

Daniel 6:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first:
that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king
should have no damage.

Analysis

The administrative structure—"three presidents" (Hebrew sarekin, סָרְקִין) overseeing provincial governors—demonstrates sophisticated imperial organization. Daniel held the preeminent position ("first") among these three chief administrators, indicating his exceptional trustworthiness and competence. The purpose clause "that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage" reveals the system's design: accountability preventing corruption and financial loss to the crown.

Daniel's elevation to first president under Persian rule (after serving Babylonian kings) demonstrates both his administrative brilliance and God's sovereign preservation of His servant across regime changes. His prominence inevitably provoked envy among subordinates, setting up the conspiracy that follows. Excellence in service to earthly masters, rooted in faithfulness to God, often generates opposition from those whose compromised character can't compete.

The phrase "the king should have no damage" emphasizes that Daniel's role served the king's interests, not merely bureaucratic administration. This points to believers' proper relationship with earthly authority: genuine service to governing authorities as unto the Lord (Romans 13:1-7), while maintaining ultimate allegiance to God. Christ demonstrated this balance perfectly, rendering to Caesar what is Caesar's while giving to God what is God's (Matthew 22:21), and believers

follow this pattern when their excellence serves earthly masters without compromising heavenly citizenship.

Historical Context

The Persian Empire (539-331 BC) under Darius (likely Darius I, 522-486 BC, or possibly Darius the Mede mentioned in Daniel 5:31) implemented sophisticated administrative systems to govern vast territories from India to Greece. The three-tier structure (king, presidents/satrap, provincial governors) enabled efficient governance while preventing any single administrator from accumulating dangerous power.

Accountability mechanisms were crucial in ancient empires where distance from the capital enabled corruption. Regular reports and oversight by chief administrators like Daniel protected royal revenue and maintained imperial control. Daniel's position at approximately 85 years old demonstrates that age and foreign origin did not disqualify him when competence and integrity were proven.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does Daniel's excellence in serving earthly authority while maintaining faithfulness to God model proper Christian engagement with secular employment?
2. What does Daniel's prominence at 85+ years teach about God's use of His servants across entire lifetimes regardless of age or changing circumstances?
3. How should knowing that excellence often provokes envious opposition prepare you for workplace conflict rooted in others' resentment of your integrity?

Interlinear Text

מִנֵּה וְ	מִנֵּה וְ	סֶרֶךְ יִן	תְּלַת הַ	דָּי	דָּנִי אֶל	קֵד	מִנֵּה וְ
And over	of whom	presidents	three	H1768	Daniel	was first	of whom
H5924	H4481	H5632	H8532		H1841	H2298	H4481
דָּי	לְהוֹ אֶ	אֲחַשְׁדָּרְפָּזִּי אֶ	אֶל יִן	יָהֲב יִן	לְהוֹן	טַעַמֶּה אֶ	
H1768	might	the princes	that	give	H0	accounts	
	H1934	H324	H459	H3052		H2941	
וּמֶלֶךְ אֶ	לְהוֹ אֶ	לֹא	נֶזֶק:				
unto them and the king	no	might	damage				
H4430	H3809	H1934	H5142				

Additional Cross-References

Daniel 5:16 (Kingdom): And I have heard of thee, that thou canst make interpretations, and dissolve doubts: now if thou canst read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about thy neck, and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom.

Daniel 5:29 (Kingdom): Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.

Ezra 4:22 (Kingdom): Take heed now that ye fail not to do this: why should damage grow to the hurt of the kings?

Esther 7:4 (Kingdom): For we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. But if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I had held my tongue, although the enemy could not countervail the king's damage.