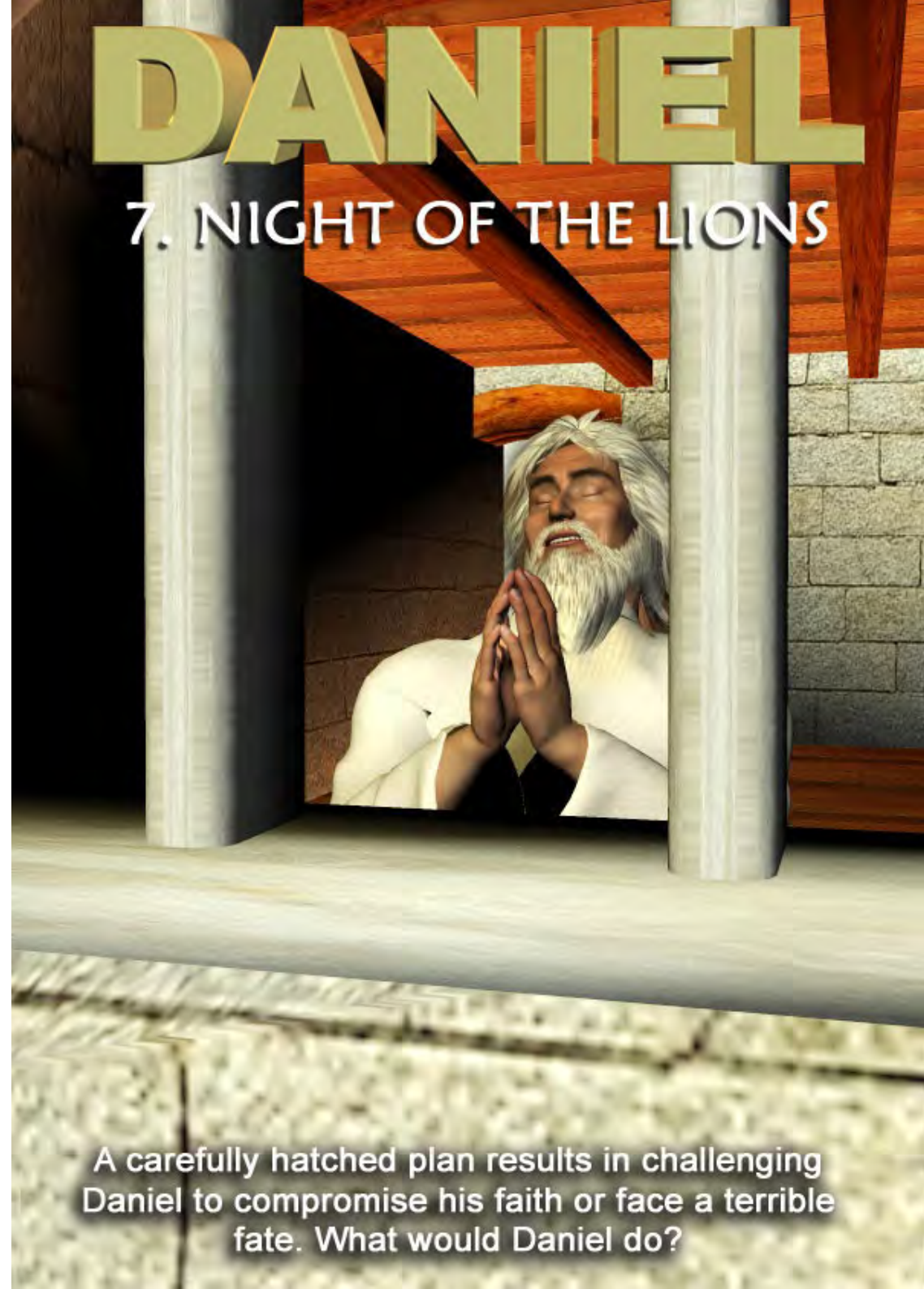




DANIEL

7. NIGHT OF THE LIONS



A carefully hatched plan results in challenging Daniel to compromise his faith or face a terrible fate. What would Daniel do?

