

Daniel in the Lion's Den

Chapter 6



It pleased Darius to appoint 120 satraps to rule throughout the kingdom, with three administrators over them, one of whom was Daniel.



These were local administrators, set in place to run the affairs of the extensive empire. Three were over them, and Daniel was appointed one of them – a fulfilment again of Belshazzar's offer.

The satraps were made accountable to them so that the king might not suffer loss.



Darius was aware that administrators could be helping themselves too. So extra security was made with the supervisors.

Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom.



Again Daniel stands out – even at this great age!
The king's wish would arouse jealousies.

At this, the administrators and the 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.



Obviously, this wouldn't have been the whole group of leaders, but a smaller group with a jealous mindset.

But Daniel's integrity meant that they could find no corruption!
An honest man!

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."



Satan's strategy shows here. The hatred is focused on Daniel's faith.

And they knew he wouldn't be breaking his God's law either so it had to be something to do with his practice.

So the administrators and the satraps went as a group to the king and said.. "O King Darius, live forever! The royal administrators, prefects, satraps, advisers and governors have all agreed



It was a lie. They didn't all agree eg. Daniel wasn't included, and probably many others.

It was a conspiracy against both Daniel and the king.

that the king should issue an edict and enforce the decree 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.

Since the king was regarded as the earthly representative of the gods it may have seemed a good idea to Darius to unite the new nations of the empire. For him it was probably more of a political decision rather than a religious one.

Imposing extreme penalties was normal for the ancient leaders.



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."

This is the evil deception of the conspirators to tie the king's hand.

The laws of the Medes and Persians had become a kind of god that even the king couldn't reverse without losing face.



So King Darius put the decree in writing.



King Darius was unaware that the trap had been set

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.



Finally, Daniel got to hear about the decree. He too may have seen it simply as a political move, but whatever the situation, he continued to put God first and to trust and worship him.

Daniel practised the promise given by Solomon at the dedication of the temple.

1 Kings 8:33-34 “When your people Israel are defeated before the enemy because they have sinned against you, and if they turn again to you and acknowledge your name and pray and plead with you in this house, then hear in heaven and forgive the sin of your people Israel and bring them again to the land that you gave to their fathers.”



Then these men went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help.



The spies knew when to find Daniel in his private prayer time.

It was good to ask for God's help. Perhaps Daniel was aware that something was brewing.

So they went to the king and spoke to him about his royal decree.. "Did you not publish a decree that during the next thirty days anyone who prays to any god or man except to you, O king, would be thrown into the lions` den?"

Again they employ deception by first asking the king to confirm what he had written before.



The king answered, "The decree stands--in accordance with the laws of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed."



He naively answers proudly that that was what had been written.

He has now been set up by the conspirators.

Then they said to the king, "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."



They had 'evidence' of Daniel's defiance of the edict. They set it out as an act of gross disobedience and an insult to the king to make it look as bad as possible – spin!

When the king heard this, he was greatly distressed; he was determined to rescue Daniel and made every effort until sundown to save him.



He was trapped! And he knew it. Daniel had been a loyal favourite. The king was really upset by this trick.

He tried to get round the decree but the law required that the sentence be carried out by the end of the same day.

Then the men went as a group to the king and said to him, "Remember, O king, that according to the law of the Medes and Persians no decree or edict that the king issues can be changed."



The conspirators gave the king time to stew. But as the end of the day approached they effectively demand that he carry out the edict.

The king said to Daniel,
May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!"



The king has a 'final' word with Daniel with the wish that Daniel's God will rescue him. Perhaps he had heard of the event with the 3 young men in Nebuchadnezzar's time.

How did Daniel react during this whole process?

So the king gave the order,
and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions' den.



Sorry, Daniel, but rules are rules!

A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles, so that Daniel's situation might not be changed.



They perform an official sealing ceremony.
The king cannot reverse it and secretly try to rescue Daniel.

Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating and without any entertainment being brought to him. And he could not sleep.



