

Life Lesson 110
Daniel and the Lion's Den
Text: Daniel 6

Introduction

The new king, Darius, like Daniel -- and no wonder. He had an "excellent spirit" in him. The king put new governors, or princes, in charge when he took over as ruler from Belshazzar. He put three presidents over the 127 governors, and made Daniel the chief president. Not everyone liked Daniel, though. The governors and the other presidents were jealous of his position and decided to get Daniel into trouble.

The Story

"How can we get Daniel into trouble when he never does anything wrong?" one of the plotters asked. "We can't say he is disloyal to the king or that he is cheating on his taxes, because he is faithful in everything."

"There is only one way," another of the enemies said. "We'll have to find something against the law of Daniel's God."

They hatched a terrible, sneaky scheme, and went to King Darius to put it into action.

"King Darius, live forever," they greeted the king. "We governors and presidents got together to think of a way to honor you. We think you are a terrific king and so we want to proclaim the next 30 days as a special time to praise you. We've made a decree that no one can pray to any god or honor any man, except for you, Oh King, for the next 30 days. If they do, they will be thrown into a pit full of hungry lions. And if you'll just sign right here, it will be official."

How flattering for the king! People would pray to him as if he were a god. No one would be praised but him for 30 days. He signed the petition. Once he signed the paper with his ring, it was done. Not even the king, himself, could change the law. It had to happen.

Daniel must have known right away that the decree was a trick to get him into trouble. Everyone knew that he went to his window every day, the one that faced toward Jerusalem, and knelt there to pray. He knelt there three times every day. But after the decree was signed, he would be punished -- he would die a terrible death -- if anyone saw him. He could have just closed the curtains, or prayed in another room where no one would see him.

But Daniel wouldn't deny his God. He went at the usual time and knelt at the same window as usual and prayed and praised God. That took courage and faith!

His enemies were watching and no doubt were delighted to see Daniel kneeling in prayer. They had trapped him at last! They went right away to the king.

"You know that decree you signed -- the one that can't be changed? Well, we saw Daniel praying to someone besides you. He doesn't care about you or your decree. He'll have to be thrown into the den of lions."

The king was angry at himself, as well as at Daniel's sneaky enemies. He knew he should have seen through that wicked plot. He tried all day to figure out a way to keep from having to throw Daniel to the lions. He couldn't do it. He had signed the law and he had no power to change it.

That evening they brought Daniel to the pit where they kept the hungry lions.

“The God you serve continually will deliver you,” the king said. He must have seen the Lord answer prayer for Daniel before. He certainly had seen that Daniel was serious about serving God with all his heart.

They put Daniel down with the lions and rolled a big stone on the opening of the pit. They didn’t just people in prison in those days. They tortured the people they wanted to punish. The lions were kept to eat law-breakers. They weren’t fed often, so they would really be hungry and ready to eat whoever was tossed down to them.

The king knew what happened to people who were thrown in the pit. They died a horrifying death, being pulled apart and eaten. He didn’t sleep well that night, thinking of Daniel in that terrible place.

Early in the morning he rushed to the lion’s den.

“Daniel,” he called down. “Did your God, the one you serve continually, deliver you from the lions?”

How relieved he must have been to hear Daniel’s voice coming up from below.

“My God sent an angel to shut the lion’s mouths so they haven’t hurt me,” Daniel said. “God knew I hadn’t sinned against Him or against you.”

They pulled Daniel up out of the den and saw that he wasn’t hurt at all because he believed in his God, and God kept him safe.

Do you think that maybe the lions weren’t hungry that day? No, because the king commanded that Daniel’s enemies who tried to have him killed should be brought to the lions’ den.

“Throw them in, along with all their families,” the king commanded.

They threw them all into the pit. The lions were so hungry that they jumped up and started eating the people before they hit the ground!

The king then passed another decree that everyone in the kingdom should show respect to Daniel's God.

Daniel kept on serving as a leader for King Darius and he was prosperous during the reign of the next king, Cyrus, too. God used him in a great way, even though he was far away from his home in Israel. God gave him many visions which told of things that would happen in the future. Daniel wrote those things down and they are in our Bible for us to read today.

The Life Lesson

Serving God is not always easy. For Daniel it meant that he would be in danger of the worst kind of torture. But God is trustworthy. He will take care of us and bless us when we follow Him with all our hearts. I hope you, like Daniel, will be brave and faithful, and trust the Lord to take care of you in times of trouble.

Review Questions

What king put Daniel in charge of his kingdom?

King Darius

What was the only thing his enemies could use to get Daniel into trouble?

His faithfulness to God.

What decree did they trick the king into signing?

The decree said no one could pray to anyone but the king for 30 days.

What did Daniel do after the law was signed?

He went to his window and prayed to God as he always did.

What happened when Daniel was thrown to the lions?

God sent an angel to shut the lions' mouths

What did the king do to Daniel's enemies?

He had them thrown into the lions' den.

What happened when the enemies were thrown to the lions?

The lions started eating them before they hit the ground.

Did God take care of Daniel when he was in danger?

Yes

Will God take care of you as you trust Him?

Yes