**Daniel and the Lions’ Den**

**Introduction:**

Daniel serves as a great example of the faithful servant of God. He came to Babylon when he was quite young. (Daniel 1) (Daniel 1:6) Now from among those of the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.” NKJV By the time of his encounter with the lions, he may have been as old as eighty-five or ninety. At this time, the ruler of the land was Darius, King of the Medo-Persian Empire. Daniel rose to a position of great power and influence because he possessed “an excellent spirit.” **Text:** Daniel 6 **Body:**

1. **The World in which He Lived** Daniel 6:4-9 “So the governors and satraps sought to find some charge against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find no charge or fault, because he was faithful; nor was there any error or fault found in him. 5 Then these men said, ‘We shall not find any charge against this Daniel unless we find it against him concerning the law of his God.’ 6 So these governors and satraps thronged before the king, and said this to him: ‘King Darius, live forever! 7 All the governors of the kingdom, the administrators and satraps, the counselors and advisors, have consulted together to establish a royal statute and to make a firm decree, that whoever petitions any god or man for thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. 8 Now, O king, establish the decree and sign the writing, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter.’ 9 Therefore King Darius signed the written decree.” NKJV

* Daniel lived in a barbaric, cruel world where life was not highly valued. The excesses of sin were no doubt all around: idolatry, immorality, and ungodliness. Yet, despite his surroundings, Daniel displayed a stellar character. His motivation came from the inside. We should never say, “If conditions were better, I could be a better Christian.”
* Daniel lived under the rule of an irreligious king who loved to have his subjects worship him. (Verses 6-9) Darius allowed evil men to use him in their plot against Daniel. “Men are responsible for the evil they can prevent, as well as the good they can accomplish.” Unknown
* Daniel’s world included a number of enemies. You can tell a lot about a person by his enemies. (Verses 4-5) They hated a good man simply because he was good. (Proverbs 27:4) “Wrath is cruel and anger a torrent, But who is able to stand before jealousy?” NKJV Just because a person is righteous, doesn’t mean he won’t have enemies. (Isaiah 59:15) “So truth fails, And he who departs from evil makes himself a prey. Then the Lord saw it, and it displeased Him” NKJV The world hates those who are not like them. (John 15:18-19) “If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.” NKJV Daniel’s enemies could determine what he would do by his faith. They knew Daniel was so faithful to his God that he would never compromise his worship. Would our enemies know what we would do? Where we would be on Sunday morning? Whether we would take that drink of alcohol? Whether we would take God’s name in vain?

1. **The Choices Daniel Faced** Daniel 6:10 “Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.” NKJV

* After the king signed the decree, Daniel went ahead and did what he always did. He knelt and prayed like he had done yesterday and the day before. He prayed in the same room, same windows, same direction. (I Kings 8:48-49) “and when they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their enemies who led them away captive, and pray to You toward their land which You gave to their fathers, the city which You have chosen and the temple which I have built for Your name: then hear in heaven Your dwelling place their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause.” NKJV
* Daniel could have compromised. He could have just prayed silently or quietly. Or since the decree was for only thirty days, he could have just not worshipped for that length of time. He could have reasoned that this would be only a small compromise – no big deal. But Daniel would not begin to compromise because it would be even easier to compromise the next time.
* How many Christians today would just sit out for thirty days and wait until the decree was over? It is not easy to stand against the hypocrites in the church and the enemies in the world. But stand we must!
* Furthermore, why should God’s people be forced to compromise simply because the wicked do not like what we do?

1. **Daniel Faces the Lions** Daniel 19:11-23 “Then these men assembled and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. 12 And they went before the king, and spoke concerning the king’s decree: ‘Have you not signed a decree that every man who petitions any god or man within thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?’ The king answered and said, ‘The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter.’ 13 So they answered and said before the king, ‘That Daniel, who is one of the captives from Judah, does not show due regard for you, O king, or for the decree that you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day.’ 14 And the king, when he heard these words, was greatly displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him. 15 Then these men approached the king, and said to the king, ‘Know, O king, that it is the law of the Medes and Persians that no decree or statute which the king establishes may be changed.’ 16 So the king gave the command, and they brought Daniel and cast him into the den of lions. But the king spoke, saying to Daniel, ‘Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you.’ 17 Then a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signets of his lords, that the purpose concerning Daniel might not be changed. 18 Now the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; and no musicians were brought before him. Also his sleep went from him. 19 Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions. 20 And when he came to the den, he cried out with a lamenting voice to Daniel. The king spoke, saying to Daniel, ‘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, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you.’ 23 Now the king was exceedingly glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no injury whatever was found on him, because he believed in his God.” NKJV

* Daniel’s enemies’ tell the king what Daniel had done. The righteous will always have enemies. (Verses 11-13)
* The king faces a dilemma. (Verses 14-15) The king could not go on record as changing his mind. (Verse 8)
* So Daniel is thrown into the den of lions. (Verses 16-17) The king had obviously been impressed by Daniel’s character. He was different.
* The king was tormented all night. (Verses 18-19) He could not wait to check on Daniel. His hope was that Daniel’s God had saved him. (Verse 20)
* Of course, Daniel is saved and the king was glad. (Verses 21-23)

1. **Darius Honors God** Daniel 19:24-28 “And the king gave the command, and they brought those men who had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions – them, their children, and their wives; and the lions overpowered them, and broke all their bones in pieces before they ever came to the bottom of the den. 25 Then King Darius wrote: To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you. 26 I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom men must tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. For He is the living God, And steadfast forever; His kingdom is the one which shall not be destroyed, And His dominion shall endure to the end. 27 He delivers and rescues, And He works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, Who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions. 28 So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.” NKJV

* The enemies are killed by the lions. While it may appear that the wicked are prospering their prosperity will not last forever. God is still in control. (Verse 24)
* Darius makes another decree. This time it is about the living God, the God Daniel worshipped. (Verses 25-28) Daniel, because of his steadfast faith, had greatly influenced this world leader.

**Conclusion:**

Daniel presents a great example of unwavering trust in Jehovah. His strong faith in Jehovah kept him from compromising his convictions. In the days ahead, we too will need this unwavering trust and strong faith to survive.

Bobby Stafford September 18, 2016