A mix of conscience, regret, frustration and anger may have kept him awake. He didn't have an appetite for anything

At the first light of dawn, the king got up
and hurried to the lions` den.



He had to find out if
Daniel's God really
was as big as he
claimed.

When he came near the den, he called to Daniel 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?"



A nervous question – was Daniel's God able to protect him?

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."



To his surprise ? He heard a respectful reply. And a declaration of his innocence and respect for the king.

An angel lion tamer had been there. Did Daniel see and speak with the angel?

Daniel had a better night than the king

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



Darius was genuinely pleased.

A close inspection revealed no damage!

It was faith in the living God that had protected him.

At the king's command, the men who had falsely accused Daniel were brought in and thrown into the lions' den, along with their wives and children.



Pay back! It was a custom in those times – their family was included in the punishment they had wanted to impose on Daniel.

God forbids this. No one else should die for someone's sin.
cf. Deuteronomy 24:16.

*Fathers shall not be put to death because of their children,
nor shall children be put to death because of their fathers.
Each one shall be put to death for his own sin.*

And before they reached the floor of the den, the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.



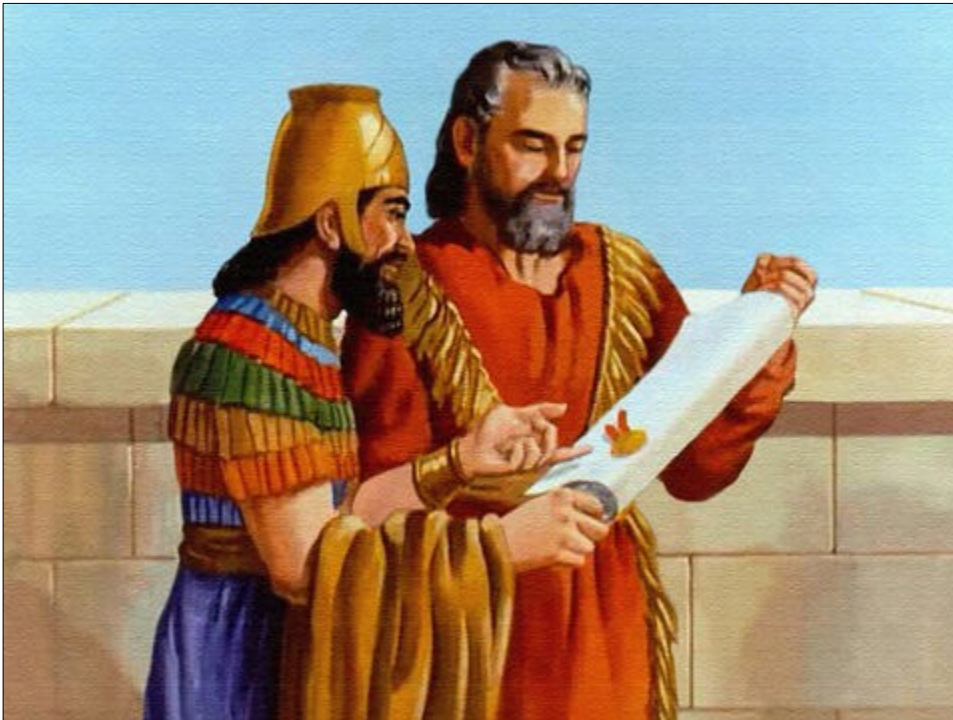
The lions were dangerous and hungry. The lion tamer had left.

Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations and men of every language throughout the land..



Darius now made a general declaration having witnessed God's great act of deliverance for his servant Daniel.

"May you prosper greatly! "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."



Was Darius including the true God as one of the empire's collection of deities?

Did the God of Daniel become the God of Darius?

So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius
and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.



In many ways
this episode was a description of Daniel's whole life in exile.

The writer to the Hebrews includes a reference to the events in the book of Daniel

Hebrews 11:33-34 who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.

The key to surviving in a hostile world is a real faith/trust in the real living God

