

## Kings Darius and Cyrus

Praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just. And those who walk in pride he is able to humble.—Daniel 4:37

**D**uring the Israelites' seventy years of captivity in Babylon, four kings learned of the God of Israel. First was King Nebuchadnezzar who, when he returned from his insane life with the animals, lifted up his eyes to heaven and gave praise and honor to the God of Israel.

The second was King Belshazzar, who once had his wine served in goblets stolen from God's temple and that night was slain. This ended the Babylonian kingdom (Daniel 5:2-4,30).

Third was King Darius, the Mede, who took the kingdom of Babylon that night, and who took Daniel as well. He wanted Daniel to be the first prince over all the princes and rulers of that kingdom.

Darius appreciated Daniel's honesty and grew to love him as a noble friend. But the princes and rulers were jealous and hated the king's favorite, not just because they wanted the favor of the king; with Daniel watching everything so carefully they could not steal from the empire's wealth.

They plotted against Daniel, yet could find no fault in him. The only thing he did besides work long hours for the king was to pray to his God. Three times each day Daniel went to an upper room where it was quiet and restful. There he prayed to God before an open window. Daniel was not ashamed to be seen praying to his God. Others too realized he was not pretending to pray to Darius.

This was enough to have him thrown into the den of hungry lions! The story of his experience and rescue is in Daniel chapter 6.

The fourth king was King Cyrus of Persia whose heart was stirred by God to issue a proclamation giving the Israelites liberty to return to Palestine. He also gave money and decreed that the precious vessels of the Lord's temple should be returned.

About fifty thousand Israelites went back to Palestine. This was not many out of the great number who had been captured. These fifty thousand remembered God's promises and wanted to live in the land he had promised them. They rebuilt the city, and in due time, they rebuilt the temple as well.



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Daniel's enemies plotted to throw him into the lions' den.