"servant of the living God." A pagan monarch had been watching Daniel long enough to know exactly whose servant he was.

CRITICAL THINKING

Darius asked whether God had been "able," but the night before he had declared that God "will Himself deliver you." His faith was strongest when he was helpless and weakest after he had slept on it. Fear does not usually attack our convictions head-on; it just wears them down between sundown and dawn.

KEY QUESTION

What did I believe about God yesterday that I am asking Him to prove again this morning?

9 What was Daniel's response to the king (see verses 21-22)?

P. 119

Daniel 6:21-22 NASB95

Then Daniel spoke to the king, "O king, live forever! My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths and they have not harmed me, inasmuch as I was found innocent before Him; and also toward you, O king, I have committed no crime."

IN MY WORDS

He greeted the king warmly and said God had sent His angel to shut the lions' mouths because he was found innocent before God, and that he had committed no crime against the king either.

CROSS REFERENCE **Hebrews 11:33** By faith they "shut the mouths of lions"—Daniel is unnamed there, but unmistakably in view among the heroes of faith.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur observes that Daniel opened with a blessing on the very man who had sentenced him. There is no bitterness in the answer, not a syllable of accusation.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes that Daniel gives the credit entirely away—God sent, God shut. He does not claim his faith closed the lions' mouths; he claims God did.

CRITICAL THINKING

Daniel says he was found innocent "before Him" first, and only then adds that he had done nothing against the king. He got the order right. His conscience was settled in heaven before he ever defended himself on earth, which is why he could defend himself without heat.

KEY QUESTION

Do I seek my verdict from God first, or do I need people to clear me before I can rest?

10 What did the king command be done to Daniel's accusers, and what was their fate (see verse 24)?

P. 120

Daniel 6:24 NASB95

The king then gave orders, and they brought those men who had maliciously accused Daniel, and they cast them, their children and their wives into the lions' den; and they had not reached the bottom of the den before the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.

IN MY WORDS

The king had the men who maliciously accused Daniel thrown into the same den along with their wives and children, and the lions killed them before they even reached the bottom.

CROSS REFERENCE **Proverbs 26:27** "He who digs a pit will fall into it, and he who rolls a stone, it will come back on him."

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati notes the Persian custom of executing a traitor's household, harsh to us but standard in that court—and a warning that a man's rebellion never stays contained to himself.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik points out the detail that settles any doubt about the miracle: the lions were not full, not tame, and not asleep. They were ravenous. Only God had held them.

CRITICAL THINKING

The narrative gives us the lions' real appetite only after Daniel is safe. Had we been told first, the deliverance would have looked like a lucky night. Told afterward, it removes every natural explanation—Scripture often withholds the proof until the trusting is already done.

KEY QUESTION

Am I willing to trust before I am given the evidence that would have made trusting easy?

11 King Darius then wrote a new decree. What did the decree say about God (see verses 26-27)?

P. 121

Daniel 6:26 NASB95

I make a decree that in all the dominion of my kingdom men are to fear and tremble before the God of Daniel; For He is the living God and enduring forever, And His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed, And His dominion will be forever.

Daniel 6:27 NASB95

He delivers and rescues and performs signs and wonders In heaven and on earth, Who has also delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.

IN MY WORDS

He decreed that everyone in his empire must fear the God of Daniel—the living God who endures forever, whose kingdom will never be destroyed, and who delivers and rescues and works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 4:34-35** Nebuchadnezzar's nearly identical confession—"His dominion is an everlasting dominion"—a second pagan king brought to the same conclusion.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur cautions that a royal decree is not a conversion; Darius commanded reverence for Daniel's God without ever saying that God had become his own.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati observes that a Persian king announced God's everlasting kingdom to the whole empire—the very truth Daniel 7 is about to unfold in detail.

CRITICAL THINKING

The decree cannot make anyone believe; it can only make everyone hear. Darius could legislate reverence the same way he had legislated worship a month earlier, and the mechanism was no better the second time—but the content had changed, and Daniel's faithfulness in a pit is what changed it.

KEY QUESTION

Is there someone who will hear the truth this month only because of how I handled something hard?

02 ANALYZE THE MESSAGE

What does it say and mean?

Using both my Bible and my copy of Discovering Daniel.

