

Daniel 6:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm.

Analysis

Daniel's excellence provokes both favor and opposition: 'Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm.' The phrase 'excellent spirit' (Aramaic: ruach yattir, extraordinary spirit) describes Daniel's outstanding administrative competence and character. His superiority wasn't merely technical skill but character excellence. The king's intent to elevate him 'over the whole realm' indicates recognition of exceptional ability. Yet this very excellence provokes the jealous conspiracy that follows. Faithfulness and competence don't guarantee human favor; they often provoke opposition.

Historical Context

Daniel, now elderly (likely 80+), had served three empires: Babylonian (Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar), Median (Darius), and would serve into Persian (Cyrus). His survival through multiple regime changes while maintaining high position demonstrates exceptional wisdom and competence. Ancient Near Eastern regime changes typically executed previous officials to prevent rebellion. Daniel's retention and promotion under Darius shows his value transcended political rivalries. His decades of faithful service under pagan kings models engaging culture without compromise.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does Daniel's 'excellent spirit' teach that character excellence matters more than mere technical competence in positions of influence?
2. What does the plot against Daniel teach about how excellence and favor often provoke jealous opposition rather than universal acclaim?

Interlinear Text

סֶרְכֵי א	עַל	מִתְנַצֵּחַ	הָא א	דָּן ה	דָּנִי אַל	אָז יִן
the presidents	above	preferred	was	this	Daniel	Then
H5632	H5922	H5330	H1934	H1836	H1841	H116
בִּה	יְתִירָא	רוּחַ יִ	קֶבֶל ל	כֹּל	וְאַחַשְׁדָּרְפָּנִי א	
H0	an excellent	spirit		because	and princes	
	H3493	H7308	H1768	H3606	H324	
מַלְכוּתָא:	כֹּל	עַל	לְהַקְמוֹתִי ה	עָשָׂה ית	וּמֶלֶךְ א	
realm	because	above	to set	thought	was in him and the king	
H4437	H3606	H5922	H6966	H6246	H4430	

Additional Cross-References

Daniel 5:14 (Spirit): I have even heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods is in thee, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom is found in thee.

Proverbs 22:29 (Kingdom): Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men.

Daniel 5:12 (Kingdom): Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and shewing of hard sentences, and

dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar: now let Daniel be called, and he will shew the interpretation.

Esther 10:3 (Kingdom): For Mordecai the Jew was next unto king Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed.

Daniel 9:23 (Parallel theme): At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.

Proverbs 17:27 (Spirit): He that hath knowledge spareth his words: and a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit.

Ecclesiastes 2:13 (Parallel theme): Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness.

Nehemiah 7:2 (Parallel theme): That I gave my brother Hanani, and Hananiah the ruler of the palace, charge over Jerusalem: for he was a faithful man, and feared God above many.