

Lesson 13: In the Lion's Den



When faithfulness to God is challenged, we must remain steadfast.

Study at a Glance: The 5 W's

KEY AREA	DETAILS AND SUMMARY
WHO (Author & Audience)	Daniel, a faithful Jewish official under King Darius, is targeted by jealous administrators who exploit his devotion to God, but God sends His angel to protect him.
WHAT (Core Message)	A law forbids prayer to anyone but Darius for thirty days; Daniel keeps praying to God, is thrown into the lions' den, and is miraculously delivered, leading Darius to honor Israel's God.
WHEN (Timing)	After Babylon falls and during the early Medo-Persian period under Darius the Mede, near the end of Daniel's long career in exile.
WHERE (Location)	In the Persian royal administration centered at Babylon—Daniel's upstairs room facing Jerusalem and the king's lions' den where executions occur.
WHY (Rationale)	Jealous officials seek to destroy Daniel by making his faithfulness illegal, but God allows the plot so His power to rescue and His eternal kingdom will be publicly proclaimed through Darius's decree.

Key Terms Defined

TERM	Give the verse where the term is found	DEFINITION (Contextual)
Satraps		
Edict / Decree		
Injunction / Interdict		
Supplication		
Innocent / Blameless		
Dominion		

Transition into Section 1:

Darius organizes his kingdom under 120 satraps and three administrators, with Daniel distinguished above the rest because “an excellent spirit” is in him.

Jealous leaders cannot find any corruption or negligence in Daniel, so they decide the only way to accuse him is to make his loyalty to God illegal. They flatter Darius into signing a 30-day decree that no one may pray to any god or man except the king, according to the unchangeable “law of the Medes and Persians.”

Section 1: A Conspiracy Against Daniel (Daniel 6:1-9)

Summary of the passage (Daniel's promotion, jealousy of the officials, and the plot using the unchangeable law).

Core Questions

1. Why do Daniel’s enemies focus on his relationship with God rather than his political performance (6:4–5)? What does this reveal about the kind of man Daniel is?

2. Where might believers today experience pressure like Daniel—situations where faithfulness to God becomes the very reason others oppose them?

Dig Deeper (If time allows)

Why did the conspirators choose prayer as the point of attack instead of Daniel's ethics or politics?

Transition to Section 2:

The snare has been set: a flattering law has become a spiritual trap, and the ink on the decree is now dry.

The question is no longer whether Daniel is competent but whether he will remain faithful when his normal prayer life has become a death-sentence offense.

Section 2: Daniel's Faithfulness Invites a Challenge (Daniel 6:10-18)

When Daniel learns that the decree has been signed, he goes home, opens his windows toward Jerusalem, and kneels three times a day to pray and give thanks to God, “just as he had done before.”

His enemies find him praying, report him to the king, and remind Darius that the law of the Medes and Persians cannot be changed. Darius is distressed and spends the day trying to rescue Daniel, but in the end he must order him thrown into the lions’ den, expressing a fragile hope: “May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you.”

A stone is placed over the den and sealed; the king spends a sleepless night fasting, while Daniel is alone in the darkness with the lions.

Core Questions

1. What is significant about the phrase “as he had done previously” (6:10)? How does this shape our understanding of Daniel’s courage?

2. Darius cares for Daniel but still sends him to the lions because he feels trapped by his own law. What does this teach us about trusting human favor versus trusting God?

Dig Deeper (If time allows)

Why does God let the conspiracy go all the way to the lions' den instead of stopping it earlier?

Transition to Section 3:

The stone is sealed and the law stands, but the story is not over; while Darius tosses in his bed, heaven is quietly at work in the den.

At daybreak, the real verdict will be announced—not just on Daniel, but on whose word ultimately rules: the law of the Medes and Persians or the decree of the living God.

Section 3: God Delivers and Is Revered (Daniel 6:19-28)

At first light, Darius hurries to the den and calls out in anguish, asking if the God whom Daniel serves continually has been able to rescue him.

To the king's astonishment, Daniel replies that God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, and that he has been found innocent before God and before the king.

Daniel is lifted out unharmed, while his accusers and their families are thrown in and destroyed; Darius then issues a decree to all peoples and nations, commanding them to fear and reverence the God of Daniel, proclaiming His eternal kingdom and His power to rescue and save.

Core Questions

1. How does Darius's final decree (6:25–27) show a change in his understanding of Daniel's God? What key truths does he confess?
2. What does Daniel's emphasis on being innocent "before God and before you, O king" teach us about relating to earthly authorities when our ultimate allegiance is to God?

Dig Deeper (If time allows)

Daniel is rescued, but many faithful believers are not. How is Daniel 6 still good news for those who are devoured rather than delivered?

Closing: Bringing It All Together

We all face “lion’s dens” where obedience to God feels dangerous: telling the truth when it costs you, refusing to bow to cultural idols, holding to holiness when compromise is easier.

Daniel’s story reminds us that courage in the den is formed long before the crisis, in the hidden habits of seeking God “as we have done previously,” and that God can use our trials as platforms to display His power to people who are watching.

Whether He shuts the lions’ mouths now or carries us safely through suffering into His eternal kingdom, our calling is the same: remain steadfast, keep the windows open toward our true home, and trust the living God whose kingdom will never be destroyed.