

Daniel 6:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then they came near, and spake before the king concerning the king's decree; Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask a petition of any God or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said, The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.

Analysis

The accusers remind the king of his decree before mentioning Daniel: 'Then they came near, and spake before the king concerning the king's decree; Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask a petition of any God or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said, The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.' They secure the king's reaffirmation of the law before revealing Daniel's violation. This tactical sequence traps the king—having confirmed the law's irrevocability, he cannot now make exception. The phrase 'altereth not' will haunt Darius throughout the chapter.

Historical Context

Persian legal tradition's emphasis on unchangeable law served governmental stability—citizens could trust laws wouldn't be arbitrarily modified. Yet this rigidity created problems when laws were unjust or circumstances changed. The lion's den as punishment method was documented in ancient Near East. Lions were sometimes kept for royal hunts or as symbols of power. Archaeological evidence from Persian sites shows lion motifs prominently featured in royal iconography.

The conspiracy's sophistication shows court officials' understanding of legal and psychological manipulation.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does the conspirators' tactical sequence warn about manipulation techniques that secure commitment before revealing full implications?
2. What does the unchangeable law's trap teach about how rigid legal systems can create injustice when good laws are manipulated for evil purposes?

Interlinear Text

אָסָר עַל מֶלֶךְ אֶתְּנָם בְּאֶדְן
 Then they came near and said before The king concerning a decree
 H116 H7127 H560 H6925 H4430 H5922 H633

לֹא מֶלֶךְ אָסָר רְשֵׁת מִתְּמָמָה כָּל דַּי אֶתְּנָשׁ
 The king Hast thou not a decree signed any man H1768
 H4430 H3809 H633 H7560 H3606 H606

תִּלְתָּן יְמִינָה יְמִינָה אֶל הָכָל מִתְּרָם
 that shall ask a petition of any God man within days thirty
 H1156 H4481 H3606 H426 H606 H5705 H3118 H8533

לְפָנָיו אֶתְּנָשׁ לְגַדְלָה יְתַרְמָה מֶלֶךְ אָסָר
 save a petition of The king shall be cast into the den of lions answered
 H3861 H4481 H4430 H7412 H1358 H744 H6032

מִדְיָן כְּדַת מֶלֶת אֲזִיכָּה אָסָר מֶלֶךְ אָסָר
 The king and said is true The thing according to the law of the Medes
 H4430 H560 H3330 H4406 H1882 H4076

תְּמִימָדָא: לֹא יַפְגַּס
 and Persians Hast thou not which altereth
 H6540 H1768 H3809 H5709

Additional Cross-References

Daniel 6:8 (Kingdom): Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.

Esther 1:19 (Kingdom): If it please the king, let there go a royal commandment from him, and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes, that it be not altered, That Vashti come no more before king Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal estate unto another that is better than she.

Acts 16:19 (Parallel theme): And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers,

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