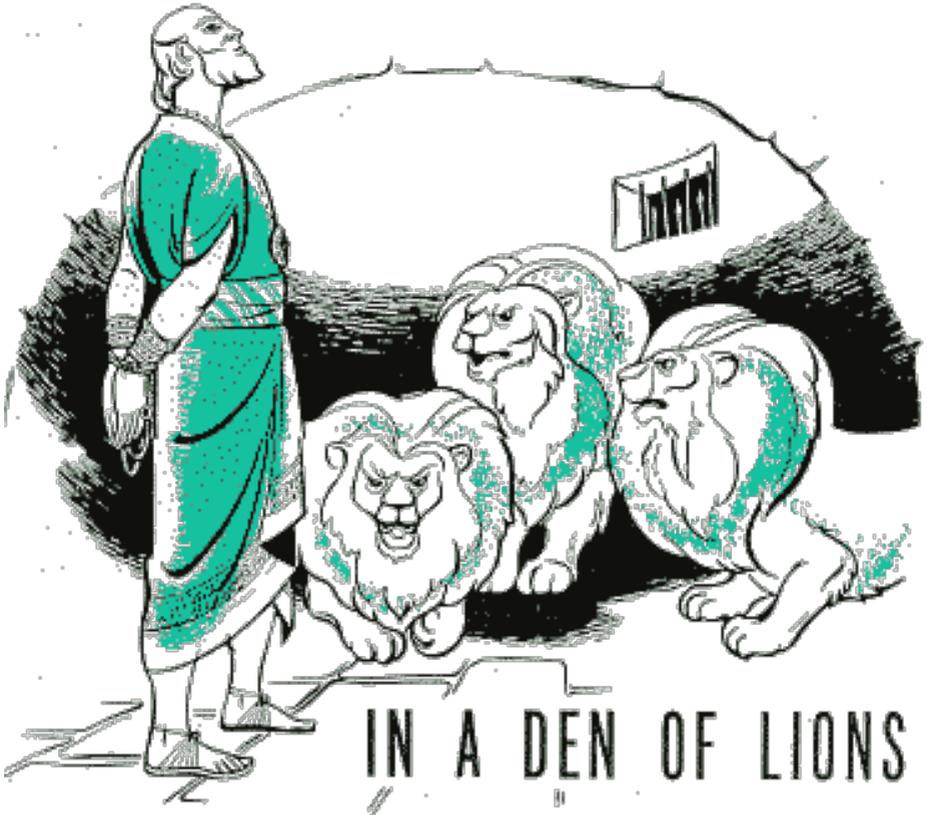


## IN A DEN OF LIONS



**HAVE** you ever heard anyone say, “Dare to be a Daniel”? Daniel always did the things which were pleasing to God. He decided that he would please God even though he was killed for it. Because of this, people have come to say, “Dare to be a Daniel,” which means, always do what is right no matter how much it may cost. Sometimes, you know, it may seem easier to do wrong than to do right. But if it ever seems that way to you, just remember Daniel, and say to yourself, “I’ll be like Daniel, I’ll do what is right.” God helped Daniel to be wise, and enabled him to explain Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, as we learned in another story. The king was pleased with Daniel, and not only made him a very powerful ruler in Babylon, as I have already told you, but he also decided that Daniel should be ruler over all the other wise men. So you see this

fine young Jewish man was certainly getting along very well indeed, considering that he was a captive in Babylon. God was helping him, that's the reason.

Daniel ruled in Babylon for a long, long time, and God blessed him. He ruled until Nebuchadnezzar died and another man became the king of Babylon. His name was Bel-shaz-zar. This new king of Babylon also liked Daniel. But the new king didn't reign very long. The king of a nation called the Medes captured Babylon and killed Belshazzar. But Daniel was such a good ruler over the people that the king of the Medes, whose name was Da-ri-us, liked him, and he also made Daniel his chief ruler.

