

Daniel 6:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions.

Analysis

The king's actions—"arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions"—demonstrate desperate hope for Daniel's survival. The phrase "very early" (Aramaic *bishafraya*, ܒܫܦܪܝܐ) suggests dawn's first light, the earliest moment social convention permitted royal activity. "In haste" (*behitbehala*, ܒܗܝܬܒܗܠܐ) conveys urgency driven by anxiety and desperate hope. Darius rushes to learn Daniel's fate, fearing the worst yet hoping for miraculous deliverance.

The king's early rising and hurrying contrast with his conspirators' likely expectation that he would delay, perhaps indefinitely avoiding confirming his valued servant's death. Instead, Darius rushes to the den, suggesting faith that Daniel's God might accomplish what Persian law could not. His behavior demonstrates the impact of Daniel's consistent faithfulness—even pagan kings recognized that this servant of the living God might receive supernatural protection.

This scene prefigures the resurrection morning when women hurried to Christ's tomb at dawn, fearing death yet hoping for life (Mark 16:2-6). Both accounts involve early morning haste to where death held sway, only to discover divine deliverance accomplishing what seemed impossible. Darius's desperate hope and Daniel's vindication point to believers' confident hope in resurrection—God delivers from the power of death itself, not merely temporary threats.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern royal protocol typically involved elaborate morning rituals and ceremonies before kings attended to business. Darius's abandonment of these formalities to rush to the lions' den at dawn demonstrates both his distress and his hope for divine intervention. Royal dignity gave way to desperate urgency, revealing genuine affection for Daniel and recognition of extraordinary spiritual dimensions to this crisis.

Lions' dens were common execution and imprisonment sites in ancient empires. Natural caves or constructed pits served as holding areas for dangerous animals or prisons for condemned criminals. The overnight period allowed nature to take its expected course—lions would devour prey once hunger overcame initial wariness.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does Darius's desperate early morning haste illustrate the human longing for divine intervention when earthly systems have failed?
2. What does the king's hope for Daniel's survival teach about the witness power of consistent faithfulness over time?
3. How does this scene prefigure resurrection morning, and what hope does Christ's victory over death provide for believers facing threats?

Interlinear Text

וְכֵן תִּבְהֹל ה	בְּנֹגֶה א	יָקָוּם	בְּשַׁפְּרָךְ א	מֶלֶךְ א	יָבֹא יוֹ
in haste	in the morning	arose	very early	the king	Then
H927	H5053	H6966	H8238	H4430	H116
אָזַל:	אֶרְיוֹת א	דִּי	לִגְבֹּ א		
and went	of lions		unto the den		
H236	H744		H1358		
		H1768			

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 28:1 (Parallel theme): In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

1 Thessalonians 3:5 (Parallel theme): For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain.