

Among the Lions: In and Out of the Den (Part 2)

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[0 : 00] Amen. Okay, Daniel, where we are, of course, you know that.

! By the way, this is a continuation of what we started last week. But we have come tonight to the third point in my outline, and actually the fourth.

We ended last week looking at the prophet Daniel's prayerful devotion. You remember the story. I mean, let's just kind of refresh ourselves.

This is, you know, that chapter that is a favorite of the kids, Daniel and the lion's den. And that story is rich.

And we also, you know, started this chapter out with a new king, Darius. And not just a new king, but a new empire. The next empire after the Babylonian Empire is commonly called the Medes and the Persian, the Medo-Persian Empire.

[1 : 12] And Darius is mentioned here in the text. I believe it's probably just another name for Cyrus, but we won't press that too hard. It doesn't really matter.

And so we've been kind of walking our way through that story. And you remember, you know, Darius, he's chosen to kind of get organized. And he's selected 120 satraps, the scripture says, or the word is.

And then over them, three governors or princes, we could call them. And Daniel is one of them. But because of Daniel's character, Darius is really seriously contemplating promoting Daniel to really co-regent.

Kind of second in command to him to rule over the entire empire. And, of course, as is usually the case, others probably want that job.

The other two governors would love to have that job, and they're envious. And besides that, you know, Daniel, he's just a Hebrew slave, you know, a conquered Hebrew.

[2 : 25] And so why should he, you know, have this kind of authority? All right, so you remember that. And so they kind of connive and figure out a way to get Daniel into trouble with the king.

And it has to do with their convincing the king to make a decree. A decree that for 30 days, all prayers, all petitions must go to him.

No one can petition their God or man. And for 30 days, Darius gets to be God, in a sense. God for a month. And so he likes the idea because he's a pretty prideful guy.

And so he signs a decree. It's the law of the Medes and the Persians. Can't be broken. Can't be deviated from. And that just kind of falls into the hands or into the plans of these governors.

Probably the other two governors are probably the ones here. And maybe a few of the satraps are kind of in on this. And so they know what they're going to do.

[3 : 34] Well, Daniel, of course, this is kind of how we ended last week, Prophet Daniel's prayerful devotion. He knew all about it, and yet he prays anyway. All right, so now we're then up to the consequence of Daniel's decision to continue to pray to his God and point or rather Roman numeral number four in our outline, the Lord's powerful deliverance.

The Lord's powerful deliverance. And this is where we come to that part of the story that we're most familiar with. All right, so here's Daniel. I want you to kind of think about this, kind of get the whole picture in your mind here.

I always like to, when I'm studying scripture, especially particular passages that are narrations, the telling of a story, try to read between the lines, but behind the lines, and try to figure out some other things that might have been going on, or maybe even try to imagine some other scenarios that could take place in the telling of the story or in the story.

And so just think about it. Here's Daniel, and what's he doing? He's praying. All right, we looked at that passage, verse 10. He's praying, just like he always has.

And so he knows the king's decree. That's what verse 10 tells us. He knows the punishment for disobeying the king's decree.

[5 : 14] And what was the punishment? Thrown into the lion's den. Be devoured by the lions. That's pretty severe, pretty final. All right, so he knows that, doesn't he?

Yeah, verse 10 suggests that. It says in verse 10, Now, when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. He knows about the writing. I mean, he's one of the governors. He would know this.

All right, so he knows all about that. And then think about this. He is one of three governors in the Persian Empire, the Medo-Persian Empire.

Essentially, he answers only to the king. All right, so he's up there. I mean, really up there. And the king, again, would remind you, seriously contemplating making Daniel second in command.

So he has a mate, doesn't he? I mean, if you're in his place. Now, think about it. This is the Medo-Persian Empire.

[6 : 20] This is the power in the world for that day and would be the power, the superpower in the world for years to come.

And so he's one of the three governors. Answers only to the king. God had made, set for life. Now, he doesn't have a whole lot of life yet, left.

I mean, he's 90, probably 90 years old. And so, really, maybe that even adds more to the thought that, well, just sit back and just bide your time.

You only have a few years left. Just, you know, don't rock the boat at this time. And, you know, all he has to do is cease praying to God for 30 days.

That's all he has to do. And, I mean, that's it, right? Just don't pray to God for 30 days. Just give up prayer for one month.

[7 : 20] You think you could do that? Well, we could do that. I mean, surely God will understand. I mean, let's not be legalists here, right?

I mean, God knows my situation. Surely God will understand. If I, you know, just kind of leave off talking to him for 30 days, that's all I have to do.

