

SERMON | DANIEL AND THE LIONS' DEN

SERIES | STRANGE LAND

STUDY GUIDE | MARIO BENAVIDES | MOTHER'S DAY, MAY 12, 2024

SERMON SUMMARY

At this time, Daniel was over 80, and had enjoyed God's blessing throughout his entire life. Daniel was the favorite of king Darius. Daniel had experience, wisdom, leadership, a good reputation, ability, attitude, and revelation from God. God wanted Daniel in a place of influence to encourage and assist in the Jews' return to Judah. This return was made in Cyrus' first year, right before the lions' den incident.

Daniel had lived in Babylon for over 60 years. His loyalty to the rulers was well known. In spite of that loyalty, his consistent faithfulness to God brought a threat against him, leading to a jealous plot against Daniel from the other administrators of the king. A deceptive stroke of the king's ego secured his instruction, which was designed to benefit Daniel's administrative peers. Once this law was enacted, Medo-Persian law could not be changed, even by the king. Even though the king was distraught and tried to find a way to use his power to deliver Daniel, he was forced to order Daniel to be killed in the lions' den.

King Darius sincerely wanted Daniel's God to deliver him, and Daniel was saved by his faith. God openly honored Daniel's faith for the purpose of showing His glory. King Darius was impacted by Daniel and by the Lord. He expressed himself as if he had come to a point of personal trust in God for his salvation, such as Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel illustrated the evangelistic potency of a godly, uncompromising life.

STUDY REFLECTIONS

1. Being trustworthy is a gift from God and can awaken jealousy and envy.
2. Revenge should not be our lifestyle.
3. In the lions' den, what Daniel remembers most is having spent the entire night with an angel.
4. Daniel's confidence that he had done nothing wrong; his conscience was clear.
5. Remember that he was seen right in Heaven and was delivered from danger on earth.

SCRIPTURE READING

READ THIS WEEKS BIBLE PASSAGE: Daniel 6:1-28 (ESV)

Daniel and the Lions' Den

6 It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom 120 satraps, to be throughout the whole kingdom; **2** and over them three high officials, of whom Daniel was one, to whom these satraps should give account, so that the king might suffer no loss. **3** Then this Daniel became distinguished above all the other high officials and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him. And the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. **4** Then the high officials and the satraps sought to find a ground for complaint against Daniel with regard to the kingdom, but they could find no ground for complaint or any fault, because he was faithful, and no error or fault was found in him. **5** Then these men said, "We shall not find any ground for complaint against this Daniel unless we find it in connection with the law of his God." **6** Then these high officials and satraps came by agreement to the king and said to him, "O King Darius, live forever! **7** 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. ⁸ 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.” ⁹ Therefore King Darius signed the document and injunction.

¹⁰ When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously. ¹¹ Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and plea before his God. ¹² Then they came near and said before the king, concerning the injunction, “O king! Did you not sign an injunction, that anyone who makes petition to any god or man within thirty days except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?” The king answered and said, “The thing stands fast, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be revoked.” ¹³ Then they answered and said before the king, “Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or the injunction you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day.”

¹⁴ Then the king, when he heard these words, was much distressed and set his mind to deliver Daniel. And he labored till the sun went down to rescue him. ¹⁵ Then these men came by agreement to the king and said to the king, “Know, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no injunction or ordinance that the king establishes can be changed.” ¹⁶ Then the king commanded, and Daniel was brought and cast into the den of lions. The king declared to Daniel, “May your God, whom you serve continually, deliver you!” ¹⁷ And a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet and with the signet of his lords, that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel. ¹⁸ Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; no diversions were brought to him, and sleep fled from him.

¹⁹ Then, at break of day, the king arose and went in haste to the den of lions. ²⁰ As he came near to the den where Daniel was, he cried out in a tone of anguish. The king declared to Daniel, “O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?” ²¹ Then Daniel said to the king, “O king, live forever! ²² 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.” ²³ 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. ²⁴ 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.

²⁵ Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: “Peace be multiplied to you. ²⁶ 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.

²⁷ 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.”

²⁸ So this Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian. – Daniel 6:1-28

BIBLE PASSAGE APPLICATION QUESTIONS

What stood out to you in these passages? Did the Lord highlight anything to you? What do these passages teach you about the character of God? What do these passages teach you about mankind? What do these passages teach you about how mankind should respond to God? What do these passages teach you about how to respond to others?

Read these passages again (use a different translation if helpful). How did these passages help to convict, correct, or encourage you?

GROUP DISCUSSION

DISCUSS THESE QUESTIONS WITH YOUR GROUP

1. Is envy or jealousy a struggle in your life? How can we overcome this sin?
2. What does the Lord instruct us to do with our enemies instead of taking the fleshly response of revenge?
3. If you were in Daniel's place, what would your fears be?
4. How has walking by faithful obedience in your life brought trust and freedom in the Lord, in spite of persecution?
5. Is there someone who has influenced you by exhibiting a godly uncompromising life? How?

PRAYER

Take some time for prayer requests and pray over one another before wrapping up.

