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The Conspiracy of the Royal Administrators 6: 4-9

The conspiracy of the royal administrators DIG: What stirs up the jealousy between the two administrators and satraps? What trap do they set for Dani'el? Why did Dani'el's private life become an issue for public policy? How did they manage to get their way with the king? Why are appeals to flattery so powerful?

REFLECT: Describe a time when you (or someone you know) have experienced difficulties at work that reflected directly to your religious beliefs. Does having strong principles cause you to be more vulnerable to others? If you were accused of being a believer, would there be enough evidence to convict you?

The primary objective of the conspirators was to trap Dani'el in an impossible situation.

The story opens with **Darius** (**to see link click Ag – Cyrus and Darius**) setting up **his** personal form of government for the province of **Babylon**. By now, we are not surprised that **Dani'el** had distinguished **himself** from all the others that **Darius** had placed in important positions throughout the province. After all, we already know **he** was the wisest of the magi (see **Cs – Dani'el Interpreted the Handwriting on the Wall**) and most capable of everyone in the land. **The king's** desire to promote **him** above **the** other two **administrators** (see **Dl – Dani'el is Promoted**) was apparently leaked to the others who, for obviously selfish reasons, wanted to block **his** swift rise. Therefore, **they** hatched two conspiracies.[330]



First, **the** two **royal administrators and** a few **satraps tried to find grounds for charges against him in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so.** Unfortunately for **them**, **Dani'el's** behavior conformed to **his** spotless reputation. Even in the eyes of **his** worst enemies, **he** was **a** faithful **man** of integrity. **They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent (6:4). Their** first conspiracy having failed, so **the**y needed to come up with some other excuse to accuse **him**.

So, secondly, **their** twisted minds came up with what **they** thought was the perfect plan. **They** realized that **they** would **never find any basis for charges against Dani'el unless it had something to do with the law of his God (6:5).** In other words, **the conspirators** thought **they** could get **Dani'el** in trouble on religious grounds. **They** would work on arranging a situation in which **Dani'el** would be forced to either compromise **his** faith or disobey **the decree** of **Darius**, bringing **his** religious practice in conflict with the state. **They** knew that if **Dani'el** had to choose between obedience to **his God** and obedience to the Persian authorities, loyalty to **ADONAI** would come first.

Once again, this observation should be both challenging and convicting to us. **Dani'el's enemies** were totally confident that **he** would rather die than disobey

his God. **They** knew that **he** would sooner go to **the lions' den** than give up **his** practice of daily **prayer**. Would our friends and acquaintances, never mind our enemies, say that about us with equal confidence? Is our commitment to constant **prayer** so obvious to everyone we meet? In view of **Dani'el's** commitment to **prayer**, **the administrators and satraps** conspired together and went to **Darius** with a proposal for a new law.[331]

So, the two **royal administrators and** a few **satraps went as a group to the king, declaring "May King Darius live forever!"** After the customary greeting, **their** plan started with a lie. **They** claimed that every level of government officials in the whole province of **Babylon** had approved of **their** proposal, saying that **the royal administrators, prefects, 120 satraps, advisers and governors have all agreed that the king should issue an edict and enforce it.** Only **Dani'el** was missing from **their** conspiracy meeting with **Darius**. It was quite probable that **Darius** was unaware of **Dani'el's** absence. **He** may have assumed that **Dani'el** supported the apparently unanimous decision. The plan was that **a** royal **decree** would prohibit **anyone praying to any god or human being** other than **the king.** If caught **praying** to anyone else but **Darius**, they would **be thrown into the lion's den.** That absolute law would remain in effect for **the following thirty days.** This edict thus functioned similarly to Nebuchadnezzar's enormous golden statue. Doubtless, **Darius** was also flattered by the thought that all of **his** officials wanted to introduce this new **decree** – so flattered that **he** didn't notice that **Dani'el** wasn't among **them**. Whatever **the king's** motives, **he** quickly signed **the decree** into effect as a law of **the Medes and Persians** which **could not be altered**. **So the king put the decree in writing (6:7-9).**[332]

