**Facing the Lions**

**Daniel 6:1-17**

**Introduction**

This is perhaps one of the best-known accounts of the Bible. It is one of the first stories children learn, and it has inspired songs and been the text for many sermons. It has also been used to describe a person of character in a trying time. WORLD Magazine recognizes a “Daniel of the Year Award” and they explain, “*Since 1998, WORLD Magazine has selected a Daniel of the Year—a very different individual from* Time *magazine's typically power-grasping Person of the Year. Over the years we've had some well-known Daniels and some little-known ones, but in all cases their faith in God gave them the strength to stand up against tyrants who tried to put themselves in God's place. That's what made them Daniels: They exhibited bravery in defense of God's authority, not their own autonomy.*” In this lesson, we will see why Daniel was sentenced to the lions’ den and how it relates to your life. There are a number of ways you may be facing the lions.

1. **Daniel was promoted under the new administration. (v. 1-3)**
   1. A new administration came to power in Babylon under the reign of Darius. The events of this chapter most likely occurred during the transitional year.
   2. Darius organized his kingdom with 120 princes (governors) under three executive leaders. The Medo-Persian empire was the largest the world had seen. It was possible for the provincial leaders to abuse their power and to tax the people for their own profit. Daniel and the other two leaders were responsible to ensure honesty in the king’s matters.
   3. The reason Daniel was chosen is not stated, but we may speculate.
2. The king would have heard of the most recent story regarding Daniel’s ability to interpret the message on the wall.
3. Daniel served under Nebuchadnezzar and thus understood the inner workings of Babylon very well. The new king needed someone with insight.
4. Whatever prompted him, Daniel was installed as one of the top three leaders.
   1. Among the three, Daniel continued to distinguish himself. It was not out of a motive to excel above the others. He was not a man given to ambition. It was strictly because he was a faithful man. His good work brought him into favor with the king.
   2. Daniel was preferred above the others because of his excellent spirit. (v. 3)
   3. Faithful people with good attitudes tend to get promotions.
5. A man who proves himself reliable in training may be the first considered for leadership.
6. A lady who proves reliable in the office may be trusted to carry additional responsibility.
7. **Daniel was targeted in the new administration. (v. 4-9)**
   1. Those who have a good attitude and good work ethic may not only encounter promotion, but also the jealous spirit of coworkers.
   2. Why were his conspirators so antagonistic toward Daniel?
8. It may have been that they hoped to use their position to get wealthy. They would never be able to make a little money by dishonest gain while Daniel was on the scene.
9. It may have stemmed from anti-Semitism. “Why should this Israelite be promoted over us?”
10. Whatever the reason, they were dangerously against his promotion.
    1. Others may be jealous of your promotion. Someone at work may complain, “Why should he get that position? I have been here much longer!”
    2. Those who are eaten up with envy attempt to turn the advantage to themselves. (v. 4) “Then” (from that time on) the other leaders sought to bring about Daniel’s demise. They sought to find something to bring against him that would cause him to lose his position.
11. They sought for something in his public or political career. Surely, they thought, “There has to be something! You can’t be in politics for this many years and have a good testimony!”
12. They were not able to find any fault (corruption) with Daniel. He was trustworthy in his service to the king. Unfortunately, it is too easy to find evidence of negligence and corruption on the part of leaders today.
    1. The only way they could possibly bring an accusation against Daniel was if they could cause his allegiance to God to come into conflict with his allegiance to the king. (v. 5)
    2. They assembled before the king as co-conspirators against Daniel. (v. 6)
    3. They suggested a decree to test the loyalty of the people to their new ruler. (v. 7)
13. For the next 30 days, everyone in the realm was to pray only to King Darius. How would you like to be god for a month?
14. Why would Darius go with this new law? It appealed to his pride and would help him gain control of the new province. He trusted his officials to do what was best for the realm and did not see their ulterior motives.
15. The penalty was to be thrown into the den of lions. It was the sport of kings to hunt and collect lions. A pit served as an effective form of execution. It was a “trouble-free method of disposing of undesirable members of society” (Baldwin).
    1. They asked that the law be signed according to the law of the Medes and Persians. Once the king signed the decree, there was no way in which it may be changed.
16. **Daniel chose to remain faithful to God despite the ruling of the new administration. (v. 10-17)**
    1. First, notice what he did not do. He did not go in and complain to the king. He did not form a campaign to overthrow the ruling. He did not form a militia.
    2. Instead, he continued to do what he always did. (v. 10) He prayed three times a day, kneeling upon his knees facing Jerusalem. (2 Chron. 6:36-39)
    3. The evil men who conspired against Daniel found him praying to God, just as they suspected he would. (v. 11-13) They immediately went before the king. When the king confirmed the decree, they did not hesitate to report Daniel’s infraction of the new law.
    4. The king was very displeased with himself and determined to deliver Daniel. (v. 14-15) He devoted the remainder of the day to resolve the issue, but Daniel’s conspirators insisted that the king must proceed with the decree.
    5. The king reluctantly conceded and called for Daniel’s death sentence. (v. 16-17) Nonetheless, he believed Daniel’s God would deliver him.
17. **Central Idea: Daniel was sentenced to the den of lions because his faith brought him into conflict with the new administration.**
    1. You will encounter difficulty when your faith comes into conflict with a worldly administration.
    2. Your faith may come into conflict with the educational administration where you serve or attend as a student. The further the educational system forsakes the truths of God’s Word, the more believers will face the lions.
    3. Your faith may bring you into conflict at work. What will you do if your boss wants you to falsify information? You may have to choose between doing what is right and keeping your job.
    4. Your faith may come into conflict with your family. They may not understand or agree with your decision to follow Christ and obey His Word.
    5. Your faith may come into conflict with a group of friends. What will be your response if they invite you to join them for a drink after work?
18. **Application**
    1. Accept the fact that being a believer places a target on you.
    2. Be blameless in your private and public life.
    3. Maintain a relationship with God that is not crisis oriented. Daniel had a regular prayer life. Don’t wait until the crisis hits to turn to the Lord.
    4. Those who know how to kneel find strength to stand in adversity. Continue in your devotion to God whether it brings promotion or attack.
    5. Remember, it is better to spend the night with lions than to be at peace with doing wrong.