

## Faith Under Persecution

### Daniel 6 CEV

<sup>6</sup> Darius divided his kingdom into 120 states and placed a governor in charge of each one. <sup>2</sup> In order to make sure that his government was run properly, Darius put three other officials in charge of the governors. One of these officials was Daniel. <sup>3</sup> And he did his work so much better than the other governors and officials that the king decided to let him govern the whole kingdom. <sup>4</sup> The other men tried to find something wrong with the way Daniel did his work for the king. But they could not accuse him of anything wrong, because he was honest and faithful and did everything he was supposed to do. <sup>5</sup> Finally, they said to one another, "We will never be able to bring any charge against Daniel, unless it has to do with his religion." <sup>6</sup> They all went to the king and said: "Your Majesty, we hope you live forever! <sup>7</sup> All of your officials, leaders, advisors, and governors agree that you should make a law forbidding anyone to pray to any god or human except you for the next 30 days. Everyone who disobeys this law must be thrown into a pit of lions. <sup>8</sup> Order this to be written and then sign it, so it cannot be changed, just as no written law of the Medes and Persians can be changed."

<sup>9</sup> So King Darius made the law and had it written down. <sup>10</sup> Daniel heard about the law, but when he returned home, he went upstairs and prayed in front of the window that faced Jerusalem. In the same way that he had always done, he knelt down in prayer three times a day, giving thanks to God. <sup>11</sup> The men who had spoken to the king watched Daniel and saw him praying to his God for help. <sup>12</sup> They went back to the king and said, "Didn't you make a law that forbids anyone to pray to any god or human except you for the next 30 days? And doesn't the law say that everyone who disobeys it will be thrown into a pit of lions?" "Yes, that's the law I made," the king agreed. "And just like all written laws of the Medes and Persians, it cannot be changed."

<sup>13</sup> The men then told the king, "That Jew named Daniel, who was brought here as a captive, refuses to obey you or the law that you ordered to be written. And he still prays to his god three times a day." <sup>14</sup> The king was really upset to hear about this, and for the rest of the day he tried to think how he could save Daniel.

<sup>15</sup> At sunset the men returned and said, "Your Majesty, remember that no written law of the Medes and Persians can be changed, not even by the king."

<sup>16</sup> So Darius ordered Daniel to be brought out and thrown into a pit of lions. But he said to Daniel, "You have been faithful to your God, and I pray that he will rescue you."

<sup>17</sup> A stone was rolled over the pit, and it was sealed. Then Darius and his officials stamped the seal to show that no one should let Daniel out. <sup>18</sup> All night long the king could not sleep. He did not eat anything, and he would not let anyone come in to entertain him.

<sup>19</sup> At daybreak the king got up and ran to the pit. <sup>20</sup> He was anxious and shouted, "Daniel, you were faithful and served your God. Was he able to save you from the lions?"

<sup>21</sup> Daniel answered, "Your Majesty, I hope you live forever! <sup>22</sup> My God knew that I was innocent, and he sent an angel to keep the lions from eating me. Your Majesty, I have never done anything to hurt you."

<sup>23</sup> The king was relieved to hear Daniel's voice, and he gave orders for him to be taken out of the pit. Daniel's faith in his God had kept him from being harmed.

## Faith Under Persecution

Daniel 6:1-23 (CEV)

### A. From Young Captive to President

1. The Book of Daniel showcases the faithfulness of Daniel and his friends in a hostile environment.
2. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, captives in Babylon, were exemplary in maintaining their faith.
3. They refused the king's food and wine, interpreted dreams, and held positions of authority without compromising their beliefs.
4. Despite facing severe trials like the fiery furnace and interpreting ominous dreams, they remained steadfast.

### B. Darius Saw That Daniel Was Different (v. 3)

1. King Darius, succeeding Belshazzar, recognized Daniel's exceptional spirit and appointed him as one of three administrators over 120 overseers.
2. Darius planned to make Daniel the top administrator, which caused jealousy among the local royals and officials.

### C. The Presidents and Princes and Their Plot (vv. 4-9)

1. Jealous officials plotted against Daniel, finding no fault in him except his faithfulness in prayer.
2. They convinced Darius to enact a decree that prohibited prayer to anyone but the king for 30 days, knowing Daniel would continue praying to God.

### D. People of Faith Are Not Always Popular (v. 4)

1. Daniel faced disdain from the royal court, similar to how Christian's face scorn and persecution.
2. Serving God has historically been costly, as seen with prophets, John the Baptist, Paul, and the Apostles.
3. Jesus warned His disciples of worldly rejection (John 15:18-19), a timeless challenge for believers.

### E. Faith Always Finds Help in Prayer (vv. 10-28)

1. Daniel openly prayed despite the decree, choosing faithfulness over self-preservation.
2. He prayed three times daily, demonstrating his consistent faith and influence from a God-serving upbringing.
3. The conspirators reported Daniel, leading to his sentencing to the lion's den despite Darius' attempts to save him.
4. Darius, believing in Daniel's God, expressed hope for his deliverance.

## **F. Triumph Follows Trials**

1. The next morning, Darius found Daniel unharmed in the lion's den, attributing his survival to divine intervention.
2. This event led Darius to decree reverence for Daniel's God, acknowledging His enduring dominion and miraculous power.
3. The conspirators were punished, emphasizing the justice of God.
4. Daniel's unwavering faith serves as a powerful example of choosing spiritual devotion over worldly safety.

## **G. Lessons To Take Away From Daniel 6**

1. Remain faithful in the face of adversity.
2. Trust in God's protection.
3. Live with integrity.
4. Maintain a strong prayer life.
5. Recognize God's sovereignty in all situations.