

Bible Stories

DANIEL - LION'S DEN

Daniel 6:20-23

June 17, 2023

Daniel was now an old man. He had been in royal service for nearly 70 years and had remained faithful and loyal to God throughout his long life.

Let us set the scene for our story.... Darius decided to divide the empire into 120 satrapies (provinces), assigning each a royal governor (Satrap). Over these regional officials he placed 3 high officials. Daniel was one of these officials. Daniel distinguished himself above all other court officials in such a way that Darius planned to, **"set him over the whole kingdom."**

If modern politics teaches us anything it is that politicians are a jealous bunch. They are quick to toot their own horns, and equally quick to throw each other under the bus. Well, as Solomon said, **"there is nothing new under the sun,"**

The other officials were jealous of Daniel's success and started looking for grounds to denounce him before Darius, but they found nothing because Daniel was faithful in all that he did, so, they turned to the one thing they knew would work – Daniel's loyalty to his God:

"We shall not find any ground for complaint against Daniel unless we find it in connection with the law of his God."

As a matter of fact, they were counting on his loyalty to assist them in their plan. They were also counting on Darius being a bit full of himself, as most monarchs are. They would use Daniel's loyalty and the king's pride to their advantage and bring an end to Daniel.

With their plan in place the officials went in to Darius:

"O King, live forever! All the high officials of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the counselors and the governors are agreed that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce an injunction, that whoever makes petition to any god or man for thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which cannot be revoked."

Darius liked the sound of that and the law went on the books.

Daniel, knowing this new law was directed at him, went home and promptly opened his windows facing Jerusalem and did what he had always done - prayed to God for all the world to see. He knew what the consequences would be, but he deliberately defied the law and did what was right. All the while spies were in his garden watching...

The officials could hardly contain their glee as they pranced into the throne room to report Daniel's disobedience.

Officials: *O king! Didn't you just sign a decree, which states that anyone who makes petition to any god or man for 30 days, except to you, should be cast into the den of lions?*

Darius: *That is correct and as you know, the law cannot be revoked according to the law of the Medes and Persians.*

Officials: *Well, we are sad (cough) to report that Daniel, one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king. He continues to pray to his God three times a day.*

Darius tried desperately to find any loophole that would deliver Daniel from certain death. But as the sun set, he knew he had failed. About that time the officials returned to remind him that a law of the Medes and Persians could not be changed (helpful).

So, Darius ordered Daniel be brought and cast into the lion's den. Before the stone was laid over the mouth of the den, Darius declared,

"May your God, whom you serve continually, deliver you!"

The king was so upset he spent the night fasting. Early in the morning he rushed to the lion's den to see what had become of Daniel. When he got close to the den, he cried in an anguished voice, *"O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?"*

Daniel: *O king, live forever! My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm.*

Then the king was exceedingly glad, and commanded that Daniel be taken up out of the den. So, Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no kind of harm was found on him, because he had trusted in his God. And the king commanded, and those men who had maliciously accused Daniel were brought and cast into the den of lions — they, their children, and their wives. And before they reached the bottom of the den, the lions overpowered them and broke all their bones in pieces.

Then Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: "Peace be multiplied to you. I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for he is the living God, enduring forever; his kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion shall be to the end. He delivers and rescues; he works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, he who has saved Daniel from the power of the lions."

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

What do we do with this story?

Daniel **KNEW** when he opened his windows, he would get a first-person experience with hungry lions. He opened the windows anyway.

Being a Christ Follower is serious business. It is not for the faint of heart. It is not for fair-weather types. It is not for those who expect reward or position or popularity. It is for those who have weighed the earthly consequences and decided that they would not have it any other way. It is for those who have decided that in Jesus they have found everything, no matter what it costs them.