



THE STORY OF DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN (Daniel 6)

In the vast and mighty empire of Persia, during the reign of King Darius, there lived a man named Daniel. Daniel was known throughout the land as a man of exceptional wisdom, integrity, and deep faith in the God of Israel. He had served under several kings and had earned their trust, rising to a position of great power and influence. King Darius, recognizing Daniel's abilities, appointed him as one of the top three administrators over the entire kingdom. Among these administrators, Daniel distinguished himself so much that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom.

However, Daniel's rapid rise to power stirred jealousy and resentment among the other officials and satraps (provincial governors). They searched for any flaw in his character or conduct, hoping to find something to accuse him of, but they found nothing. Daniel was faithful, honest, and above reproach in all his duties. The only way they could trap him, they realized, was by targeting his faithfulness to his God.

The officials devised a cunning plan. They approached King Darius and suggested a royal decree that would flatter the king's vanity. "O King Darius, live forever!" they said. "We have all agreed that the king should issue an edict and enforce the decree that anyone who prays to any god or human being during the next thirty days, except to you, Your Majesty, shall be thrown into the lions' den."

The idea of being the sole object of worship for an entire month appealed to Darius, and without much thought, he signed the decree into law. According to the laws of the Medes and Persians, once a decree was signed, it could not be altered or repealed.

Daniel, however, was not swayed by this new law. He was a man of deep and consistent prayer, and nothing could shake his devotion to God. When Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went to his upstairs room, where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Just as he had always done, Daniel got down on his knees three times a day and prayed, giving thanks to his God.

The conspirators, knowing Daniel's habits, watched him closely. When they saw him praying to God, they immediately went to the king to accuse him. "Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, Your Majesty, or to the decree you put in writing. He still prays three times a day."

King Darius was distressed when he heard this. He greatly admired Daniel and realized that he had been manipulated into signing the decree. The king spent the rest of the day trying to find a way to save Daniel, but the law of the Medes and Persians was unchangeable. Reluctantly, Darius gave the order, and Daniel was brought and thrown into the lions' den.

Before Daniel was cast into the den, King Darius spoke to him with a heavy heart, "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!" The entrance to the den was then sealed with a stone, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and those of his nobles, so that nothing could be done to free Daniel.

That night, King Darius returned to his palace, but he was deeply troubled. He could not eat, nor could he sleep, for his mind was consumed with worry for Daniel. At the first light of dawn, the king hurried to the lions' den. As he reached the den, he called out 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?"

To the king's astonishment and relief, Daniel answered, "May the 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, Your Majesty."

King Darius was overjoyed and immediately ordered that Daniel be lifted out of the den. When Daniel was brought up, there was not a single wound on him, because he had trusted in his God. The king then commanded that the men who had falsely accused Daniel be brought and thrown into the lions' den, along with their wives and children. Before they even reached the floor of the den, the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.

King Darius, now fully aware of the power of Daniel's God, issued a new decree to all the peoples, nations, and languages throughout his vast kingdom: "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."

Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian. His story stands as a powerful testament to the faithfulness of God, who delivers those who trust in Him, even in the face of impossible odds. This story of Daniel's deliverance from the lions' den has inspired countless generations, reminding them that no matter the circumstances, God is always with His faithful ones, protecting them and guiding them through every trial.