WATCH FOR THESE POINTS

- A king and a prophet caught in a death plot
- Wild beast tamed by an extra-terrestrial being
- The prayer that should have cost Daniel his life, but saved it.
- God's power revealed through faith and prayer.

DANIEL SURVIVES

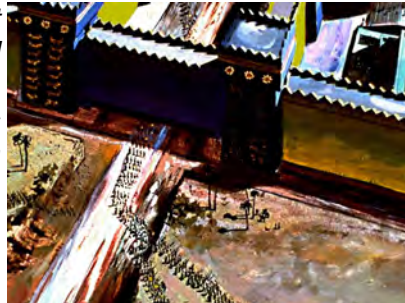
In the man-to-man fighting of Babylon's last night, Daniel's life was spared. Perhaps his escape was due to his age, or his high reputation. More likely, however, God's hand was over him. His work was not yet finished.

The Persians, too, might have wanted Daniel alive. During the many years of their contact with the Babylonian courts, they must have learned about his outstanding wisdom and excellent spirit.

*Also Cyrus himself, now the ruler of their entire empire, could have known about Isaiah's "Cyrus" prophecy. One hundred and fifty years before Babylon's fall, Isaiah had actually **named** Cyrus as Babylon's future conqueror. (see Isaiah 44:28 to 45:5, page 701).*

After the conquest, Darius the Mede received the kingdom (Daniel 5:30), evidently by appointment of Cyrus.

When Darius appointed his governors, he considered making Daniel prime minister. This did not please everybody. Jealousy raged in the palace. At a secret meeting of rival officials it was decided to do away with Daniel. He has weathered other life threatening crises before, but none so horrifying as this one. The plot involved Daniel, now 80 years of age, being fed to the lions.



The Medo-persians captured Babylon just as Daniel had predicted.

Exhibit 3 (Continued)

CHAPTER FOUR

In spite of all the lessons Nebuchadnezzar had received about humility toward God, he proudly exalts himself above God. God brings him down to the level of an animal. Nebuchadnezzar acknowledges God, is changed and restored. He learns that God, not Nebuchadnezzar, rules over all.

CHAPTER FIVE

Belshazzar knows all that happened to Nebuchadnezzar, but does not learn from it. He blasphemes God and God's sanctuary. All unbeknown to him, he is judged and condemned. He is suddenly faced with the verdict "found wanting". He loses his empire and his life. Daniel is promoted.

CHAPTER SIX

Daniel faces his greatest trial. He is cast into a den of lions. Yet he remains faithful to God, is rescued and honoured. His enemies are judged and destroyed by Darius for plotting his destruction.

Do you see a pattern in all these stories?

- The global aspirations of would-be world rulers in political and religious affairs.
- Trial and conflict for God's faithful people at their hands
- Protection, wisdom, and strength is given by God to those who are faithful
- God judges, saves, and rewards those who are true to Him.
- He judges and rejects those who usurp His authority and oppress His faithful people.

These conflicts and victories are miniature previews of greater conflicts and victories predicted in the final six chapters of Daniel which we are now about to study.

Exhibit 3**THE DEEPER MEANING
BEHIND THE "STORIES"
OF DANIEL**

Why were the experiences of Daniel and his friends recorded in his book of great prophecies?

For answer, notice each story:

CHAPTER ONE

At great risk, Daniel and his friends refuse to break their principles by eating food from the king's table. As a result, they are honoured by God and promoted to high positions by King Nebuchadnezzar. God honours those who maintain their loyalty to Him.

CHAPTER TWO

Nebuchadnezzar dreams about a metallic image. None of his wise men can interpret the dream. He brings in the death decree. Daniel and his friends face execution. They pray for deliverance. God helps them by giving Daniel the interpretation of the image. Daniel reveals the interpretation to the king. No human power, he said, could set up an everlasting kingdom. God alone will do this. The four men are saved from death and promoted to further positions of honour. God is acknowledged by the king.

