

Daniel is Delivered From the Lion's Den

Daniel 6

Daniel 6:1-28 – *“It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty satraps, to be over the whole kingdom;² and over these, three governors, of whom Daniel was one, that the satraps might give account to them, so that the king would suffer no loss.³ Then this Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm.⁴ So the governors and satraps sought to find some charge against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find no charge or fault, because he was faithful; nor was there any error or fault found in him.⁵ Then these men said, “We shall not find any charge against this Daniel unless we find it against him concerning the law of his God.”*

⁶ So these governors and satraps thronged before the king, and said thus to him: “King Darius, live forever!⁷ All the governors of the kingdom, the administrators and satraps, the counselors and advisors, have consulted together to establish a royal statute and to make a firm decree, that whoever petitions any god or man for thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions.⁸ Now, O king, establish the decree and sign the writing, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter.”⁹ Therefore King Darius signed the written decree.

¹⁰ Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.

¹¹ Then these men assembled and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God.¹² And they went before the king, and spoke concerning the king's decree: “Have you not signed a decree that every man who petitions any god or man within thirty days, except you, 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 does not alter.”

¹³ So they answered and said before the king, “That Daniel, who is one of the captives^[a] from Judah, does not show due regard for you, O king, or for the decree that you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day.”

¹⁴ And the king, when he heard these words, was greatly displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him; and he labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him.¹⁵ Then these men approached the king, and said to the king, “Know, O king, that it is the law of the Medes and Persians that no decree or statute which the king establishes may be changed.”

¹⁶ So the king gave the command, and they brought Daniel and cast him into the den of lions. But the king spoke, saying to Daniel, “Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you.”¹⁷ Then a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signets of his lords, that the purpose concerning Daniel might not be changed.

¹⁸ Now the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; and no musicians were brought before him. Also his sleep went from him.¹⁹ Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions.²⁰ And when he came to the den, he cried out with a lamenting voice to Daniel. The king spoke, saying to Daniel, “Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?”

²¹ Then Daniel said to the king, “O king, live forever!²² My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you.”

²³ Now the king was exceedingly glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no injury whatever was found on him, because he believed in his God. Ad the king gave the command, and they brought those men who had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions – them, their children and their wives, and the lions overpowered them crushed all their bones before they reached the floor of the den.

Then King Darius wrote: *To all peoples, nations ad languages that dwell in all the earth. Peace be multiplied to you.*

²⁶ *I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom men must tremble and fear before the God of Daniel.*

*For He is the living God,
And steadfast forever;
His kingdom is the one which shall not be destroyed,
And His dominion shall endure to the end.
²⁷ He delivers and rescues,
And He works signs and wonders
In heaven and on earth,
Who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.*

²⁸ *So Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.”*

Background Notes

In Daniel 5 we learned that the Babylonian Empire fell to the Medes and the Persians. This event occurred in 539BC. We read in the last verse of that chapter, that “*Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about 62 years old*”(5:31). Darius the Mede has not yet been documented from extra-biblical sources. (The term “extra-biblical sources” means historical records other than the Bible.) Most likely Darius was a high-ranking official under Cyrus, the Persian Emperor, and he ruled over the newly acquired Babylonian territory for a short while. However, the last verse of Daniel 6 leaves open the possibility that Darius the Mede may actually be another name for Cyrus the Persian, because Daniel 6:28 may be translated as follows: “So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius, even the reign of Cyrus the Persian.”

In any case, Daniel distinguished himself in the Persian Empire, and he was made one of the top three officials in the entire kingdom. The Persian Empire consisted of 120 different provinces from India to Ethiopia, as we learn in the Book of Esther. The Persian Empire, by the way, was the largest empire up to this point in the history of the world, and Daniel was about to be put in charge of the whole empire!

Of course Daniel’s success led the other officials to become extremely jealous. Notice what a great testimony Daniel had! Verse 5 says, “...*these men said, “We shall not find any charge against this Daniel unless we find it against him concerning the law of his God.”* Could this be said of us, if unbelievers were looking to find a fault in our lives? Or would they be able to say that we cheated or were unethical or had some other moral fault?

Notice how the officials lied to the king (v6-7). “*So these governors and satraps thronged before the king, and said thus to him: “King Darius, live forever! ⁷ All the governors of the kingdom, the administrators and satraps, the counselors and*

advisors, have consulted together to establish a royal statute and to make a firm decree, that whoever petitions any god or man for thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions."

This was a lie, because **all** the officials had not been consulted and formed that decree -- Daniel certainly had not been consulted.

