

# Daniel in the Lions' Den

Jealous officials trick the king into making a law that forces Daniel to choose between praying to God and obeying the king. Daniel chooses God, is thrown to the lions, and God shuts their mouths.

Daniel 6:1-28

CHARACTERS: Daniel, Darius the Mede, Jealous officials

THEMES: Prayer, Faithfulness, God's protection, Integrity, Trusting God over man

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DARIUS THE MEDE decided to appoint 120 satraps to rule throughout the kingdom, with three administrators over them, one of whom was Daniel. Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom.

At this, the other administrators and satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent.

Finally these men said, 'We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God.' So they went as a group to the king and proposed a new law: 'O King Darius, live forever! All the royal administrators, prefects, satraps, advisers and governors have agreed that the king should issue an edict that anyone who prays to any god or man during the next thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be thrown into the lions' den. Now, O king, issue the decree and put it in writing so that it cannot be altered—in accordance with the laws of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed.'

King Darius, flattered and deceived, put the decree in writing.

Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.

Daniel did not hide. He did not compromise. He did not even close his windows. His prayer life was not secret or sporadic—it was regular, visible, and directed toward the city of God's temple. He had been doing this for decades, and a new law would not change his faithfulness.

The officials went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help. They went to the king and reminded him of his decree. Then they said, 'Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the decree you put in writing. He still prays three times a day.'

When the king heard this, he was greatly distressed and made every effort to rescue Daniel. He labored until sundown trying to find a way to save him. But the men reminded him: 'According to the law of the Medes and Persians, no decree or edict that the king issues can be changed.'

Reluctantly, the king gave the order, and Daniel was brought and thrown into the lions' den. The king said to Daniel, 'May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!' A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it.

The king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating and without any entertainment. At the first light of dawn, he got up and hurried to the lions' den. When he came near, he called out in an anguished voice, 'Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?'

Daniel answered, 'O king, live forever! My God sent His angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in His sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, O king.'

The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. When Daniel was brought up, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.

At the king's command, the men who had falsely accused Daniel were brought and thrown into the lions' den, along with their wives and children. Before they reached the floor of the den, the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.

King Darius wrote to all peoples and nations: 'I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel. For He is the living God and He endures forever; His kingdom will not be destroyed, His dominion will never end. He rescues and He saves; He performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions.'

So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian. His faithfulness had testified to two empires about the one true God.