

# #9 - Standing Up in a Smackdown World

10/19/2008 - Jim Johnson/Daniel 6:1-25

## INTRODUCTION – 6:1-5

Babylon was gobbled up by the Kingdom of Medo-Persia. (Daniel 5). In chapter 6, Daniel finds himself serving in the court of a new King. King Darius was a secondary King who served under the great King Cyrus. His domain was Babylon and its regions. As he began to organize his Kingdom, he found the services of Daniel to be quite valuable (1-2). He planned, in fact, to place Daniel second in command (3). His peers were not happy about this and began to look for some grounds of accusation related to his character or his performance but none was found. (4). They, therefore, decided that they should manufacture a ground of accusation based on the practice of his faith (5) They would take his religious practices and beliefs, and make them appear to be harmful and dangerous and disloyal.

**When this world can't find \_\_\_\_\_ with our character or performance, they change the rules of the game especially in respect to our faith. So....**

## II. The critics changed the \_\_\_\_\_ – 6-15

### A. They \_\_\_\_\_ a law that seemed reasonable - 6-9

The satraps conspired to write a brand new law that made it a crime to pray to or petition anyone except the King. From the King's perspective it seemed like an excellent law. It would unify his people and encourage loyalty to the King. (6-7) Once the law was signed it would be irrevocable so they pressured the King to sign the bill – quickly – before he could think through the implications of it. (8-9)

### B. They \_\_\_\_\_ the intention of that law. 10-11

It was Daniel's daily practice to pray. 3 times a day he would go to his room, open the window that faced Jerusalem, get on his knees and beseech the God of Israel. His critics knew this was his practice. This was the specific reason that they enacted their legislation. (10) Daniel was predictably righteous. He prayed as was expected. (11) The day before the bill passed, Daniel was considered to be a good and loyal citizen. But then the bill passed, and the rules had been changed. Suddenly Daniel's faith was reframed – so that now he appeared to be disloyal and his prayer became unlawful. Daniel didn't change. His commitment to the King and to his God had not changed, but the rules had.

### C. They \_\_\_\_\_ the law to condemn the faithful– 12-15

The straps took their accusation to the King. They used their new law to paint Daniel as a rebel and a traitor to the King. (12-13) The King reacted with grief. He knew Daniel to be loyal and therefore sought to rescue him from his own decree (14) but his hands were tied by the Law.

Beware: these are the very same tactics employed in our culture today against Christians.

The critics may have changed the rules, but...

### III. God changed the \_\_\_\_\_ – 16-28

#### A. God \_\_\_\_\_ Daniel. 16-18

The King was part of God's provision for Daniel. He was a supporter and encourager. He was a prayer warrior that prayed the night away for his friend.

#### B. God \_\_\_\_\_ Daniel. – 19-23

God had dispatched an angel to spend the night with Daniel. And though the lions had been starved in preparation for the execution, they had decided to join the king in his fast. Daniel presented this as evidence that he was innocent. His implied that a guilty man would have been eaten. God protected his servant.

#### C. God \_\_\_\_\_ Daniel. – 24

The king knew who was loyal and who was not. The satraps had manipulated the King. They duped him into signing a law that would be a snare to Daniel. They tied his hands so that he had to condemn his friend and trusted counselor to death. They pretended to be loyal and painted Daniel out to be a rebel. But the king knew. So he made sure that the satraps suffered the fate they had designed for Daniel.

#### D. God \_\_\_\_\_ Daniel. - 25-28

Another pagan world ruler bowed the knee to the God of Heaven. Daniel had won another soul. He praised the Lord throughout his Kingdom.

**They may try to change the rules, but \_\_\_\_\_ owns the game.**

### APPLICATION

We need to understand this chapter for our world is growing more and more uncomfortable with people of faith. They will attempt to accuse us on the basis of our character & our performance. Which is why we, like Daniel, must be above reproach – meaning that we must be so together that there is no weakness to exploit - no basis on which to make a justifiable accusation. (Phil 2:15) Their goal is to silence the voice and the influence of the people of God forever. They may try to change the rules, but in the end it is God who owns the game. We may have to spend some time with the lion's, but at the end of the day we will be vindicated and our critics will be silenced

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### FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

Use this section in your personal or family devotions to better apply the truth.

1. The critics are still changing the rules. Take the 3 rule changing steps and trace another standard in our culture that is in the process of being changed.
2. Daniel was very public with the demonstration of his faith. What can we learn from his example?