You know, just put up with this and God understands that. Or, maybe even better than that, if Daniel is going to continue praying to Yahweh God, his God, during the month, if he's not going to stop praying, at least he could keep it quiet, keep it secret.

The door to shut. Well, yeah. Shut the door, lock the door, close the blinds on the window. Hey, Tom, go into the closet. You know, no one will ever know.

Or just pray to yourself, you know. I mean, we do that all the time, don't we? Don't you? You know, you don't even have to close your eyes, necessarily.

[8 : 25] James talked about praying while he's driving. I hope you have your eyes open. I do. I mean, you're here to tell us about it. I'm still here. But, and maybe you might talk out loud.

That's fine. I do that, too. But, I mean, we can pray and nobody knows it. I mean, can't we? And so, what's the big deal here? I don't see anything wrong with that.

And it's just 30 days. Just one month. Just one month. But no. Not Daniel. Not Daniel. As we saw in verse 10.

In fact, let me just read that verse again. He went home. All right. He knew about the writing. He was there, probably present when the king signed it into law. And he goes home.

And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem. All right. So, those who might want to find him, they'll know what window to look through.

[9 : 25] He knelt down on his knees three times that day. I mean, he's just really pressing his luck. Right? I mean, if I could put it that way.

Really taking a chance. Three times. And prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days. This is the habit of his life.

Three times a day. You know, and he didn't care who sees it. And the custom of his life is to pray to Yahweh and to kneel and face toward Jerusalem.

Not that the Bible's not giving us some instructions on how, where we ought to, you know, where we ought to be facing while we're praying. That's not the point here. But remember who Daniel is.

He's a Hebrew. And his nation has been conquered and taken into captivity. And Jerusalem is their holy city. And so, this was the custom of his life.

[10:22] And he knows about the rule, the law. He knows the consequences. But it's not going to change anything. And if somebody sees him praying, that's just the way it's got to be.

But he's not going to change it for any king who's made a decree that what he's doing is illegal. No law can keep a man from praying.

Or woman. Can keep a believer from praying. And so, this is Daniel. So, what happened next?

Well, we know, don't we? So, let's see three things here under this point in the outline.

First of all, the malice in the king's court. The malice in the king's court. Verses 11 through 15. And we'll divide that into a few points.

First of all, their treachery. The treachery of these governors and satraps, however many there were. Their treachery.

[11:22] Verse 11. Then these men assembled and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. Wow. What regrettable timing for Daniel.

That they just happened to be at the right place. Really, for Daniel, the wrong place at the wrong time. But they were at the right place. They just happened to be walking by the house.

That's really not the idea here. That's not really how it happened. Because in the first place, they knew about Daniel's uncompromising commitment to his God.

They knew about that. And they knew about it before. You know, they convinced the king to make this decree. They knew also, this is what we should assume about these guys.

They knew that no decree would ever alter Daniel's devotion to his God. They knew that. All right. So they knew about Daniel's uncompromising commitment. They knew that no decree of any king would ever, ever alter Daniel's devotion to his God.

[12:34] They also knew about Daniel's thrice daily custom of prayer. I think everybody knew it. I mean, he's right there at his window.

The shutters open or blinds drawn up or curtain pulled aside. Whatever, whatever it was. And I think it was common knowledge. They knew all that.

And they knew the timing, too, I think. The timing of Daniel's daily prayers. They knew the timing of it. Right?

They didn't just happen to go at the right time. They knew when to go. And so, then we could say that they prearranged the time they would gather at Daniel's house for purposes of catching him in the act.

It's all part of their plan. In fact, the scripture says there, and I've put this in your notes, it says, these men assembled. That's how the New King James translates it.

[13:35] But actually, the word means that they came to his house by agreement. This was part of their plan. They had planned this beforehand. They knew the time.

They didn't have watches. But they knew the time to be there. And so, they had prearranged all of this thing. All of this. To be there at the time so they could witness Daniel praying.

All right? That's always a well-laid plan. And we can see the, I think, see the treachery in this from the very beginning. I mean, maybe you could just imagine their conversation.

You know. We hate Daniel. And they did. Hated it. I mean, what right does this guy have to, you know, maybe rule over us?

A king's about to make this Hebrew a ruler over us. So, they're, you know, they're talking about this. Let's get rid of Daniel. All right? Let's devise a plan to have him destroyed.

[14:40] All right? This is their conversation. But how? How are they going to do it? He's the king's favorite. I mean, that's pretty clear from the passage. He's the king's favorite.

