

province of Babylon. Daniel, the story continues, became one of the three chief ministers of Darius. Moved by jealousy of the successful foreigner, Daniel's rivals sought to get rid of him. Failing to find fair means, they resorted to foul. They took advantage of the fact that he was (to them) a nonconformist, a heretic, and secured a decree signed by the king forbidding any one to present a petition to god or man, save the king alone, for the space of thirty days. Vs. 1-9.

I. Accused, 10-15.

V. 10. *Daniel knew that the writing* (the king's decree: see on vs. 1-9) *was signed*; and therefore his refusal to refrain from the worship of the true God was deliberate and in full view of the danger involved. *His windows were open in his chamber toward Jerusalem* (Rev. Ver.); the upper room, an apartment at one corner on the roof, with latticed windows which allowed the air to circulate freely. It was quiet and cool, and often used as a guest chamber. Daniel prayed, turning his face westward toward Jerusalem, the holy place of his God. Possibly the habit of turning toward Jerusalem in prayer, based doubtless on 1 Kgs. 8: 35, 38, 44, 48, began during the exile. Mohammed had his followers face toward Jerusalem till he quarreled with the Jews, then he changed the kiblāh ("facing") to Mecca. *Kneeled*. The Old Testament knows various attitudes for prayer,—bowing the head (Gen. 24: 26), kneeling (1 Kgs. 8: 54), prostration, Neh. 8: 6. *Three times a day*. The Rabbis said at the time of the morning, afternoon (3 o'clock) and evening offerings, and referred to the patriarchs, Gen. 19: 27; 24: 63; 28: 13. *Prayed*; presented his petitions to God. *Gave thanks*; for benefits received from heaven. *As he did aforetime*. There was no parade of courage or ostentatious defiance of the king. Daniel simply continued his usual practice. The practice of three prayer periods in the day passed over into early Christianity.

Vs. 11, 12. *Assembled*; flocking tumultuously round the house. *Found Daniel*. He could be seen through the open or latticed window. *Spake before the king*. They hurried to him with their charge. *Hast thou not signed a decree?* In their impatience they omitted the words of address, "O king, live

for ever" (compare v. 21). *Make petition unto any god or man*. Possibly Darius was regarded as in some sense the incarnation of his god. *Cast into the den of lions*; apparently some enclosure in the royal gardens where lions were kept for sport. Throwing prisoners to the lions is mentioned in Assyrian inscriptions. *Law of the Medes and Persians . . . altereth not*. A Persian edict could not be revoked: it might be evaded, but not abrogated. For the king to change his laws would have been to admit that he could make mistakes, which would be too humiliating for a proud Eastern despot.

Vs. 13-15. *Daniel . . . regardeth not thee*; the personal offence thrust forward. *Sore displeased*; not with Daniel, but with his courtiers, and with his own folly, which had made him a tool in their hands. *Set his heart*; seeking to evade his own edict. *Laboured*, etc.; spending the whole day seeking some way of undoing his mistake. *Assembled*; clamoring for the execution of the decree.

II. Sentenced, 16-18.

Vs. 16-18. *Then*; at the close of the day. *Cast him into the den of lions*; all the king's efforts to save him having proved to be in vain. *Thy God . . . will deliver thee*. The Greek Bible adds: "Courage, till to-morrow." Darius hoped that Daniel, in some way, would be rescued and his wrong undone. *A stone . . . laid upon the mouth*; still a common means, in the East, of closing doorways as well as tombs. *Sealed it with his own signet*. Perhaps a bar was stretched across the doorway and secured at either side with thongs, the knotting of which was sealed with wax stamped with a signet. The Babylonians sealed with a little cylinder rolled over the clay. What is apparently a seal ring of Darius is known; it represents the king hunting lions. *Signet of his lords*; for double security, so that not even the king could tamper with the fastening. For the idea compare Matt. 27: 66. *King . . . passed the night fasting*; in great distress, because of Daniel's fate and his own weakness and sin which had brought it about.

III. Delivered, 19-23.

Vs. 19-23. *The king arose very early*; as soon as it was light. *Went in haste*; eager