

7. Saved From the Lions

For more than 60 years, Daniel had faithfully witnessed for God in heathen Babylon. When the Medo-Persians conquered it the night of Belshazzar's feast, Daniel's life was spared. What was next for him? **Daniel 6:1-3.**

Before long, Darius was so pleased with Daniel's work, and trusted him so totally, that he planned to put him in charge of the whole kingdom. That would be a great responsibility. After the king, Daniel would be the most important man in the government.

The jealous Medo-Persian officers, however, were not happy with the king's plan. They carefully watched Daniel to find something bad to report to the king. Did they find anything? Why not? **Daniel 6:4.**



The only other thing they could think of was to find a way to force Daniel to stop worshiping his God; and if he refused, he would be put to death. They were sure he would choose to die rather than not pray to his God. What plan did they make? **Daniel 6:5-7.**



Darius didn't know the real reason behind the flattering words as the men presented the written decree. They hoped he would sign it before he had time to think about it. Did he sign it? **Daniel 6:8, 9.**

Those wicked officers had gotten what they wanted. All they needed now was to see whether Daniel would continue his usual prayer habits.

What were Daniel's prayer habits? He no doubt prayed in his mind as he went about his work. But he also knelt down in his house three times every day and prayed, facing

toward Jerusalem with his window open. **Daniel 6:10.**

Daniel heard about the decree, but he calmly went on with his duties. At the usual hours, he prayed as he had always done. He would not close his window and hide so people would think he wasn't praying to God anymore.

All those officers knew that the king admired Daniel. But they probably couldn't hide their evil, triumphant glee when they reported to him that Daniel had disobeyed his decree.

King Darius instantly realized that he had been tricked into signing a decree that he couldn't change. He tried and tried to figure out a way to save his friend Daniel. But there was no way. Finally, he sadly gave the command to put Daniel in the lions' den.

Soldiers arrested Daniel and took him to the lions' pit. Before he was thrown down to the hungry lions, how did the king encourage him? **Daniel 6:16.**



Probably the wicked officers rejoiced, thinking they had at last gotten rid of Daniel. But the king wasn't rejoicing. He went back to his palace, where he spent a long, sleepless night.

What about Daniel? He was praising God in the smelly lions' den. Angels kept the lions from hurting Daniel. Maybe those lions were tamed and rubbed against his legs

like cats do. Or perhaps Daniel even rested his head on one of them while he and the lions all slept peacefully.

Early the next morning, King Darius rushed to the lions'

9. A Ram, a Goat, and a Little Horn

For two years, Daniel puzzled over the meaning of his first vision. Then God gave him another vision. This time he seemed to be by a river.

Again Daniel saw animals. First there was a ram with two horns, one higher than the other. Suddenly, from the west, a male goat came rushing at the ram so fast it seemed to not touch the ground. What kind of horn did it have? **Daniel 8:5.**

The rushing goat broke the ram's horns, knocked it down, and stamped on it. The goat quickly grew greater and stronger. But then, suddenly, its powerful horn broke off. What came up in its place? **Daniel 8:7, 8.**

Then Daniel saw a different horn. **Daniel 8:9.** This horn came out of one of the **"winds of heaven."** It was so small that it was called a **"little horn,"** but it became **"exceedingly great."** It even tried to destroy the truth about the sanctuary, which teaches us God's plan of salvation! This little horn acted like the terrible fourth beast and the little horn that grew out of it in Daniel's first vision.

While Daniel was still in his second vision, he heard someone ask how long the little horn would persecute God's people and oppose the sanctuary services. Daniel heard the answer, **"For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed"** (**Daniel 8:14**). Then the vision ended.

Daniel longed to understand the meaning of all that God had shown him. Suddenly he saw



someone in front of him, and he heard a voice speaking. What did the voice say and what was Daniel's response?

Daniel 8:15-17.

The cleansing of the sanctuary after 2,300 days was the



part of the vision that most confused and troubled Daniel. He didn't know when that time would start or end. But Gabriel told him it would be done many years later, in **"the time of the end,"** and told him to **"seal up the vision."** We'll study about that in the next chapter.

What did Gabriel say about the ram and the goat? **Daniel 8:20, 21.** The four horns that came after the long horn broke were symbols of the four kingdoms into which Greece would be divided.

Daniel had now been shown three sets of symbols of the same world kingdoms—the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream; the beasts in his first vision; and the ram, goat, and little horn in his second vision. We have a lot more clues to help us understand the puzzle. In the next chapter, we will start putting them all together.

