

DANIEL CHAPTER 31X

NIV

3 Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the chief ministers and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. **4** At this, the chief ministers and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent. **5** Finally these men said, 'We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God.' **6** So these chief ministers and satraps went as a group to the king and said: 'May King Darius live for ever! **7** The royal ministers, prefects, satraps, advisors and governors have all agreed that the king should issue an edict and enforce the decree that anyone who prays to any god or human being during the next thirty days, except to you, Your Majesty, shall be thrown into the lions' den. **8** Now, Your Majesty, issue the decree and put it in writing so that it cannot be altered – in accordance with the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed.' **9** So King Darius put the decree in writing. **10** Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened towards Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before. **11** Then these men went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help. **12** So they went to the king and spoke to him about his royal decree: 'Did you not publish a decree that during the next thirty days anyone who prays to any god or human being except to you, Your Majesty, would be thrown into the lions' den?'. The king answered, 'The decree stands – in accordance with the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed.' **13** Then they said to the king, 'Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, Your

Majesty, or to the decree you put in writing. He still prays three times a day.' **14** When the king heard this, he was greatly distressed; he was determined to rescue Daniel and made every effort until sunset to save him.

15 Then the men went as a group to King Darius and said to him, 'Remember, Your Majesty, that according to the law of the Medes and Persians no decree or edict that the king issues can be changed.'

16 So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions' den. The king said to Daniel, 'May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!'

17 A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles, so that Daniel's situation might not be changed. **18** Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating and without any entertainment being brought to him. And he could not sleep.

19 At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lions' den. **20** When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, 'Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?'

21 Daniel answered, 'May the king live for ever! **22** My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, Your Majesty.'

23 The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.

24 At the king's command, the men who had falsely accused Daniel were brought in and thrown into the lions' den, along with their wives and children. And before they reached the floor of the den, the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.

DANIEL CHAPTER SIX



4-5 The vice-regents and governors got together to find some old scandal or skeleton in Daniel's life that they could use against him, but they couldn't dig up anything. He was totally exemplary and trustworthy. They could find no evidence of negligence or misconduct. So they finally gave up and said, "We're never going to find anything against this Daniel unless we can cook up something religious."

6-7 The vice-regents and governors conspired together and then went to the king and said, "King Darius, live forever! We've convened your vice-regents, governors, and all your leading officials, and have agreed that the king should issue the following decree:

For the next thirty days no one is to pray to any god or mortal except you, O king. Anyone who disobeys will be thrown into the lions' den.

8 "Issue this decree, O king, and make it unconditional, as if written in stone like all the laws of the Medes and the Persians."

9 King Darius signed the decree.

10 When Daniel learned that the decree had been signed and posted, he continued to pray just as he had always done. His house had windows in the upstairs that opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he knelt there in prayer, thanking and praising his God.

11-12 The conspirators came and found him praying, asking God for help. They went straight to the king and reminded him of the royal decree that he had signed. "Did you not," they said, "sign a decree forbidding anyone to pray to any god or man except you for the next thirty days? And anyone caught doing it would be thrown into the lions' den?"

"Absolutely," said the king. "Written in stone, like all the laws of the Medes and Persians."

13 Then they said, "Daniel, one of the Jewish exiles, ignores you, O king, and defies your decree. Three times a day he prays."

14 At this, the king was very upset and tried his best to get Daniel out of the fix he'd put him in. He worked at it the whole day long.

15 But then the conspirators were back: "Remember, O king, it's the law of the Medes and Persians that the king's decree can never be changed."

16 The king caved in and ordered Daniel brought and thrown into the lions' den. But he said to Daniel, "Your God, to whom you are so loyal, is going to get you out of this."

17 A stone slab was placed over the opening of the den. The king sealed the cover with his signet ring and the signet rings of all his nobles, fixing Daniel's fate.

18 The king then went back to his palace. He refused supper. He couldn't sleep. He spent the night fasting.

19-20 At daybreak the king got up and hurried to the lions' den. As he approached the den, he called out anxiously, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve so loyally, saved you from the lions?"

21-22 "O king, live forever!" said Daniel. "My God sent his angel, who closed the mouths of the lions so that they would not hurt me. I've been found innocent before God and also before you, O king. I've done nothing to harm you."

23 When the king heard these words, he was happy. He ordered Daniel taken up out of the den. When he was hauled up, there wasn't a scratch on him. He had trusted his God.

24 Then the king commanded that the conspirators who had informed on Daniel be thrown into the lions' den, along with their wives and children. Before they hit the floor, the lions had them in their jaws, tearing them to pieces.

DANIEL CHAPTER SIX

Daniel knew what God had said...

3 'You shall have no other gods before me.' (Exodus 20)

6 'Be very strong; be careful to obey all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, without turning aside to the right or to the left. 7 Do not associate with these nations that remain among you; do not invoke the names of their gods or swear by them. You must not serve them or bow down to them.

8 But you are to hold fast to the Lord your God, as you have until now. (Joshua 23)



- Praying to God was against the law, but Daniel still did it. Why?
- Do you think Daniel had 'exceptional qualities' (v3) anyway, or was this because he prayed?
- Couldn't Daniel have prayed secretly?

PRAYER

Knowing what God says to us...

Colossians 4:2
Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

1 Peter 3:12
'For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.'



- Why should we pray?
- What does it mean to 'devote yourself' to something?
- How do you talk to God? (What helps, what advice can you give to others?)
- Is prayer as important to you as it obviously was to Daniel? Why/Why not?

FOR MORE ON PRAYER SEE TFG WEBSITE www.tfg.org.uk/prayer.html