So, how are we going to do this? Well, let's see. I guess if we could just get him to break the king's laws. And then somebody probably tunes in and says, well, that won't work.

He never breaks any laws. Remember, verse 2 of the chapter tells us that he distinguished himself and his spirit. I mean, he was a law-abiding citizen.

Loyal to his authorities over him and so forth. So, that won't work. All right? So, he never breaks the laws. So, what are we going to do? I guess we'll have to come up with some other law.

All right? So, what do we know about Daniel? How could we trick him to breaking the law? Well, he's devoted to his God. And so, maybe we could just come up with some law or get the king to sign into law something that would make Daniel's worship of God illegal.

[15:48] All right? You see that that's the only thing they could get on him. And so, they might be thinking, you know, saying to themselves, you know, King Darius is a pretty prideful guy.

And so, if we just kind of go in there and suggest that he sign into law, you know, God for a moment and just sign that into law, you know, we're not going to tell him why we want to do that.

We just want to appeal to his pride, you know. And King likes the idea and so sign into law and you know the rest of the story. So, this is their treachery.

All right? So, we're talking about the malice in the king's court, their treachery. And then second, their trickery. Their trickery. They're very shrewd. And so, first of all, they've got to set the trap.

The setting of the trap. That's the first thing they have to do. Setting of the trap. Now, I'm not talking about Daniel's trap. They've already set that trap and Daniel's been caught in it. But I'm talking about the king.

[16:54] They've got to set a trap for the king. Right? Daniel's not the only one to whom they set the trap. Worked quite effectively with Daniel. They knew it would because of his commitment to the Lord.

They knew he could not resist and he would break the law without any problem. And so, now for their plans to work, they've got to set a trap for the king. And they can't just kind of storm into the throne room and demand that Daniel be arrested for high treason.

They can't just do that. Why? Because, well, they know the king loves Daniel. So, if they just come barging in and say, you know what this Daniel has done?

They probably would not get much traction there. So, they don't start there. They really kind of have to cajole the king a little bit. And so, in verse 12, it says, And they went before the king and spoke concerning the king's decree.

You know, in a sense, saying, you know, what a good idea that was. And have you enjoyed it? I mean, those words are not in there. But just kind of appealing to the king, you know, about this decree that was made.

[18:01] And, you know, isn't it wonderful that these people are really responding to you as if you were God for these days. And then they just kind of casually asked the question, Have you not signed a decree that every man who petitions any God or man within 30 days except you, O king, shall be cast into a den of lions?

You do remember that part of it, king? Well, yes, of course I do. In fact, that's what he says. The king answered and said the thing is true. According to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which does not alter, can't be altered.

You see how subtle this is. And so they're kind of setting him up. You know, it's kind of setting the trap for him. And so with that, the trap is set.

And then next comes the springing of the trap. Verse 13, So they answered and said before the king, That Daniel, who is one of the captives from Judah, So they demeaning Daniel here, Does not show due regard for you, O king, Or for the decree that you have signed, But makes this petition, his petition, three times a day.

All right. So now they've got him. They've got the king. Reminded him of the decree that he signed into law. And, you know, just kind of reminding him of the penalty for those who disobey that law.

[19:23] All right. And king said, That's right. Exactly right. I did that. The law can't be broken. Well, then, oh, by the way, king, Did you know that Daniel, And so they've got him.

What else can he do? And so that leads then to their, Excuse the word, But I've decided to, I want to keep with the alliteration, Temerity.

T-E-M-E-R-I-T-Y For those of you that have problem spelling, And I'm one. Temerity. There, temerity. Verse 15, Then these men approached the king and said to the king, See, they're coming very boldly, Very courageously, Really foolishly.

And they said, 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. Now, I skipped a verse here because, And so let me explain.

After they mentioned Daniel to him, Then the king said, Oh, no. You know, I've got to find some way out of that. We'll get back to that. And so he's kind of, Kind of backpedaling on this decree.

[20:32] And then they come very boldly. Now, king, you know, That this law can't be broken. So they're very, very bold here with the king.

Kind of throwing out all caution. Being really very demanded. And so he's caught. He's caught by his own law, Which was, of course, A law that came about Because of his own pride.

And so, With no fear, With all confidence and boldness, They approached the king, And they demanded that the king uphold the law And execute justice.

So this is their plan. The malice of the king's court. Next, the misery in the king's palace. All this had a deep impact upon King Darius' heart.

In the first place, He sought a loophole in the law. That's what we find in verse 14. He started looking for a loophole. But he found none.

[21 : 39] Verse 14, And the king, When he heard these words, Was greatly displeased with himself, And set his heart on Daniel to deliver him. And he labored till the going down of the sun To deliver him.

