

Daniel In The Lion's Den

Later in life, under the ruler Darius the Mede, Daniel was still trusted to serve a ruler in Babylon. As a young man, Daniel was chief governor over all the wise men in the province of Babylon (*Daniel 2:48*). Now, in his 80's, Daniel was one of three presidents over 120 satraps or governors. Daniel *"was distinguished above the presidents and satraps, because of an excellent spirit in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm"* (*Daniel 6:3*). Daniel's wisdom and integrity served him well as he served yet another foreign ruler faithfully, making sure the king suffered no damage in his kingdom (*Daniel 6:2*).

Envy towards Daniel seems to have raised its ugly head among those serving the king.



But how were they going to bring Daniel down? They *"could find no occasion nor fault, forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him"* (*Daniel 6:4*). They knew Daniel was a man who served God by submitting to God's law. So, they convinced the king to decree something that would contradict God's law. Darius signed the following interdict: *"Whosoever shall ask a petition of any god or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions"* (*Daniel 6:7, 9*).

Envy is a very destructive emotion. It occurs in men who do not like the honor others are receiving, especially when they do not possess the same honor. Instead of improving their own character, the envious work hard to bring others down. Jesus would be delivered up to die because of envy (*Matthew 27:18*). Now, this destructive emotion is working to bring Daniel down. Jealousy and envy are both works of the flesh which will keep people from entering into heaven (*Galatians 5:20-21*). Jealousy is when we see in others that which we would like to have in ourselves. Envy is when we do not necessarily desire the same honor, but selfishly begrudge others being so honored. Instead of rejoicing in working with such an honorable man like Daniel, those working with and under Daniel desired to destroy him. The penalty for not obeying the king's interdict was not a money fine, but the loss of life in the den of lions.

Daniel did not change his godly habits to accommodate the king's signed writing.

"When Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house (now his windows were open in his chamber toward Jerusalem); and he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime" (*Daniel 6:10*). Jerusalem was where God's temple had been built by Solomon. While God has always been in heaven, his authoritative presence was in Jerusalem where His house had been. Solomon in his prayer at the dedication of the temple asked God to *"hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place; yea, hear thou in heaven thy dwelling*



place; and when thou hearest, forgive” (I Kings 8:30). Daniel seems to have been praying toward Jerusalem realizing that captivity had been the consequence of Israel’s sin. In humility he continues to beseech God with thanksgiving. Daniel reminds us even in difficult times that we can be thankful toward God in all things as we pray without ceasing (I Thessalonians 5:17-18).

Daniel did not disobey the King’s edict out of ignorance, but after he knew the writing was signed by the king, he continued to petition God in prayer three times a day. Under the penalty of certain death in the den of lions, some would no doubt begin to rationalize regarding their walk with God. The time is only for 30 days, so I will not pray to God for that time. Then, I will return to praying without ceasing. Surely God will understand that this is a matter of life and death in my case. Daniel looked at it as a matter of remaining faithful, even if it meant his death. Early Christians even in the face of danger and death remained faithful like Daniel. When the apostles were commanded to not teach in the name or authority of the Lord, they replied, “*We must obey God rather than men*” (Acts 5:29). To Christians in Smyrna already going through tribulation, the Lord exhorts them, “*Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life*” (Revelation 2:10).

The king found himself between a rock and a hard place. His governors and presidents remind him of Daniel’s actions, stressing how disrespectful Daniel was in disobeying the King’s written edict. They said Daniel “*regardeth not thee, O king, nor the interdict that thou has signed, but maketh his petition three times a day*” (Daniel 6:13). Yet, the king knew he was served well by Daniel, and “*labored till the going down of the sun to rescue him*” (Daniel 6:14). Daniel’s accusers continue to push the king even further by reminding him that “*no interdict nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed*” (Daniel 6:15). So, the king is forced to command that Daniel be cast into the den of lions (Daniel 6:16). The king recognized two interesting things: The God Daniel served would “*deliver*” him from the lions, and that Daniel served his God “*continually*” (Daniel 6:16).

After sealing the mouth of the den of lions with a stone, the king spent a sad and sleepless night. Eager to see how Daniel fared, the king went early the next morning to the den, and “*with a lamentable voice; the king spake and said to Daniel, ‘O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?’*” (Daniel 6:20). He rejoices to see that Daniel is still alive. Daniel explains,



“*My God has sent his angel, and hath shut the lions’ mouths, and they have not hurt me forasmuch as before Him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, o king, have I done no hurt*” (Daniel 6:22). Daniel, saved from the den of lions, showed that he

was innocent before God and the king. Being yet alive also manifested his trust in the Lord (*Daniel 6:23*).

Sin has consequences! God is alive! Those who had accused Daniel were cast into the same den of lions along with their wives and children. Before they hit the bottom of the den, the lions broke their bones into pieces (*Daniel 6:24*). The wives and children, though not guilty of the sinful act of their husbands and fathers, suffered the consequences of their sin. The lions not devouring Daniel did not do so because they were tame. God had worked a miracle, and the king knew it for in his new decree he says the following about the living God: “*He delivereth and rescueth, and He worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions*” (*Daniel 6:27*).

Daniel reminds us that we can live an entire life being faithful to God. As a young man he served God with purpose in not defiling himself (*Daniel 1:8*), and now as an old man, he continually prays to God when it meant a fearful death. He is definitely an example to both young and old!

Discussion Questions

1. What distinguished Daniel above his ruling peers?
2. What do you think caused Daniel's fellow rulers to try to destroy Daniel?
3. What was the only way they could create some fault in Daniel?
4. What edict did Daniel's accusers present to the king for his signing?
5. What did Daniel continue to do after he heard of the signed edict?
6. How should we react when we face man's law that contradicts God's law?

7. While the edict of the king was to make it difficult for Daniel, how did it make it difficult for the king?

8. Did the king think that Daniel would survive being in the den of lions?

9. How did God deliver Daniel from the lions?
Was it a miracle?

10. Can one be faithful to God beginning in their youth and continue to do so into old age?