

Daniel in the Lions Den

In the Bible: Daniel 6

King Darius had captured Babylon and placed 120 governors to rule the city closely, so he wouldn't come to any harm.

Daniel in the Lions Den fact:
The name Daniel means "God is my judge".

Daniel was about 90 years old at this time, and had just prophesied the defeat of the Babylonians by King Darius the Mede. King Darius was so impressed by the prophecy, and Daniel's wisdom and fairness, that he placed Daniel and two others in charge of the 120 governors.

Some governors were jealous of Daniel because King Darius favoured him, and sought an opportunity to remove him from power. Daniel continued to obey God's laws, so they could not find fault in anything he did.

The governors met and said, "We will not be able to find fault with him, unless we use his faith against him."

They knew they could take advantage of the king's pride and trick him into removing Daniel from power. They sought a meeting with the king and lied to him, "Oh King, the governors, captains, princes, and counsellors have come together to create a new law. We say that if any man pray to their God or any other man except for you for thirty days, the man should be thrown in the den of lions.

Daniel in the Lions Den fact:
King Darius was crowned king of Babylon when he was about 62 years old. Some historians still dispute to this day, who Darius actually was. They maintain that he could not be a Mede because the Medes were under control of the Persians during this time.

"King Darius, sign this law in writing, so that it cannot be changed."

So Darius signed the writing and the decree.

Even after Daniel discovered the decree had been signed, he continued to go up to his room and kneel toward the window that faced Jerusalem and prayed to God, like he had always done.

The group of governors watched Daniel do this for a few days, and ran to the king again.

"King Darius, did you not sign a decree that states nobody may pray to their God or any other man except you, for thirty days?"

"I did sign the decree," replied King Darius.

Daniel in the Lions Den fact:
Ezekiel 14:14 states that God will punish an entire nation for idolatry. However, he will save faithful men like Noah, Job, and Daniel.

"Your high prince, Daniel, does not respect you or your decree, and so he must be thrown into the den of lions."

Daniel in the Lions Den fact:
King Darius was not the only king distressed over a bad decision. When John the Baptist was in captivity, the king at the time granted a dinner guest's request of killing John, for no particular reason! See Mark 6:25.

Upon hearing this news, King Darius was angry with himself for signing the decree. He knew he had been tricked, and worked the entire day to save Daniel from the lions' den.

He could not save Daniel, however, and he was thrown into the den of lions.

A large stone was placed in front of the entrance, and the king sealed it with his signet ring so nobody could interfere.

King Darius could not eat or sleep. He tossed and turned all night worrying about Daniel. Even when musicians played for him, he could not sleep.

Daniel in the Lions Den fact:
Psalm 91:11-13 says that God will command his angels concerning us, to guard us in all our ways - if we make God our dwelling place. Daniel did just that, and he was saved miraculously, twice!

Early the next morning, the king rushed to the lions' den to see if Daniel survived. He cried out, "Daniel, servant of the living God, was your God, whom you continually serve, able to save you from the lions?"

Daniel replied from the den, "Oh King, live forever. My God sent an angel to shut the mouths of the lions so they couldn't hurt me. It is now as it was before, I am innocent in the eyes of God."

Daniel in the Lions Den fact:
Lions are used many times in the Bible to test God's people. Samson and David were both tested using lions. God gave them strength both times to overcome the test.

The king then burned with anger toward the governors that tricked him. He had the governors and their families thrown into the den with the lions. This time, the angel did not shut the mouths of the lions, and the families perished.

Overjoyed with the fact that Daniel had survived, the king ordered a new decree for all the land to worship Daniel's God, the God of Israel.