

## The deliverance of Daniel from the lions' den

Daniel's story about how the Persian king Darius the Mede (Daryavesh) was forced by the intrigues of satraps and viziers to punish Daniel by throwing him into the lions' den so as not to violate his own law, which he had been persuaded to issue by his servants, is well known, yet today's politicians, presidents, prime ministers, and entire governments fail to learn from it. If they took Daniel's deliverance from the lions' den seriously, they would not act rebelliously against God, His Anointed One, and God's natural order. But let's start at the beginning.

*"It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom a hundred and twenty satraps, who should be over the whole kingdom; And over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first: that the satraps might give accounts unto them, and the king should suffer no loss. Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm. Then the presidents and satraps sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find no occasion nor fault; because he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him."* Daniel 6,1-4;

Daniel won the favor of King Darius with his abilities, which were given to him by God, and probably also with his reliability and trustworthiness. The king therefore wanted to elevate Daniel above the satraps and viziers. Once again, it is evident that a true servant of God does not deceive, supports the ruler appointed by God in good deeds, and warns him against evil intentions and actions (see Daniel 4) so that God's wrath does not befall him. Joseph in Egypt also attained the highest position after Pharaoh with God's help.

*"Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God. Then these presidents and satraps assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live forever. All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the satraps, the counselors, and the advisors, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, except from you, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be*

*not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which alters not. Therefore king Darius signed the written decree.” Daniel 6, 5-9;*

Let us note two things. The conspirators could find no fault with Daniel, so they did not waste any time and searched the law of Daniel's God to see if there was any provision that Daniel had broken. They did not care whether Daniel served the king well or poorly. They wanted to get rid of him at any cost. Meanness and envy fueled by ambition and lust for power are a cancer that threatens all great civilizations. This is still true today. So, the viziers and satraps just had to come up with a law that would prohibit something Daniel wouldn't respect because of his faith and convince the king to issue such a law with the threat of capital punishment. They therefore proposed to the king that he issue a law prohibiting any petition to any authority other than the king for a period of 30 days. They knew that Daniel prayed to God three times a day and presented his petitions to Him in prayer.

*“Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. Then they came near, and spoke before the king concerning the king's decree; have you not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask a petition of any god or man within thirty days, except of you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said, The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which alters not. Then answered they and said before the king, That Daniel, who is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regards not you, O king, nor the decree that you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day.”*

Daniel 6, 11-13;

Daniel did not back down an inch, nor did he hide in a corner to pray to his God in secret. The viziers and satraps easily accomplished their wickedness against him and reported to the king that Daniel was not obeying his royal law. They also reminded him that the punishment for this was to throw the guilty party into the lions' den. The king then understood why they wanted him to issue that law. Let us see how the king behaved in this situation.

*“Then the king, when he heard these words, was greatly displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him. Then these men assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, That no decree nor statute which the king establishes may be changed. Then*

*the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spoke and said unto Daniel, Your God whom you serve continually, he will deliver you. And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel. Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of music brought before him: and his sleep went from him. Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions. And when he came to the den, he cried with a grieved voice unto Daniel: and the king spoke and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is your God, whom you serve continually, able to deliver you from the lions?"*

Daniel 6,14-20;

The king's intentions and actions were straightforward and sincere toward Daniel and his God. He wished for God to save Daniel. He was not blinded by pride, did not take justice into his own hands, and hoped that Daniel's God would deliver Daniel from the lions' mouths. The king rejoiced all the more when he found out that Daniel was alive.

*"Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live forever. My God has sent his angel, and has shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: because before him innocence was found in me; and also before you, O king, have I done no wrong. Then was the king exceedingly glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of harm was found upon him, because he believed in his God." Daniel 6, 21-23;*

The story would seem like a fairy tale if it were not for the very important testimony of how God showed his power to the Persian king so that all rulers who read the story would remember it. The Church had and still has the task of reminding the politicians of Christian nations of their responsibility and respect towards God. Feudal rulers showed respect for God sometimes more, sometimes less, with a few exceptions, but respect for God was rather natural, as it was with ancient kings. The power that the Church had in the Middle Ages was increasingly abused over time, which led to the Reformation protests, from which new churches emerged. This gradual decay weakened both the church and faith, first among the high nobility, and gradually the decline of faith manifested itself in other strata of society as well. And instead of supporting righteous rulers and admonishing the arbitrary ones, the church became

increasingly entangled in worldly political intrigues. So today there is no ecclesiastical authority to warn politicians of the wrath of God and the Lamb.

For us, on the contrary, Daniel's deliverance from the lions' den is a testimony that God does not abandon his faithful servants. We too can become victims of power intrigues, and when the persecution of Christ's servants for Christ's name comes (Mt 24:9; Lk 21:12, 17), we will draw strength and encouragement from the stories recorded by the prophet Daniel.

## Consequences

The current state of Western civilization did not arise out of nowhere but is the result of increasing injustice and arbitrariness in the actions of rulers and governments. The revolutions that overthrew the feudal order gave rise to a new political system, known as democracy. The democratic socio-political system excluded God as the highest authority and replaced Him with the so-called will of the people expressed in elections. The result is the worst wars in known human history and a decline in morality, ethics, and growing lawlessness in all strata of society.

Nevertheless, we can live with the hope that God's prophecies and Jesus' words, recorded in Matthew 24:32-42, are being fulfilled: *“Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When its branch is yet tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near: ...”*