And basically what this means is, He's looking for a loophole. You know, Something in the writing of the law That might give a way out.

Or some other alternative. And maybe even looking at precedents In past legal documents and so forth.

And maybe he's got a whole battery of his legal experts there. And they're pouring through all of the, You know, The law books and such, Whatever. Or scrolls.

And trying to find some way, Some loophole, That will allow him to, You know, Let Daniel off the hook. Because he loves him.

[22 : 32] He cares for him. He greatly admires him. And so forth. So he sought a loophole. Then he sought a miracle From Daniel's God. But he really did not even believe in him.

And that comes through in verse 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, I guess this is on his way down. I don't know.

He said, Your God, Not mine, But your God, Whom you serve continually, He will deliver you. So he's looking for a miracle. Hoping for a miracle. Though he really doesn't even believe in Daniel's God.

And I would say third, He sought solace from his kingly life. But he found no solace. Verse 18, Now the king went to his palace And spent the night fasting.

No musicians were brought before him. Also his sleep went from him. So this is the misery in the king's palace. He could not sleep. He could not eat. Had no desire for music.

[23 : 34] No desire for entertainment. No celebration. No fun. None of that. The misery in the king's palace. And then next, The miracle in the lion's pit.

And it was a pit, by the way. When I think of a den, I think of something you walk into Or crawl into. But this was a pit. In the ground. And the lions were down in there.

Because after they throw Daniel in, They put a rock over the top of it So he can't climb out. And so Daniel in the lion's pit. The miracle in the lion's pit.

And so first of all, Notice his, Daniel's woeful situation. Verse 16, The second part of verse 16. And they brought Daniel And cast him into the den of lions. Cast him in there. Threw him in. Verse 17, Then a stone was brought And laid on the mouth of the den.

[24 : 36] 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. So they put a rock over the hole.

Sealed it. Nobody can break that seal Under extreme penalty. And so this is pretty tough. Pretty bad situation.

Then we have the king's hopeful expectation. Verse 19, Then the king arose Very early in the morning. Remember, he couldn't sleep.

He rose very early in the morning And went in haste to the den of lions. And when he came to the den, He cried out with a lamenting voice To Daniel.

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? This was his hopeful expectation.

[25 : 36] Hope he could go to the... And perhaps, you know, He's familiar with the story Of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. You know, back in Nebuchadnezzar's day. And how God delivered them From the fiery furnace.

And he's heard these stories. And perhaps, you know, You know, the Hebrew God Saved Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. His friends. And maybe he's done the same for Daniel. So, his hopeful expectation. And then, third, God's faithful protection. His protection.

He protected Daniel. Throughout that night. Verse 21. Then Daniel said to the king, O king, live forever. See, still respectful to the king. My God sent his angel And shut the lions' mouths So that they have not hurt me Because I was found innocent before him, Before God. And also, king, I have done no wrong before you. So his conscience was clear. See. Not only with God, But also with the king.

[26 : 43] With man. He's done nothing wrong. So God protected him. His faithful protection. And that's, you know, We remember this story Mostly because of the miracle.

And it's just, you know, A couple verses. And that's, you know, It's done. It's an awesome miracle, yes. But we want to take that in With the entire story And see how God used Daniel To really reach this king And to reveal himself to this king.

All right, so Then we want to see next The accuser's painful destruction. And I guess painful is putting it mildly. Though it probably didn't hurt very long.

Probably over pretty quick. But verse 23, Then 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. 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.

[27 : 57] And the lions overpowered them And broke all their bones in pieces Before they ever came To the bottom of the den. Wow.

Pretty tough. There are three realities That are magnified in these verses. First one, The measure of the king's mirth His merriment, You can put either word there.

His happiness, If you want to break with my alliteration. You can put whatever word you want in there. Because it says, Then the king was exceedingly glad for him, For Daniel.

He was beside himself. Joyful. Happy. Daniel has been spared. Alright. So that's magnified here. Exceedingly glad. Next, Or B, The magnitude Of the governor's malice Toward Daniel. The magnitude of that Sin against it.

[28 : 59] What I'm getting at here. 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 I say the magnitude of their malice Because the word accused And that's putting it mildly In the New King James.

The word accused there, Just one word in our English text, But it's really several words, Well, not several words in the Hebrew, But the Hebrew word, Or words, Form what's called an idiom.

You know, we have a lot of idioms That we use in our speech. And this is an idiom That means literally, I don't think I, Did I put this in your notes? Did I?

