

This is a portion of a larger book. In this version, the Bible texts have been modified into modern English, the punctuation improved, headings and emphasis may have been added, and some sentences realigned.

Chap. 5

Daniel in the Lions' Den

When Darius took possession of the throne of Babylon, he at once proceeded to reorganize the government. He “set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes . . . ; and over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first” (Daniel 6:1, 2). And “Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm” (verse 3). The honors bestowed upon Daniel excited the jealousy of the leading men of the kingdom. The presidents and princes sought to find occasion for complaint against him. “But they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him” (verse 4).

What a lesson is here presented for all Christians. The keen eyes of jealousy were fixed upon Daniel day after day; their watchings were sharpened by hatred; yet not a word or act of his life could they make appear wrong. And still he made no claim to sanctification, but he did that which was infinitely better – he lived a life of faithfulness and consecration.

The more blameless the conduct of Daniel, the greater was the hatred excited against him by his enemies. They were filled with madness, because they could find nothing in his moral character or in the discharge of his duties upon which to base a complaint against him. “Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God” (verse 5). Three times a day Daniel prayed to the God of heaven. This was the only accusation that could be brought against him.

A scheme was now devised to accomplish his destruction. His enemies assembled at the palace and besought the king to pass a decree that no person in the whole realm should ask anything of either God or man, except of Darius the king, for the space of thirty days, and that any violation of this edict should be punished by casting the offender into the den of lions. The king knew nothing of the hatred of these men toward

Daniel, and did not suspect that the decree would in any way injure him. Through flattery they made the monarch believe it would be greatly to his honour to pass such an edict. With a smile of satanic triumph upon their faces, they come forth from the presence of the king, and rejoice together over the snare which they have laid for the servant of God.

An Example of Boldness and Fidelity

The decree goes forth from the king. Daniel is acquainted with the purpose of his enemies to ruin him. But he does not change his course in a single particular.

With calmness he performs his accustomed duties, and at the hour of prayer he goes to his chamber, and with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he offers his petitions to the God of heaven. By his course of action he fearlessly declares that no earthly power has the right to come between him and his God and tell him to whom he should or should not pray. Noble man of principle! he stands before the world today a praiseworthy example of Christian boldness and fidelity. He turns to God with all his heart, although he knows that death is the penalty for his devotion.

His adversaries watch him an entire day. Three times he has repaired to his chamber, and three times the voice of earnest intercession has been heard. The next morning the complaint is made to the king that Daniel, one of the captives of Judah, has set at defiance his decree. When the monarch heard these words, his eyes were at once opened to see the snare that had been set. He was sorely displeased with himself for having passed such a decree, and labored till the going down of the sun to devise a plan by which Daniel might be delivered. But the prophet's enemies had anticipated this, and they came before the king with these words: "Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, That no decree nor statute which the king establishes may be changed.

"Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spoke and said to Daniel, Your God whom you serve continually, he will deliver you" (verses 15, 16). A stone was laid upon the mouth of the den, and sealed with the royal seal. "Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of music brought before him: and sleep went from him" (verse 18).

“My God Has Sent His Angel”

Early in the morning the monarch hastened to the den of lions, and cried, “Daniel, Oh Daniel, servant of the living God, is your God, whom you servest continually, able to deliver you from the lions?” (verse 20). The voice of the prophet was heard in reply, “Oh king, live for ever. My God has sent his angel, and has shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before you, Oh king, have I done no hurt.

“Then was the king exceeding 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 manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God” (verses 22, 23). Thus was the servant of God delivered. And the snare which his enemies had laid for his destruction proved to be their own ruin. At the command of the king they were cast into the den, and instantly devoured by the wild beasts.