1 **Daniel's fellow governors and administrators did not like the idea of being placed under his authority. Knowing what you do about Daniel's character, what are some reasons these adversaries were so determined to get rid of Daniel (see page 115 in Discovering Daniel)?** P. 115

> **Daniel 6:4 NASB95**
>
> Then the commissioners and satraps began trying to find a ground of accusation against Daniel in regard to government affairs; but they could find no ground of accusation or evidence of corruption, inasmuch as he was faithful, and no negligence or corruption was to be found in him.

> **IN MY WORDS**
>
> He was a foreigner and a Jewish exile promoted over native Persians, he was in his eighties and they expected the post themselves, and above all he was honest—an incorruptible man over the treasury threatened every bit of graft they had going.

CROSS REFERENCE **Proverbs 29:27** "An unjust man is abominable to the righteous, and he who is upright in the way is abominable to the wicked."

> **Amir Tsarfati** DISCOVERING DANIEL
>
> Tsarfati notes that Daniel's integrity was not merely admirable to these men—it was expensive. A satrap who cannot be bribed shuts down the entire system beneath him.

> **John MacArthur** GRACE TO YOU
>
> MacArthur adds that envy needs no injury. Daniel had done nothing to them; his existence at the top was the offense.

> **CRITICAL THINKING**
>
> The deepest reason is the one the text hints at rather than states: a righteous man is a standing accusation to men who are not. They did not hate Daniel for what he did to them but for what his life said about them, and that is a grievance no amount of good treatment can settle.

KEY QUESTION

Have I ever resented someone simply because their integrity exposed mine?

2 **Why do you think King Darius was able to be persuaded to sign the new law?** P. 116

> **Daniel 6:7 NASB95**
>
> All the commissioners of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the high officials and the governors have consulted together that the king should establish a statute and enforce an injunction that anyone who makes a petition to any god or man besides you, O king, for thirty days, shall be cast into the lions' den.

IN MY WORDS

They flattered him—presenting it as unanimous, as a way to unify a newly conquered empire around him, and as an honor to his own person—and his pride swallowed it before his judgment could ask who was missing from the room.

CROSS REFERENCE **Proverbs 29:5** "A man who flatters his neighbor is spreading a net for his steps."

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur points out the one question Darius never asked: where is Daniel? The absence of his most trusted official from a supposedly unanimous consultation should have ended the meeting.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik observes that the thirty-day limit made it feel small and temporary—harmless enough to sign without thinking, which is exactly what made it deadly.

CRITICAL THINKING

Flattery works because it does not ask us to believe something about the flatterer, only something we already want to believe about ourselves. Darius was not deceived about them; he was deceived about himself. That is always the harder deception to catch.

KEY QUESTION

What compliment would be most effective at getting me to stop asking questions?

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3 In light of the new law, Daniel could have changed his prayer routine, but didn't. What are some reasons you can think of for why Daniel continued his habit of prayer?

P. 116

Daniel 6:10 NASB95

Now when Daniel knew that the document was signed, he entered his house (now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem); and he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously.

IN MY WORDS

He needed God more than ever at that moment, he refused to let a government redefine his worship, and after a lifetime of praying that way any change—even a discreet one—would have been a public signal that the king now outranked God.

CROSS REFERENCE **Acts 5:29** "We must obey God rather than men."

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes Daniel did not open the windows in defiance; they were already open. He simply refused to close them, which is a different act altogether.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati observes that Daniel had prayed toward Jerusalem in exile for some seventy years. A thirty-day decree was not going to interrupt a seventy-year conversation.

CRITICAL THINKING

Daniel had a real option that looks entirely reasonable: pray silently, pray inwardly, wait thirty days. What he understood is that a concession framed as prudence still teaches everyone watching that faith yields when the cost rises. He was not being stubborn; he was refusing to teach that lesson.

KEY QUESTION

Where am I calling a compromise "wisdom" because the season is short?

4 **When King Darius was forced to have Daniel thrown into the lions' den, he made this remarkable statement to Daniel: "Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you" (Daniel 6:16). By this time, Daniel would have served Darius for at least a year or two. What might Daniel have done during that time that would impress upon the king the idea that God might deliver Daniel?** P. 118

Daniel 6:16 NASB95

Then the king gave orders, and Daniel was brought in and cast into the lions' den. The king spoke and said to Daniel, "Your God whom you constantly serve will Himself deliver you."

IN MY WORDS

Daniel must have spoken openly about his God, told the king the histories of the furnace and Nebuchadnezzar's madness and the writing on the wall, and lived a life so consistent that Darius knew exactly whom he served without having to ask.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 5:11-12** The queen mother could describe Daniel's God and gifts in detail to Belshazzar—his testimony was common knowledge in that palace.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur notes the phrase "whom you constantly serve" is the king's own summary of Daniel's life. He had watched long enough to reduce it to one accurate sentence.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati points out that Daniel had lived through three deliverances he could have recounted—and Darius clearly knew the stories, or he could not have expected a fourth.

CRITICAL THINKING

The witness that mattered here was not a sermon; it was a reputation. Darius could name Daniel's God under pressure because Daniel had made Him unavoidable in ordinary conversation for years. Consistency, not eloquence, is what put that sentence in the king's mouth.

KEY QUESTION

If the people I work with had to guess what I believe, would they have to guess?

5 **In Daniel 6:22, whom did Daniel credit for protecting him from the lions?** P. 119

Daniel 6:22 NASB95

My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths and they have not harmed me, inasmuch as I was found innocent before Him; and also toward you, O king, I have committed no crime.

IN MY WORDS

He credited God, who sent His angel to shut the lions' mouths.

CROSS REFERENCE **Psalm 34:7** "The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him, and rescues them."

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes the same messenger who walked in the furnace in Daniel 3 appears in the den in Daniel 6—the God who comes into the trial rather than merely watching it.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati observes that Daniel takes no credit for his own courage or his own righteousness before men; the whole account is handed to God in a single sentence.

CRITICAL THINKING

The angel shut the lions' mouths but did not remove Daniel from the den. He spent the entire night in the pit, in the dark, with the animals. God's deliverance did not spare him the place; it changed what the place could do to him.

KEY QUESTION

Am I asking God to take me out of something He intends to keep me safe inside of?

6 Why do you think the account about Daniel in the lions' den generates such a strongly positive and empathetic response from those who read it?

P. 121

Daniel 6:23 NASB95

Then the king was very pleased and gave orders for Daniel to be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den and no injury whatever was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.

IN MY WORDS

Because everyone understands being punished for doing right, everyone fears being cornered by something bigger than themselves, and this story says out loud what we all hope is true—that God sees the innocent man in the pit and comes for him.

CROSS REFERENCE **Psalm 22:21** "Save me from the lion's mouth"—the cry David wrote and Daniel lived.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur points out that the final clause is the theological center of the chapter: no injury was found on him "because he had trusted in his God." The narrative refuses to let us admire Daniel's nerve instead of God's faithfulness.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes the appeal is partly that Daniel is old, alone, and completely powerless. There is no clever escape and no heroics—only God.

CRITICAL THINKING

The story moves us because it is the shape of the gospel in miniature: an innocent man condemned by law, sealed in a pit, brought out alive in the morning, and his accusers judged. We respond to Daniel 6 the way we do because we have already met its ending somewhere else.

KEY QUESTION

Do I read this story mainly as a rescue I want, or as a picture of the rescue I have already been given?

03 COMPARE THIS PASSAGE WITH THE REST OF SCRIPTURE

How is it supported elsewhere in the Bible?

Letting Scripture interpret Scripture.

1 **The fact King Darius sentenced Daniel's accusers to the very same sentence they had imposed upon Daniel may seem harsh. But note the Old Testament principle taught in the following passages:** P. 120

a. What does Deuteronomy 19:16-21 state was to be done with those who bore false witness?

> **IN MY WORDS**
>
> The false witness was to receive exactly the penalty he had intended to bring on his brother—life for life, eye for eye—so that the rest of the people would hear and fear.

CROSS REFERENCE **Deuteronomy 19:19 NASB95** "Then you shall do to him just as he had intended to do to his brother. Thus you shall purge the evil from among you."

b. After Haman was caught conspiring to have the innocent Mordecai hanged on the gallows, what fate did Haman face, according to Esther 7:9-10?

> **IN MY WORDS**
>
> Haman was hanged on the very gallows, fifty cubits high, that he had built for Mordecai.

CROSS REFERENCE **Esther 7:10 NASB95** "So they hanged Haman on the gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai, and the king's anger subsided."

c. In Obadiah 15, what did God say He would do to the nations that harm His people?

> **IN MY WORDS**
>
> He said that as they had done, it would be done to them—their dealings would return on their own heads.

CROSS REFERENCE **Obadiah 15 NASB95** "As you have done, it will be done to you. Your dealings will return on your own head."

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur notes this is not vengeance but the lex talionis built into the Law itself—the measure a man sets for another becomes the measure God allows him to receive.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati connects the pattern to God's word to Abraham—"I will curse those who curse you"—a promise still running through Esther, Obadiah, and the last days.