Alright, those who have eaten his pieces. Alright, now that, I didn't put that in there. Alright, that doesn't make A whole lot of sense to us. It's an idiom. But here's what it means.

That they have spoken maliciously Against Daniel. They're not just simply accusing it, But it's the spirit Behind their accusation.

[30 : 08] They were malicious. And so, the king has, Really, in a sense, Has put two and two together here. He's going all the way back To when these guys first appeared In his throne room And suggested that he make this decree That everybody worship him As God for a month.

And then, later on, You know, they're bringing it up again. And, oh, by the way, Daniel, you know, He's broken this law. And he led them down this path.

He's put all that together And he understands. So, it was a malicious thing That they had done. The king has discovered that. And the penalty for their sin Or their malice Is very severe, isn't it?

And, you know, We might, you know, Think about that And think, well, you know, It's terrible. Why would God Be a part of any of that? Well, it wasn't God Who decided that they'd be Thrown in the lion's den With their children.

It was the king Who decided that. But, you know, There are some pretty Serious things That we read about In the Old Testament.

[31 : 14] And some of it Has to do with the culture That is quite foreign to us. And, but this was a severe Very severe Sin And their judgment Was very severe.

And then, finally, Under that, Point number five The marvel Of God's miracle It's a marvelous miracle. And say, well, this This These verses aren't About the miracle.

But they really are. And let me just read it. And the lions Overpowered them And broke all their Bones in pieces Before they ever Came to the bottom Of the den.

Now, I say that That part of the verse Magnifies for us The marvel Of God's miracle That he preserved Daniel. These are the same lions That were in the den When Daniel was down there. They didn't do any of that To Daniel. You know, believe it or not There I think I did put this In your notes. Liberal theologians Have argued for years That, you know, This is what they do.

[32 : 20] They find those Miracle accounts in scripture And they try to Explain them in natural ways. Kind of trying to Take miracles out To demythologize the Bible.

And so They have argued That the lions Didn't hurt Daniel Because They were probably old Decrepit lions You know I mean, they're kept In captivity So how could they Really be You know, really strong lions And only Only the The old and weak ones And the frail ones And the diseased ones The ones they would Keep in there And so, of course You know Or they say They just weren't hungry At the time You know, maybe they had a meal Before Daniel Was thrown in there Maybe the king Worked that out And, you know, he knew He was going to have to put Daniel in there And so beforehand On the sly He went and fed them A lot of meat So they were full And he thought Well, maybe They'll leave Daniel alone I mean, this is ridiculous To come up with these ideas The problem with that Of course Is they were plenty Plenty strong enough To devour These guys And their families In fact So Strong Were they That they Killed them Even before they Hit the ground I mean, even before They came to the bottom

Of the pit They were breaking Their bones I mean We're not talking About a bunch of Weak, frail, old You know Wiles And they were Certainly hungry Right So what does it do?

It really Proves It magnifies The greatness Of the miracle Because they didn't Do any of that To Daniel And then Finally And I'll just read The verse The king's Praiseful declaration Verse 25 Then king Darius Wrote To all peoples Nations And languages That dwell In all the earth And I mean That is a bit Of an exaggeration But It was a Huge empire And Many of the Most of the Civilized world Was under His Control So he's Writing To all The nations Peoples Nations Languages Peace be Multiplied To you I make a 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 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 So he's Praising The God The one True God Whether he Became a Believer At this Point I don't Think you Could really Make a Case for That But Perhaps He's real Close He certainly Is a Believer In the Existence Of this God And the Power of This God You know He's not An atheist I mean He believes In many Gods And believes They're real But he Does say That this Is the Living God Living God So he Does make A distinction Between the Idols That the Babylonians Before him Worshipped And the Persians Worshipped Now the Idols Made out of Stone And wood And gold And precious Metals They're inanimate He knows that

[35 : 47] And understands that And this God The God Of Daniel Is a Living God So he Is really Praising Him And then I lied There's one More The prophet's Rightful Promotion Verse 28 So this Daniel Prospered In the Reign of Darius And in The reign Of Cyrus The Persian And I Put in Parentheses There because Grammatically It could Read So this Daniel Prospered In the Reign of Darius That is The reign Of Cyrus The Persian So that Kind of Accommodates The idea That Darius And Cyrus Wasn't The same Person Grammatically It can Be That That can Be it Alright So that Probably Means of Course that Darius Followed Through With his Original Desire For Daniel That he Mentioned Or is Mentioned In verse Three And the King Gave Thought To Setting Him Over The Whole Realm And that Is Exactly What He Did What He Did Pretty Amazing!