CHAPTER THREE

Nebuchadnezzar defies divine predictions. He builds an image all of gold, indicating his purpose to set up Babylon as the everlasting kingdom. Daniel's three friends refuse to bow to the image. They choose to be thrown into the furnace rather than break God's commandments. God intervenes. The three are not only saved from burning, but are promoted yet again to still higher positions. Nebuchadnezzar then orders everyone to worship God or be put to death. He thinks he has authority to rule in God's affairs.

Life for a genuine prophet was never easy. Turn to Daniel 6 and read how it happened.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**A. KING DARIUS INSTALLS A NEW GOVERNMENT****QUESTION 1** (Daniel 6:1, 2, page 863)

What changes in government by Darius led to the threat on Daniel's life?

"It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty satraps (provincial governors), to be over the whole kingdom; and over these, _____ governors." (verses 1,2)



Darius the king made Daniel the supreme governor above all other leaders beside himself

QUESTION 2 (Daniel 6:2)

Who was to be one of the three governors? _____

QUESTION 3 (Daniel 6:3)

Why did the king consider promoting Daniel to the position of supreme governor?

"Because an excellent _____ was in him." (verse 3)

B. THE DEATH PLOT**QUESTION 4** (Daniel 6:4)

Enemies emerge quickly when it comes to politics - especially when favoured appointments are being made. Some contenders will stoop to anything to bring down their rivals. Usually they start with "fitness for office", "track record", or allegations of "corruption".

How successful were Daniel's opponents in their attempts to discredit him?

"They could find no charge or fault, because he was _____."
(verse 4)



The king signed the decree that no one should pray to any god save the king for thirty days

QUESTION 5 (Daniel 6:5, page 863)

Not to be put off by Daniel's faultless record, what did his opponents suggest?

"We shall not find any charge against this Daniel unless we find it against him concerning the law of his _____."

QUESTION 6 (Daniel 6:6-9)

Read the account of the plans made by Daniel's enemies, then mark the following statements as TRUE (T) or FALSE (F).

- The plan was to get the king to make a decree.
- No request (petition) was to be made to any "god" or person other than the king
- The ban on prayer was for a period of 50 days.
- Anyone found guilty of breaking the ban would be executed by hanging.
- The law of the "Medes and Persians" could be changed, only if ten or more people signed a petition.
- The law of the "Medes and Persians" could not be changed even by the king.

Exhibit 2

**WHAT THE BIBLE
SAYS ABOUT PRAYER**

WHAT IS PRAYER?

- 1) Prayer is talking with God. Thanking God, praising God, and making requests for His help in our lives. Prayer is asking for forgiveness of sin, for power over temptation, for protection against danger, for our everyday needs, for the needs of others, and for God's kingdom to come
- 2) "Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend."

EXAMPLES OF PRAYER

- 1) Jesus often rose early for personal prayer. (Mark 1:35)
- 2) He spent time alone in prayer. (Luke 5:16)
- 3) He prayed simply and openly. (John 11:41, 42)
- 4) At times He prayed with "vehement cries and tears" (Hebrews 5:7)
- 5) Sometimes His prayers did not seem to be answered (Matthew 27:46; 26:39)
- 6) If Jesus needed to pray, how much more do we? (Matthew 26:36, 39, 42, 44)

WILL GOD ALWAYS ANSWER PRAYER?

- 1) Our requests must be according to God's will. (1 John 5:14)
- 2) We must forgive those who have wronged us if we expect God to forgive us (Matthew 6:14-15)
- 3) If others have anything against us, we should first try to make a right with them. (Matthew 5:23, 24; 6:14, 15; 18:21-35; Col 3:12,13)
- 4) Known sin must be given up. (Psalm 66:18)
- 5) We must be willing to obey God. (Proverbs 28:9)
- 6) We are to pray in the name of Jesus our mediator. (John 15:16)
- 7) God cannot answer selfish prayers. (James 4:1-3)
- 8) Those who trust and obey God can expect answers to their prayers. (His answers are sometimes "yes" and sometimes "no" God knows best Whatever His answer, keep on trusting Him still.) (1 John 3:22)

