

Bible Studies for Life: September 24

*Staying True in a World Far From God: Live Courageously •
Daniel 6*

By Becky Brown



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The so-very-familiar account of dear old Daniel being thrown into the den of lions might just be my favorite of them all.

We have seen Daniel as a teenager exiled to Babylon. He stands firm against eating the food fit for the king that was unfit for those who worship Holy God.

His ruler is Nebuchadnezzar. The dreams of the king are interpreted by Daniel. Daniel and his friends have emerged from the fiery furnace without even the smell of smoke on their clothes.

After last week's lesson, Nabonidus and his co-regent son Belshazzar are history. As the ink from the handwriting on the wall was sinking into the plaster, the city of Babylon was under siege.

Belshazzar was slain shortly after enjoying his last sip from the golden vessels stolen from the Temple in Jerusalem. The kingdom of Babylon has now come under the control of the Medes and Persians.

Darius is the king. Time has marched on and now Daniel needs a crew of firemen on standby for the danger of nearly 80 candles on his birthday cake.

Daniel has stood firm through three generations of Babylonian kings. He has maintained a legacy of faithfulness to God and personal integrity among men.

Darius recognizes his value and places him as one of the top three advisors in the new kingdom. His coworkers are not happy

with this Judean wonder named Daniel. They quickly observe and surmise that Daniel is a close confidant to King Darius.

Daniel is a threat to them. They desperately try to find fault or failure in Daniel's life but come up empty. They know he's a praying man who is faithful to his Lord, the God of Israel.

Daniel would open his windows and kneel to pray three times a day facing westward toward the destroyed holy city of Jerusalem. He didn't START to pray when he was told not to pray. He CONTINUED to pray, as was his daily habit of worship and petition to God on behalf of his Jewish nation (1 Kings 8:44-49).

Daniel's life is a focused arrow in the hand of God. Daniel's enemies aim for the jugular, planning to see him executed by the king's hungry lions.

They trick Darius into signing a decree that will prohibit prayer and petitions that are made to anyone except the king himself. Such a law cannot be overturned, not even by the king.

In the Book of Esther, Queen Vashti found out that laws passed by the Medes and the Persians could never be revoked (Esther 1:19-20). Such a law resulted in the loss of her place as Queen of Persia.

Daniel is condemned to die by a very disturbed and distraught King Darius. The king did not want Daniel to be eaten by lions but he was powerless to revoke the decree. The death order he would sign also could not be revoked.

The only thing standing between Daniel and death would be, "...the God whom you constantly serve... He will deliver you!"

Darius would spend a sleepless night out of concern for the welfare of Daniel. At dawn, Darius would race to the den of lions, calling out to Daniel as he ran. God had delivered

Daniel from a whole den of hungry lions.

According to Daniel, the lion tamer was the angel of the Lord. Darius condemned the accusers and their families. Daniel lived to serve God by serving pagan kings all the way through the reign of Cyrus of Persia.

Standing firm while staying true in a world far from God is our theme. Daniel continues to shine as the example of one man in Scripture who did exactly that. His enemies couldn't find any dirt on Daniel!

Oh, that such a testimony would be repeated through our lives in our generation.

Pilate would say of Jesus, "I find no fault in this man." Darius said that of Daniel.

The tomb of Jesus was secured with a stone and the seal of Rome. Darius personally sealed the "tomb" of Daniel and early the next morning, Daniel emerged from that tomb – the den of lions – without even a paw print.

Jesus would emerge from His tomb alive forevermore wearing the scars of MY sin. Through the power of Jesus' death and life, we can stand firm in this life until our death!

Brown is minister of missions at First Church, Richland.