As Arnold Fruchtenbaum relates in his commentary on *Dani'el*, under Persian law, any command or **decree** signed and sealed by **the king** was unalterable. Even **the king himself** lacked the authority to repeal **it**. **Dani'el** would be subject to the same rule. Once **Darius** signed and sealed **the conspirators' decree**, it couldn't be revoked. This irrevocability of the law made **the Medo-Persian Empire** inferior to **the Babylonian Empire**, in keeping with **Dani'el's** prophecy in **Chapter 2**. **The Babylonian** ruler possessed absolute authority, whereas **the Persian king** was not immune to the errors of **his** own law. The book of **Esther** provides an illustration of this reality. Using **the king's** signet ring, **Haman** sealed **a decree** mandating the execution of every **Jew** in **the Persian Empire** (see the commentary on **Esther Ax – Kill all the Jews on a Single Day, the Twelfth Month of Adar**). Even after **Haman** was impaled on a pole, this **decree** couldn't

be annulled. To solve the problem and save **the Jews**, **the king** was forced to issue a second decree allowing **the victims** of that conspiracy throughout the **empire** to defend **themselves** on the very day **they** were to be executed (see **Esther Bi – Now Write a Counter-Decree in the Kings' Name on Behalf of the Jews**).

The primary objective of **the conspirators** was to trap **Dani'el** in an impossible situation. Curiously, **they** didn't provide an official explanation when **they** presented the proposal to **the king**. We can, therefore, only speculate as to why **Darius** agreed to sign **the decree**. First, **he** may have been motivated by the political power **the decree** would give **him**, for it would force the recently conquered **Babylonians** to submit **themselves** to **him**. Second, **Darius** may have been driven by pride. Again, for **thirty days**, **he** would be in an exceptional position. No one would be allowed to **pray** to anyone, divine or human, except to **Darius**.

The polytheistic theology of the time held that the ruler represented the gods of his people. He was the manifestation and son of those gods. The rulers demanded that subjugated nations pay religious homage to this son of their gods. The manner in which such a tribute would be paid varied from nation to nation. Any religious decree that **Darius** signed was viewed within that theological system. This system didn't require other pagans to abandon their own deities. They were permitted to continue practicing their own worship, but they were obligated to acknowledge gods other than their own. Against this theological backdrop, those affected by **the conspirators' decree** were required to acknowledge that **Darius** was the son, representative, and manifestation of both **the Medo-Persian** gods and their own gods for **thirty days**. During this brief period, they were required to present petitions to their national gods via **Darius**, who was at that time, the son, the representative, and the manifestation of those gods. Following **the decree** did not violate their political conscience because it tested their loyalty, but it did not violate their religious conscience.

However, this religious system was diametrically opposed to the requirements of the Torah. A devout **Jew** like **Dani'el** could not view **Darius** as **God's** son, representative, or manifestation. **Dani'el's adversaries** were aware of this situation and planned to take advantage of **his** religious convictions.[333] There's evidence that **Darius** loved and appreciated **Dani'el**, but in **his** haste, **the king** put **his** friend in peril. It has been well said that **flattery** is manipulation, not communication, and in **his** pride, **Darius** succumbed to **the flattery** of evil men. **They cannot speak a truthful word; their deepest desire is to destroy**

others. Their talk is foul, like the stench from an open grave, their tongues are filled with flattery (Psalm 5:9).[334]

*Dear heavenly **Father**, praise **You** for **Your** almighty power, a power greater than any king's power, greater than any scheme that men can think up. In this sinful world, trouble will always be there. How encouraging it is for me to know with absolute certainty that **You** are always greater than any trial or problem and **You** have the solution. **In the world you will have trouble, but take heart! I have overcome the world!" (John 16:33c).** Those who are evil in this world may take my life, but they cannot take my joy. They cannot take my eternal salvation. **You** are a wise **God** who is always eager to share your wisdom with me! I love and worship **You**! In **Yeshua's Messiah's** holy **Name** and the power of **His** resurrection. Amen*