Once the king signed the decree, it became a law of the Medes and the Persians that could not be revoked – not even by the king himself! We use that expression even today. We may say, "It's the law of the Medes and Persians" when we're referring to something that absolutely cannot be changed.

The lion's den was some kind of cave or pit that could be sealed with a large stone, as we see in verse 17.

By the way, do you realize that Daniel was in his **eighties** when he was thrown into the den of lions? He was taken as a captive in 605BC, when he was likely only a teenager, and the Medes and Persians took over Babylon in 539BC. Daniel was in his eighties! So the Sunday school handouts and Bible story pictures that portray Daniel in the lion's den as a teenager are not exactly historically correct!

Doctrinal Points

1. "Daniel in the lion's den" has practical lessons for the present.

Daniel's ordeal in the lion's den certainly has a number of lessons for believers today. The first and foremost lesson is that **God can deliver us from the "lion's den"**! No matter what threat the enemy of our souls comes up with, including the threat of physical death, the Lord can deliver us from the "lion's den" if He so chooses.

The lions here are a picture of Satan. We read in 1 Peter 5:8 "*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*" But God can "shut the lion's mouth" and He can deliver us unscathed from any lion's den into which we've been thrown by the opposition.

Even if the Lord chooses not to deliver us physically from the lion's den, He will be with us in the lion's den, just as He was with the three faithful Hebrews in the fiery furnace (Daniel 3). Notice that Daniel said, "*My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths...*" (v22). This angel sent by God may have indeed been the Angel of the Lord, the pre-incarnate Lord Himself, who was also with the faithful three in the fiery furnace.

Another lesson for believers that we see in this account is Daniel's reaction to the edict of the king. We know that Daniel had a good relationship with the king, and Daniel certainly could have gone to Darius and exposed the plot of the other commissioners. That reaction to the plot would not have been wrong. But Daniel chose to leave the situation totally in the Lord's hands. Sometimes that is definitely the best policy. Don't waste time defending yourself. So our second lesson from this chapter is: **Just continue to do the right thing, and leave the situation completely in the hands of God.**

Notice that Daniel continued to pray three times a day, facing toward Jerusalem, as he had always done. This was Acts 5:29 in operation! "*But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men."*" Daniel could have prayed in secret, but Daniel knew that the unscrupulous commissioners would eventually find some way to catch him. Better to show courage and let God handle the situation -- and God certainly did handle the situation!

Before it was all over, the plot of the commissioners backfired and they were thrown into the lion's den. And that's certainly another lesson for us to appreciate. So the third lesson from this chapter is: **God has ways to make the enemy's strategy backfire.** Remember the story of Esther and how the strategy and plots of wicked Haman backfired? Haman was eventually hung on the very gallows that he had prepared for godly Mordecai! God can cause the strategy of the opposition to backfire today as well.

Daniel in the lion's den has practical lessons for the present.

2. "Daniel in the lion's den" has prophetic implications for the future.

We've mentioned before that every chapter in Daniel is prophetic. Even in the chapters that are not prophetic visions, there are prophetic implications. Here in Daniel 6, with Daniel in the lion's den, we have a prophetic glimpse of the coming Tribulation period, when the godly remnant of restored Israel will go through a lion's den experience. The Roman beast of the end times (the figure with the number 666), will be deified, as was Darius in Daniel's time. Anti-Semitism (like the anti-Semitism of the commissioners that we see in Daniel 6) will certainly intensify as we approach the end times, and persecution will especially be directed toward the godly remnant of restored Israel in the future.

Another prophetic implication that is hard to miss is Daniel as a spiritual picture of Jesus Christ. Daniel, who was innocent of any wrongdoing, was wrongfully accused and thrown into the lion's den. The stone was rolled over the opening of the cave and sealed. Daniel was considered as good as dead. In the same way, our sinless and faultless Lord was falsely accused and "thrown into the lion's den" when He was crucified. As the stone was rolled into place to seal the tomb, His enemies considered that He was dead and gone forever. But just as Daniel was brought alive out of the lion's den, so our Lord was resurrected and came out of the tomb alive -- forevermore! Daniel in the lion's den has prophetic implications for the future.

Practical Application

Be a "Den of Daniels!"

This practical application is for every evangelical church or fellowship group. When we go out into the world, it is like going into the lion's den. But when an unbeliever visits our church or fellowship group, it should be for them like walking into a "Den of Daniels"! They should realize that our church is not mere social club! They should recognize that our church is a group of committed, Bible-believing, courageous, loving and righteous Christians who love the Lord and can defend the faith!

How are we doing? Let's determine to be a "Den of Daniels!"