Exhibit 1 (Continued)

- 3) Faith enables us to keep God's commandments. (1 John 5:1-3)
- 4) Faith shields us from evil. Faith helps us to overcome the corruptions that surround us. (1 John 5:4 Eph. 6:16)

HOW FAITH BEGINS

- 1) Faith is the gift of God. A "measure of faith is given to everyone (Ephesians 2:8)
- 2) Faith grows by hearing and acting upon God's Word. (Romans 10:17)
- 3) We should pray for our faith to increase. (Luke 17:5)

HOW FAITH IS DEMONSTRATED

- 1) Faith in Christ is demonstrated by acts of love. (Galatians 5:6)
- 2) By active obedience to God's word. (Heb. 11:7,8 Rom. 3:31)
- 3) Without faith, right-doing is impossible and faith, without right-doing, is dead (James 2:22-26)

C. DANIEL AND THE SPIES**QUESTION 7** (Daniel 6:10, page 863)

Although Daniel knew about the plot to kill him, what did he do?

ANSWER: _____

QUESTION 8 (Daniel 6:11)

Who waited outside Daniel's window to catch him breaking the newly signed law?

"Then these _____ assembled and found Daniel _____."
(verse 11)

QUESTION 9 (Daniel 6:12,13)

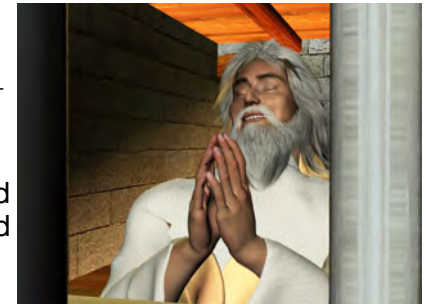
Read the report that was taken back to the king. Notice that while most of the report was true, one part was totally false. What lie did it contain? (verse 13).

ANSWER: _____

QUESTION 10 (Daniel 6:14)

How do we know whether the king cared about Daniel and whether he recognised Daniel's right to freely worship God?

"And the king, when he heard these words, was greatly displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to _____ him." (verse 14)



Daniel continued His worship of the King of heaven regardless of the decree

QUESTION 11 (Read Daniel 6:15,16)

Darius would have done anything to rescue Daniel. But the supposed unchangeableness of Persian law, finally forced the king to take action against him. How was Daniel, "the lawbreaker", to be punished?

"So the king gave the command and they brought Daniel and cast him into the _____ of _____ ." (verse 16)

QUESTION 12 (Daniel 6:16, page 863)

What showed that Darius had some hope that God might save Daniel?

"But the king spoke saying to Daniel, 'Your _____ whom you serve continually, He will _____ you.'" (verse 16)

(Perhaps Darius had heard about the three Hebrews being rescued from the fiery furnace many years before!)



Daniel prayed earnestly to God that He would shut the month of the lions

D. SURVIVAL THROUGH FAITH

QUESTION 13 (Daniel 6:17)

Three precautions were taken to make sure that Daniel could not escape from the lion's den. What were they?

- "Then a stone was brought and laid upon the _____ of the den"
- "and the king _____ it with his own signet ring"
- "and with the _____ of his lords"

These seals prevented even Darius himself from getting Daniel out secretly.

QUESTION 14 (Daniel 6:18,19)

Was the king troubled over what he had done? Place a tick next to those true statements which help you answer this question.

Exhibit 1

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT FAITH

WHAT IS FAITH?

