

DANIEL IN LIONS' DEN

Daniel 6:1-28; 9:23; 10:11, 19

STRUCTURE

Key-persons: King Darius, Daniel's enemies, and Daniel

Key-location: Babylon

Key-repetitions:

- The king's decree cannot be altered, in accordance with the laws of the Medes and Persians: the fact stated (Dan 6:8); Daniel's enemies reminded the king that his decree could not be canceled (Dan 6:12); at sundown, they reminded the king again that his decree could never be canceled (Dan 6:15).
- Conspiracy against Daniel: governors sought scandal against Daniel (Dan 6:4); they conspired to forbid any prayer except to the king (Dan 6:6-9); they reported to the king that Daniel defied the king's decree and prayed three times a day (Dan 6:11-13); they reminded the king that his decree could not be canceled (Dan 6:12); at sundown, they reminded the king again that his decree could never be canceled (Dan 6:15).
- Positive facts about Daniel: King Darius planned to put Daniel in charge of the kingdom (Dan 6:3); Daniel was trustworthy (Dan 6:4); Daniel ignored the decree to only pray to the king and prayed to God (Dan 6:10); King Darius tried to save Daniel (Dan 6:14); God rescued Daniel from the lions (Dan 6:19-22); Daniel was greatly loved by God (Dan 9:23; 10:11, 19).
- Daniel and his God: Daniel's enemies could not find any fault with him unless it was related to his God (Dan 6:5); Daniel always went to his room and prayed three times a day (Dan 6:10); God rescued Daniel from the lions (Dan 6:19-22); King Darius recognized the greatness of Daniel's God (Dan 6:25-27); Daniel was greatly loved by God (Dan 9:23; 10:11, 19).

Key-attitudes:

- Other governors' maliciousness toward Daniel.
- Daniel's dedication to God.
- King Darius' audacity to require people to pray to him.
- King's distress at sending Daniel to the lions' den.
- King's joy at discovering Daniel alive in the lions' den.

Initial-situation:

King Nebuchadnezzar died and Belshazzar became his successor as king. King Belshazzar was slain, and Darius the Mede took over the kingdom. Daniel had been in Babylon seventy years when Darius the Mede took over the Kingdom of Babylon.

Initial-problem:

King Darius planned to put Daniel in charge of the whole kingdom. Other governors tried to find some scandal that they could use against Daniel.

Final-situation:

Daniel prospered during the reign of King Darius. Daniel was greatly loved by God.

BIBLE STORY

Darius the Mede conquered the Kingdom of Babylon (Dan 5:29-31).

King Darius appointed 120 governors to administer the kingdom. The king planned to put Daniel in charge of the whole kingdom. The other governors tried to find some scandal that they could use against Daniel. But Daniel was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent. The other governors said, "We'll never find evidence of negligence or misconduct against Daniel unless, it's something to do with the religion of his God" (Dan 6:1-5).

The governors conspired together and told the king, "King Darius, live forever! We all agreed that the king should issue the following decree, 'Anyone who prays to any god or man during the next thirty days, except to you, Your Majesty, shall be thrown into the lions' den.' Now, Your Majesty, issue the decree and sign it. Then it cannot be altered, in accordance with the laws of the Medes and Persians." King Darius signed the written decree (Dan 6:6-9).

The decree was published. But, Daniel went to his upstairs room and faced the window toward Jerusalem. Three times a day, Daniel got down on his knees and prayed like he always did. The conspirators found Daniel praying and reported to the king, "Daniel, one of the Jewish exiles, ignores you and defies your decree. He still prays three times a day." The king heard this and was greatly distressed.

The conspirators reminded the king, "Remember, Your Majesty, according to the law of the Medes and Persians the king's decree can never be canceled" (Dan 6:10-14).

King Darius was displeased and tried every way he could think of to save Daniel. At sundown Daniel's accusers gathered in front of the king and said, "Remember, Your Majesty, the Medes and Persians have a law that every decree the king signs cannot be canceled."

Daniel was brought to the king. The king ordered Daniel to be thrown into the lions' den. King Darius told Daniel, "May your God, whom you loyally serve, rescue you!"

