

## **PERSECUTION CAN PRODUCE POSITIVE RESULTS**

Daniel 6:16,22,25-16 ... “So the king gave the command, and they brought Daniel and cast him into the den of lions. But the king spoke, saying to Daniel, ‘Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you.’... My God sent his angel and shut the lions mouths to that they have not hurt me [Daniel], because I was found innocent before Him ... Then King Darius wrote ... ‘I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom men must tremble and fear before the God of Daniel.’”

I apologize for shortening the story of Daniel in the lion’s den. You can read it in entirety in chapter 6 of the book of Daniel. But I want to bring out a specific truth.

Persecution has more dimensions than simply being treated unfairly for one’s religious beliefs. Daniel was among Jews captured by the King of Persia. Because of his wisdom and respectful nature, he was brought into the palace to serve the king and he did so with distinction without compromising his beliefs in God. But others who served the king hated Daniel – a Jew – for enjoying such advantages. So, they conspired to accuse him falsely to force the king to condemn Daniel to death. The King hated to do it, but he had to obey his own laws. He sent Daniel to the lions, hoping that God would save Daniel and thereby prove his innocence.

Daniel was tossed into a cave with starving lions that normally tore people apart in seconds. In fact, in verse 24 we read that the king punished those who accused Daniel falsely, by sending them to the lions, who broke all of their bones and devoured them for lunch. But when Daniel was in the cave he watched as one of God’s angels joined him and forced the lion’s mouths shut. They were hungry, but could do nothing to hurt Daniel.

The result of Daniel submitting to the king and to his persecutors, was that God had the victory in the end. Not only did Daniel survive, but the king ordered everyone to worship Daniel’s God instead of their idols. A famous story from South America, is about a missionary who was killed by a tribe he went to minister to. After they killed him, the man’s wife ministered to them. They confessed their sin and came to know God. So, not all persecution ends well for the persecuted, but God can still use such situations to accomplish his will. If you are ever persecuted or attacked for your faith, understand that God could be allowing it to send a message to your persecutors. But, for that message to be received, you must not compromise your beliefs or your devotion to God, whatever the result might be.

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