

## **Daniel And The Lion's Den (Dan. 6)**

One of most well-known stories, learn it early, lots of merchandise; often relegated to a “children’s” story, or it becomes so familiar it loses its impact; lose sight of how much it teaches us, whatever our age; story of faith and living in a hostile world

**1-3** Just before this Medo-Persians conquered Babylon from Babylonians, and Daniel had been in a position of authority; might have been marked for death but God protected him or it was clear he was a person of character; since his youth Daniel displayed integrity and new king saw it, valued him and his character, and put him in position of authority; not young (probably 70s) but maintained consistent behavior which was plainly evident even to those who did not follow God

**4-9** His position, and coming promotion made others jealous, angry; Daniel was a foreigner in high command, but root of this was that righteous living made Daniel’s peers uncomfortable and he became a target; desired Daniel’s prominence and were not of his character; but could not find fault with Daniel’s conduct, had to attack his priorities and service to God; through flattery, deceit (“all the high officials”) got Darius to attack Daniel; came together to throng Darius who may have wanted to ingratiate himself by agreeing.

**10-17** Daniel soon learned of law, and how he responded was indicative of his priorities; no record of support from his friends or trying to change Darius’ mind, even with danger Daniel’s behavior was unchanged: he trusted in God; did not shut windows \*which may have seemed a reasonable compromise), would not show unbelief or mistrust: this was who he was; determined to serve God no matter what government said or the danger it posed; each time he publicly prayed his chances of getting caught grew, but he kept at it; everyone saw him violate the law; enemies pounced and painted Daniel, an exile, as outside of mainstream, suspect, untrustworthy; Daniel was guilty, but opponents used a man-made law to find guilt, rather than his conduct; Darius was upset at himself and deceivers, and recognized Daniel’s innocence based on character and conduct; interesting that he waited so long to put Daniel in den; not only that but Daniel’s faith inspired Darius who was in distress; when Daniel was put in the lion’s den you do not see him resist; he did not fear his government but trusted in God and refused to change lifelong behavior no matter the consequences; would not blend in with world or compromise principles.

**18-23** No information on what Daniel did that night: sleep soundly? Pray? Text makes clear that Darius did not sleep as focus of story shifts to him; looked for loopholes to free Daniel, genuinely sorry; telling that he went to den early and showed respect for Daniel’s god, perhaps a sign of faith; called Daniel’s god a “living god” because a living god could overcome a death sentence; Daniel’s answer was not vengeful but respectful even though king had just condemned him the previous night; clear though why he was saved: his faith brought miraculous protection; faith in God even in dire circumstances, gave God glory for safety; God would not allow the plots to prevail against his servant.

**24- 28** Darius emboldened to punish deceivers, and punishment eventually came to those who accused God’s servant; not by Daniel but Darius, and God’s glory proclaimed by a pagan ruler; dangerous message to a non-Jewish audience, but took courage from Daniel’s faith and what he had witnessed; Daniel elevated even further, and more people saw his faith.

### **Important Lessons for Us**

Daniel held up as an example of faith, nothing negative in Bible

- As God’s people we need to be different than the world, and our lives need to make that clear so that everyone knows it; we are called to live in such a way that will impress the world.

- Our walk with God will make others dislike us and persecute us, because the world does not like those who do not behave like everyone else; Jesus told us this in Jn. 15:18-19 *If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. <sup>19</sup> If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.*

The world wants to bring Christians down by any means necessary.

- We will be accused of all sorts of crimes and told that we are outside of the mainstream of culture, ignorant, etc. because we will not blend in. Laws may be made to try to change our righteous behavior. These laws, and their violations, should be the only charges that can be levied against God’s people. We must do as Daniel did and maintain our convictions no matter what others or our government may threaten us with.

- Daniel’s faithfulness inspired someone who was not a follower of God but was in distress. Our attitudes and conduct in times of crisis can lead others to honor God; people are always watching us; Darius noted that Daniel served God continually; do people see us in the same way?

- Eventually, those that attack, persecute, and even kill God’s followers will face judgment for their crimes against God’s people; but leave that to God.

- God's plans will not be undone by the schemes of sinful men; His deliverance will come, even if that is after physical death.
- God changed the nature of lions. Do we think anything else is too much for God to do?
- Daniel's faith, hope, and courage should inspire us to meet the trials in every age of our life and should motivate us to be steadfast in the struggles that will inevitably come; Remember, God is always in control.

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