The king went to his palace. The king went to bed without eating, but he couldn't sleep.

King Darius got up at daybreak and hurried to the lions' den. Darius called out anxiously, "Daniel, has your God, whom you serve so loyally, rescued you from the lions?"

Daniel answered, "Your Majesty, may you live forever! My God sent his angel to shut the lions' mouths so they would not hurt me."

King Darius was overjoyed and gave orders to take Daniel out of the den. Daniel was lifted from the den and no scratch was found on him. Daniel had trusted his God.

King Darius commanded that those who conspired against Daniel be thrown into the lions' den, along with their families. Before they hit the floor of the den, the lions were tearing them to pieces (Dan 6:15-24).

King Darius wrote a decree and published, "I decree that in all my kingdom, people should tremble before Daniel's God, who is the living God who continues forever. His kingdom will never be destroyed. His power will last forever. This living God rescues and does amazing things in heaven and on earth. He rescued Daniel from the lions."

From then on, Daniel prospered during the reign of King Darius the Persian (Dan 6:28).

Daniel was greatly loved by God. Daniel was greatly loved by God (Dan 9:23; 10:11, 19).

GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

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| 1. What catches your attention in the story? | 5. How did the characters face their problems? |
| 2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand? | 6. How have you faced similar problems? |
| 3. Who are the main characters in the story? | 7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you? |
| 4. What problems did the characters face? | 8. What does the story tell about God? |

SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What kind of hostilities and conspiracies did Daniel face when Darius was king?
2. What was the only criticism Daniel's enemies could find against him?
3. If you were accused of being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?
4. How was King Darius tricked into condemning Daniel to the lions' den?
5. What part did prayer play in Daniel's life?
6. How was God's power manifested in a place where most people neither believed in him nor served him?
7. What can you learn from Daniel that could help you face a hostile environment with people who conspire against you?

LIFE-LESSONS

1. **All should be faithful to their employers; however, Christians should be the most faithful.** Daniel made enemies by doing a good job. Daniel distinguished himself. He was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent (Dan 6:3-4).

2. **The person who is faithful to God will suffer threats and persecutions when his virtue enters into conflict with the culture of those who surround him. Then his own virtue becomes a reason to condemn him.** Daniel had enemies who used his faithfulness to God as a reason for killing him (Dan 6:5, 12-16).
3. **Some crimes are not sins. God's people should disobey a law that would require them to disobey God.** Daniel was a righteous man who was convicted of a crime; however, he was not guilty of a sin against God. Daniel purposefully committed this crime because he did not wish to sin against God (Dan 6:6-10).
4. **God's servant needs a disciplined prayer life.** Daniel continued to pray three times a day as he always had (Dan 6:10).
5. **Cruel people often reap the cruelty they plan for others.** Daniel's enemies planned for the lions to kill him; yet, their plans backfired and the lions devoured them and their families (Dan 6:6-24).
6. **God loves the person who is faithful to him.** Daniel is one of the few people written about in the Bible where there is no mention of his doing anything wrong. Others are: Enoch (Gen 5:22-24); Joseph (Gen 37 - 50); Ezra (Ez 7:10); Joseph, Jesus' step-father (Mat 1:18-25). Daniel was greatly loved by God (Dan 9:23; 10:11, 19).

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

1. **Chant:**

Words in **bold and underlined** are stressed. Stress words by stretching them out instead of increasing volume.

All	
“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your request to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7 NIV).	
Group 1	Group 2
Do not be anxious about anything,	Don't worry.
But in <u>everything</u> ,	In every situation,
by <u>prayer</u> and <u>petition</u> , with thanksgiving, present your request to God.	pray and ask God while <u>giving him thanks</u> .
And the <u>peace</u> of God,	<u>God's</u> peace
which transcends all understanding,	which no person can understand
will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus	will control the way you think and feel through Christ Jesus.
All	
“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your request to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7 NIV).	

2. **Role-playing Drama**

Have two volunteers imagine they are two of King Darius' governors who want to prevent Daniel from being put in charge of the kingdom. Let them discuss their plans for eliminating Daniel.