

Daniel 6:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den.

Analysis

And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives—The phrase "those men which had accused" translates the Aramaic gubraya illek di-akhalu qartshohi di-Daniyel, (גָּבְרָא אֲלֵךְ דִּיאָכָלֹו קַרְצָהִי דִּינְיָאֵל), literally "those men who ate his pieces," an idiom for malicious accusation or slander. The conspirators who plotted Daniel's death experienced the very fate they designed for him—a principle of divine justice called lex talionis reflected in Proverbs 26:27 and Psalm 7:15-16.

The inclusion of wives and children shocks modern sensibilities but reflects ancient Near Eastern corporate justice. Persian law held families accountable for the patriarch's crimes, preventing blood feuds by eliminating potential avengers. While Scripture sometimes applies corporate judgment (Joshua 7:24-25), the Mosaic Law specifically prohibited punishing children for parents' sins (Deuteronomy 24:16). This detail reveals Persian, not Jewish, practice—Daniel's narrative faithfully reports historical events without necessarily endorsing every action.

And the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces

—(וְשָׁלְטוּ בָהוּ אֶרְרַתָּא וְכָל־גָּרְמִיהוּן פְּזַקְוּ)

The Aramaic shelitu behon aryavatha ("the lions overpowered them") and garmeyhon haddiqu ("crushed their bones") emphasizes the lions' ferocity. This proves Daniel's preservation wasn't due to docile or well-fed lions but to miraculous divine protection. The conspirators' immediate destruction validated Daniel's innocence and demonstrated God's justice. Those who plot evil against God's servants ultimately destroy themselves.

Historical Context

This occurred around 538 BC during Darius's first year. Persian kings wielded absolute power, executing conspirators without trial. Ancient sources describe Persian lion dens—pits housing multiple lions kept hungry for executions. The immediate destruction of Daniel's accusers proved the lions were dangerous, not tame. This vindication led to Darius's decree honoring Daniel's God throughout the empire (6:25-27), fulfilling missionary purposes through Jewish exile. The principle of justice—conspirators experiencing their own trap—recurs in Esther when Haman is hanged on gallows he built for Mordecai (Esther 7:10).

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does the swift destruction of Daniel's accusers demonstrate that God's apparent delays in justice don't indicate indifference?
2. When you face malicious opposition, can you trust God to vindicate you in His timing rather than taking revenge yourself?

Interlinear Text

דַי	אֶלְרָם	גָּבְרִיָּא	מֶלֶךְ אָ	וּבֵית יְהוָה	וְאֶתְּמָרָ
commanded	And the king	and they brought	men	those	H1768

אָרַי יְהֹוָה אֲכָל בְּקָרֶב וְהִי אֲכָל לְאַתְּ
which had accused H1710 H1768 **Daniel** of the den and the lions
H399 H1841 H1358 H744

מִתְּבָנָה וּבְנִשְׁיהָ וְרַמְּזָה וְאֶפְרַיִם וְלֹא	וְנִשְׁיהָ וְרַמְּזָה וְאֶפְרַיִם וְבְנִיהָ וְלֹא				
and they cast	them	their children	and their wives	or ever	they came
H7412	H581	H1123	H5389	H3809	H4291

לְאָרֶעָ יְתָ	גַּבְּ אַ	עַד	לִי	שֶׁלְׁ טָוָן	בְּהֹן	אַרְבָּיִתְּ אַ
at the bottom	of the den	had the mastery		H1768	H7981	H0
H773	H1358	H5705				and the lions

בְּדָקָן גְּרָמִיה וְלֵב
in pieces their bones all

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 38:13 (Parallel theme): I reckoned till morning, that, as a lion, so will he break all my bones: from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me.

Esther 7:10 (Kingdom): So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king's wrath pacified.

Psalms 54:5 (Parallel theme): He shall reward evil unto mine enemies: cut them off in thy truth.

Deuteronomy 24:16 (Parallel theme): The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin.

2 Kings 14:6 (Parallel theme): But the children of the murderers he slew not: according unto that which is written in the book of the law of Moses, wherein the

LORD commanded, saying, The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor the children be put to death for the fathers; but every man shall be put to death for his own sin.

Esther 9:25 (Kingdom): But when Esther came before the king, he commanded by letters that his wicked device, which he devised against the Jews, should return upon his own head, and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows.

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