CRITICAL THINKING

The principle is not that God is vindictive but that He is exact. The accusers did not receive a punishment God invented for them; they received the one they had drafted, signed, and sealed themselves. Justice here simply declines to protect them from their own legislation.

KEY QUESTION

Is there a standard I am applying to someone else that I would not survive having applied to me?

2 **Have you noticed by now that whenever Daniel was opposed or persecuted by enemies, he never avenged them? What attitudes are we to have toward our enemies, according to the following passages?** P. 120

a. **Matthew 5:44**

> **IN MY WORDS**
>
> I am to love my enemies and pray for those who persecute me.

CROSS REFERENCE **Matthew 5:44 NASB95** "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."

b. **Romans 12:17-19**

> **IN MY WORDS**
>
> I am never to pay back evil for evil, but so far as it depends on me to be at peace with everyone and leave room for the wrath of God.

CROSS REFERENCE **Romans 12:19 NASB95** "Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord."

c. **Romans 12:20**

> **IN MY WORDS**
>
> I am to feed my enemy when he is hungry and give him a drink when he is thirsty.

CROSS REFERENCE **Romans 12:20 NASB95** "'But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.'"

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes that Daniel never lifted a hand against the men who tried to kill him. He did not have to—God handled it, which is precisely what leaving room for God's wrath looks like in practice.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur points out that Paul's command is not passivity. "Feed him" and "give him a drink" are active, costly, and deliberately public.

CRITICAL THINKING

Notice that Paul does not say vengeance is wrong; he says it is taken. "Vengeance is Mine" means the account will be settled, just not by me. Forgiveness is not pretending the debt does not exist—it is transferring the collection to someone qualified to handle it.

KEY QUESTION

What account am I still trying to collect on myself instead of handing to God?

04 EXECUTE

How does this affect my life?

Taking Daniel 6 off the page and into the week.

1 **When we as Christians are faithful to God, we can expect opposition. What do you think are among the reasons that unbelievers respond negatively toward us?** P. 121

John 15:18-19 NASB95

If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you.

IN MY WORDS

A life lived for God quietly exposes the way other people are living, and rather than change, it is easier to attack the person holding the mirror.

CROSS REFERENCE **2 Timothy 3:12** "Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur notes that Jesus roots the hostility in identity, not behavior—"you are not of the world." The offense is what we belong to, not merely what we do.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati observes that Daniel's enemies never argued with his God; they simply could not tolerate a man whose loyalties were not for sale.

CRITICAL THINKING

Jesus says the hatred lands on us because it was aimed at Him first. That reframes opposition entirely: it is not primarily a verdict on our personality or our tact. Most of the sting goes out of being disliked once we understand who is actually being rejected.

KEY QUESTION

When I face pushback for my faith, do I take it personally or take it to Christ?

2 **Read 1 Peter 3:13-17 and answer the following:** P. 121

1 Peter 3:14-17 NASB95

But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame. For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.

a. What happens when we suffer "for righteousness' sake" (verse 14)?

IN MY WORDS

Peter says we are blessed—the suffering itself is counted as a blessing, not a sign that something has gone wrong.

CROSS REFERENCE **Matthew 5:10** "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

b. Rather than be afraid, what are we to do, according to verse 15?

IN MY WORDS

I am to set Christ apart as Lord in my heart and stay ready to explain my hope to anyone who asks, with gentleness and reverence.

CROSS REFERENCE **Colossians 4:6** "Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person."

c. What can our good conscience and good conduct do to those who oppose us?

IN MY WORDS

They put slanderers to shame—a clean record eventually makes the accusation collapse on the accuser, exactly as it did in Daniel 6.

CROSS REFERENCE **Titus 2:8** "Sound in speech which is beyond reproach, so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us."

d. What distinction is Peter careful to make in verse 17?

IN MY WORDS

He distinguishes suffering for doing right from suffering for doing wrong—only the first is a blessing, and the second is just consequences.

CROSS REFERENCE **1 Peter 4:15** "Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler."

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes that "do not fear their intimidation" is a command about the inner life. Peter does not tell us to stop the intimidation; he tells us not to let it govern us.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur points out that sanctifying Christ as Lord in the heart is the antidote Peter prescribes for fear—settle who is Lord inside, and the threats outside lose their leverage.

CRITICAL THINKING

Peter's careful distinction in verse 17 is the one Christians most often skip. We would rather interpret every difficulty as persecution than admit some of it is simply the harvest of our own foolishness. Daniel's testimony worked precisely because his enemies had to invent a crime—there were no real ones to use.

KEY QUESTION

Is what I am suffering right now actually for righteousness, or am I calling consequences persecution?

3 **On page 121 of Discovering Daniel, we read this: “In your time of trial, even though you don’t see a physical manifestation of the Almighty God, do you still believe that He loves you, that He is watching out for you, and that He will always see and reward your righteousness?” Why can we be confident God is watching out for us even when it seems He hasn’t come to our rescue? Are there Bible passages you can use to support your answer?** P. 121

Romans 8:38-39 NASB95

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Hebrews 13:5 NASB95

Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, “I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you.”

IN MY WORDS

Because His promise to never leave me was never conditioned on my circumstances improving, and the cross already settled the question of whether He loves me—so His silence is never the same thing as His absence.

CROSS REFERENCE **Romans 8:32** “He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?”

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati notes that Daniel spent the whole night in the den. God did not prevent the pit, and He did not shorten the night—He simply was not absent from either.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik reminds us that God's care is measured at the cross, not by today's circumstances. What He has already done is the fixed point; what He has not yet done is not evidence against Him.

CRITICAL THINKING

Daniel had no manifestation at all until morning—the angel came into a dark pit where no one could see him work. The absence of visible evidence is not the absence of God's activity. Most of what He does on our behalf we will only be able to name afterward.

KEY QUESTION

What am I currently reading as God's absence that may turn out to be His work in the dark?

4 **In what ways does Daniel’s example inspire you to grow more?** P. 121

Daniel 6:23 NASB95

Then the king was very pleased and gave orders for Daniel to be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den and no injury whatever was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.

IN MY WORDS

He makes me want a life with no handle on it for my accusers to grab, prayer habits so fixed that a threat could not renegotiate them, and enough trust in God that I could face a den without needing a guarantee first.

CROSS REFERENCE **1 Corinthians 15:58** “Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.”

> **John MacArthur** GRACE TO YOU
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> MacArthur observes that Daniel's greatness was not a single heroic night but sixty years of unremarkable faithfulness that made the heroic night possible.

> **Amir Tsarfati** DISCOVERING DANIEL
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> Tsarfati notes that a man in his eighties was still growing, still praying three times a day, still the one man in the empire they could not buy.

> **CRITICAL THINKING**
>
> What is most instructive about Daniel is what the chapter never shows: no agonized deliberation, no wrestling over whether to close the windows. The decision had been made decades earlier and simply held. Character is not what we produce under pressure; it is what pressure reveals we already built.

KEY QUESTION

What am I building right now that would still be standing if it were tested tonight?

CLOSING THOUGHTS

The fact God delivered Daniel from the lions confirms that He is able to care for His own in miraculous ways. But we should not take that to mean He will always rescue us from trouble. Hebrews 11 lists faithful saints who were tortured and refused release, who faced mockings and scourgings, chains and imprisonment — who were stoned, sawn in two, and put to death with the sword, wandering in deserts and mountains and caves. The same chapter that says faith "shut the mouths of lions" says faith also endured the sword. Both are listed as faith.

James wrote, "Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial" (James 1:12) — perseveres, not escapes, and not avoids. We are blessed when we endure, not when we evade. And a few verses earlier he explained why: "the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing" (James 1:3-4). When our faith is tested, something good is being made.

Paul says the same thing from the other side: "we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed — always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body" (2 Corinthians 4:8-10). Our suffering is how Christ becomes visible in us. When we endure, our enemies are left without an explanation for the strength they are watching, and later Paul adds that "all things are for your sakes, so that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God" (verse 15). Our hardships put God on display.

"My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths and they have not harmed me, inasmuch as I was found innocent before Him."

Daniel 6:22

Daniel prayed with his windows open toward a city that was still in ruins, to a God who had not yet brought His people home, under a law that made it a capital crime. He did it because he had done it the day before, and the day before that, for some seventy years. The decree did not test his courage so much as it tested his calendar — and a habit that old does not bend for thirty days. If God should choose not to deliver us when we face opposition, we can know with certainty that He will use the difficulty to do a good work in our lives and in the lives of others. Either way, the mouths that matter are the ones God closes, and the mouth that mattered most in this chapter was the king's — opened at last to tell an entire empire that the God of Daniel is the living God.

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