- 1) In the Bible the word 'faith' means belief, confidence, assurance, commitment, trust. (Hebrews 10:22, 23)
- 2) Faith is believing what God has said in spite of how things seem (Hebrews 11:1; 2Corinthians 5:7)
- 3) Faith is not feeling. It is sometimes necessary, to act against our feelings in order to obey God's word (Hebrews 11:36-38)
- 4) Faith is believing in and obeying God though we cannot see or hear Him. (Hebrews 11:27)
- 5) Faith is like a hand which takes hold of God's promises (Matthew 9:20-22)
- 6) Faith is believing in Christ's sacrifice for our sin. (Romans 5:1)
- 7) Faith is believing that He forgives us when we ask Him. (1 John 1:9)
- 8) Faith is right living with the help of God. (Romans 1:16,17)

WHAT FAITH DOES FOR US

- 1) We are made right with God by accepting Christ through faith. (Ephesians 2:8)
- 2) Faith brings answers to our prayers. (Mark 11:22-24)

REVIEW QUIZ

Underline the correct answers.

- 1) The king who first ruled Babylon after the conquest of Belshazzar was:
 - a) Darius the Mede
 - b) Cyrus the Great
- 2) Darius commanded his officers to:
 - a) cast Daniel into a lion's den
 - b) take him out of the den
- 3) Daniel's custom was to:
 - a) pray on his knees
 - b) pray twice a day
- 4) Because Darius did not favour Daniel, he:
 - a) sealed the lion's den so that Daniel could not escape
 - b) spoke words of condemnation regarding him
- 5) Darius wrote to all nations
 - a) about his great victory over Daniel's enemies
 - b) about God's power to deliver Daniel
- 6) Darius declared that God's kingdom would:
 - a) come one day in the future
 - b) would never be destroyed

- The king lost interest in food.
- He did not want to listen to his usual evening music program.
- He could not sleep.
- He prayed all night to the "gods".
- He left his palace early in the morning and went to the lion's den.

QUESTION 15 (Daniel 6:20, page 864)

As Darius hurried anxiously to the mouth of the den at daybreak, what one question was on his lips?

"Has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to _____ you from the lions?" (verse 20)

QUESTION 16 (Daniel 6:21,22)

What good news echoed up from the den?

"My God sent His _____ and shut the lions' mouths." (verse 22)

What a miracle! Daniel was still alive! The king was filled with joy! But notice that Daniel's highest concern was how he stood with God.

QUESTION 17 (Daniel 6:22, 23)

What reason is given for Daniel being saved from this horrifying death?

"Because I was _____"



Darius calls out to Daniel in the Lion's den, longing to hear the voice of his faithful servant.

before Him; and also, O king, I have done no _____ before you." (verse 22)

Who had actually shut the lion's mouths?

ANSWER: _____

QUESTION 18 (Daniel 6:24)

How did the king bring justice upon those who had plotted to destroy Daniel?

ANSWER: _____

E. A SECOND PAGAN KING ACKNOWLEDGES GOD

QUESTION 19 (Daniel 6:25-27, page 864)

Like Nebuchadnezzar, Darius was elated to discover the power of Daniel's God. He wanted to tell the world. What message did he send throughout the whole kingdom?

"He is the _____ God." (verse 26)

"His kingdom "shall not be _____." (verse 26)

"He delivers and _____ ." (verse 27)

"He works signs and _____ in heaven and on earth." (verse 27)



Those who plotted against Daniel became the victims of their own wicked plan and became food for the lions

Did the night in the lions' den shatter Daniel's nerve or deflect him from his purpose in life? (Read Daniel 6:28)

ANSWER: _____

READ EXHIBIT 1 AND EXHIBIT 2: Pages 11-13

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT FAITH
WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT PRAYER

QUESTION 20

If ever faced with demands that conflict with God's will, would you like to have the kind of faith and courage that Daniel had? _____

STUDY EXHIBIT 3: Pages 14 & 15

THE DEEPER MEANING BEHIND THE
"STORIES" OF DANIEL

OPTIONAL QUESTIONS TO THINK THROUGH

1. Do you think that experiences like Daniel had in chapter 6 have any lessons for us today or for the future?
2. What inner strength did Daniel have that would account for his loyalty and devotion to God, even when threatened with death? (if in doubt, read Isaiah 41:10, and Ezekiel 36: 26,27., page 841)
3. An interesting text in the book of Psalms describes Daniel perfectly. Would you like to read it and think about it? (Psalms 37: 31)