

In a Strange Land (Daniel)

The Lions Den

Foundation

Bible passage : Daniel 6

Powerpoint: For units 2-4 the same picture is used as all the action takes place in Babylon.

When: Daniel is now getting old and the Babylonians have been overrun by the Medes and Persians. Cyrus was King of Persia, but had returned home, leaving Darius the Mede in charge in Babylon. This is not the same Darius as is mentioned later. It is about 540 years BC.

Background: Daniel had faithfully served the King of Babylon as long as it did not mean being unfaithful to God. As elsewhere in the Bible we see that there is nothing wrong in serving in a state that does not recognise the Lord, but obedience to the Lord must come first. But now Daniel had new masters.

Jealousy: In chapter 6 we see how Daniel's trouble stemmed from the fact that others were jealous of his authority. Such things can affect all of us and it can damage friendships, classrooms, families, and any relationship. In this chapter we see what happens when people don't keep their jealousy in check but instead become ruled by it. The end of their scheming would have been the death of Daniel, if the Lord had not intervened.

"He delivers and rescues; he works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth"

What happened: The jealous officials plotted to trap Daniel and the King was foolishly caught in their plan. Prayer to anyone, except the King was forbidden for thirty days. Daniel would not



Lion of Babylon statue from shortly before the time of Daniel and rediscovered in 1876.

pray to the King and knew he should continue to pray to the LORD. He might have partly avoided the trouble by praying in secret. Many people in the world today do face difficult decisions like this. Some Christians have to meet in secret for fear of arrest or death. But Daniel chose to completely ignore the unjust law, kept praying, and made no attempt to hide what he did.

Daniel was therefore arrested and at this point the King realises what a fool he has been but has apparently made himself powerless to change the situation. Therefore Daniel is thrown into the lion's den where it would be expected that he was torn apart. Amazingly the King not only recognises his foolishness but that with the Lord there is still hope. He might have prayed to the Lord, but he had forbidden that, instead he spends the night fasting and in the morning he goes to the lion's den with expectant hope that God may have rescued Daniel, as indeed proved to be the case.

God is King: The end result was that King Darius told everyone he ruled that they should tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. Again, despite being in a foreign land we see that the Lord is in control.



Jealous people tried to trap Daniel through his faith, but Daniel kept obeying and trusting God as King.