Daniel loved God and served him. He was honest and treated the people kindly. Because of this, the people liked him and obeyed him. That is one reason Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar liked to have him rule over their people.

But there were less important rulers in the country who had to take orders from Daniel, and they did not like to do, this. They were jealous, and wanted the high position which the king had given to Daniel. We have learned in other stories that when people are jealous they often do very wicked things. Let us try never to be jealous!

These men who had to take orders from Daniel were clever as well as wicked. They tried to discover some way in which Daniel was doing wrong and report it to the king. But they learned that Daniel always did what was right. Then they said among themselves that they might find fault with Daniel in the way he served God. They knew that Daniel was faithful to God, and that he prayed to God every day. Daniel had a special place where he prayed. It was directly in front of a window in his home, and these wicked men knew about this.

So what do you suppose they did?

They went to the king and suggested to him that it would be a good idea if he made a law that no one was to ask any favor of any god or of any man, except the king, for thirty days. This pleased the king. He thought it would make all the people remember him and that he

could then rule over them better. Then the men who were plotting against Daniel told the king that he should make a law that anyone who disobeyed this command should be cast into a den of lions. The king thought this was also a good idea.

So he made the law, and it was put down in writing and the king signed it. Now you can see what that meant, can't you? Daniel prayed to God every day, and the king had made a law that no one could ask favors of God or man, but only of him, for thirty days. If Daniel continued to pray every day as he had been doing he would break the king's command and would be thrown into a den of lions. Well, what would you have done?

Would you dare to be a Daniel? Would you keep right on praying to God and trust him to take care of you? Daniel did! Daniel wanted to please the king whenever he could, but he was determined to please God even if the king was not pleased, so he continued to pray.

The evil men who formed this plot against Daniel spied on him and when they found him praying they reported it to the king. Then the king realized what a clever and wicked trick these men had played on him. The king was not angry with Daniel, and he did not want him to be put into a den of lions to be eaten up, but he could not change the law he had made.

I suppose you wonder why the king couldn't change the law which he had made. It was because of a rule of the Medes that any command issued by the king was unchangeable, so there just wasn't anything he could do about it. But Daniel was not afraid. He trusted God.

God had taken care of him all his life, and he knew that whatever God wanted to do now, he was well able to do it. When the king found that there was no possible way to save Daniel, he gave permission to have him thrown to the lions. They put him in with those fierce, hungry lions, and then rolled a large stone over the den to keep him from escaping.

My, but the king was certainly very unhappy that night! He couldn't sleep, and tossed about on his bed the whole night long. He knew

that Daniel had a wonderful God, and, no doubt, he hoped that Daniel's God would deliver him. But the king wasn't sure that he would. He didn't know as much about God as Daniel knew, and that was the reason he was so worried.

Early in the morning the king dressed himself and went straight to that lions' den and called to Daniel, half hoping that the good man of God would be alive and would answer him. The king called out, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?" How pleased the king must have been when he heard Daniel answer, "O king, live forever. My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me."

Daniel had done no wrong. And he was not angry with the king, either. He knew that the king had been deceived into making a law that had caused this trouble, so he made the king very happy by not blaming him for being cast into the den of lions. Do you know what the king then did? He ordered all those men who wanted Daniel out of the way to be thrown into the den of lions. But God's angels did not prevent the lions from eating those wicked men.

The king then sent out a command to all the earth that the people should worship the God of Daniel. He explained that Daniel's God was the only living God who was able to care for his people and rule over the nations. Yes, that is true of our God, for we have the same God that Daniel had. God is so powerful that he is able to make all his promises come true. And when all his promises come true, the people of every nation will worship and serve him. This will truly be a wonderful world, then, won't it?

## **QUESTIONS**

- What do people mean when they say, "Dare to be a Daniel"?
- In what way did the enemies of Daniel try to have King Darius put Daniel to death?
- Why was it that Daniel was not destroyed by the lions when he was compelled to be in their den with them all night?

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***Dawn Bible Students Association***