It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty satraps, to be over the whole kingdom; **2**and over these, three governors, of whom Daniel *was* one, that the satraps might give account to them, so that the king would suffer no loss. **3**Then this Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps, because an excellent spirit *was* in him; and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm. **4**So the governors and satraps sought to find *some* charge against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find no charge or fault, because he *was* faithful; nor was there any error or fault found in him. **5**Then these men said, “We shall not find any charge against this Daniel unless we find *it* against him concerning the law of his God.” **6**So these governors and satraps thronged before the king, and said thus to him: “King Darius, live forever! **7**All the governors of the kingdom, the administrators and satraps, the counselors and advisors, have consulted together to establish a royal statute and to make a firm decree, that whoever petitions any god or man for thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. **8**Now, O king, establish the decree and sign the writing, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter.” **9**Therefore King Darius signed the written decree. **10**Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days. **11**Then these men assembled and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. **12**And they went before the king, and spoke concerning the king’s decree: “Have you not signed a decree that every man who petitions any god or man within thirty days, except 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 does not alter.” **13**So they answered and said before the king, “That Daniel, who is one of the captives from Judah, does not show due regard for you, O king, or for the decree that you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day.” **14**And 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. **15**Then these men approached the king, and said to the king, “Know, O king, that *it is* the law of the Medes and Persians that no decree or statute which the king establishes may be changed.” **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.” **17**Then a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signets of his lords, that the purpose concerning Daniel might not be changed. **18**Now the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; and no musicians were brought before him. Also his sleep went from him. **19**Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions. **20**And when he came to the den, he cried out with a lamenting voice to Daniel. The king spoke, saying to Daniel, “Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?”**21**Then Daniel said to the king, “O king, live forever! **22**My God sent His angel and shut the lions’ mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you.” **23**Now the king was 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 injury whatever was found on him, because he believed in his God. **24**And the king gave the command, and they brought those men who had accused Daniel, and they cast *them* into the den of lions—them, their children, and their wives; and the lions overpowered them, and broke all their bones in pieces before they ever came to the bottom of the den.

 This is one of my favorite children’s stories. I remember sitting on the bed with Autumn and Patrick, telling them the story of Daniel and the Lion’s Den. Watching their eyes get large as I told of the stone being closed and sealed - reminiscent of Christ.

Daniel was a distinguished young man. He’d interpreted Nebuchadnezzar’s dream.It was said that none were found in Jerusalem like Daniel and his friends. They excelled in matters of wisdom and understanding. He and his friends stood firm in their faith, even in the face of death. Through Belshazzar, and now to King Darius, Daniel has remained upright in his ways. He has remained true to the one True God. He’s not wavered, no matter the threat or the person.

In Verse 3, we find that Daniel has caught the eye of Darius of the Medes. **Then this Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps, because an excellent spirit *was* in him; and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm.** Darius has chosen Daniel as 1 or 3 governors and he’s now thinking that Daniel is the man to rule it all. Almost like Joseph, as Pharaoh elevated him to in status, so Daniel is being elevated. Joseph, who was able to interpret dreams with the anointing of God and now Daniel, also able to interpret dreams with the anointing of God. People of high integrity God uses.

Daniel is hated for being a man of God. The world still hates men and women of God. The world still envies people who walk uprightly. The world loves darkness and despises those who cast light into the darkness. The darkness cannot comprehend the light. Often, we who walk uprightly, are mistrusted for being honest – people wonder what we’re up to. We’re criticized for being a goody two shoes. When we won’t take the dishonest route, we find ourselves excluded by those who do. Daniel was feared and, when we follow the most high God, we can count on being feared and mistrusted as well

In Verse 5, this is the highest praise a Christian can ever hope for -**Then these men said, “We shall not find any charge against this Daniel unless we find *it* against him concerning the law of his God.”** The people plotting against Daniel saw that there was one place that he would not waver, one place that he would not bow, one place that he would not blink and that was in his reverence for Almighty God. They said, “If we’re going to get him, it has to be through this place.” So they make a plan, they get the king to sign a decree that anyone not petitioning (praying to, bowing down to) Darius for the next thirty days exclusively would be in violation of the law. The king, without really considering all the possibilities (we see later that he is mad with himself and seeks to help Daniel) signs the law. Once signed, the Medes would not change the law. It was seen as weakness for the king to change his mind.

The Bible is very clear that we are to follow the written law of the land. ***Romans 13:1 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God***. The only exception is when it’s in contradiction of God’s law. We must never place man’s law above God. ***Acts 5:29 But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: “We ought to obey God rather than men.***

In verse 10, Daniel takes the stand. ***Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.*** He knew the law was signed and he went home – he didn’t try to hide – he did, exactly as he had always done – the verse says, as was his custom. Daniel didn’t make a big show of resisting! He didn’t call CNN to televise his protest. He simply continued, as his custom was yesterday.

If tomorrow the government made a law that said we could not pray to God, I hope, I trust that I’d wake in the morning, get my coffee, get my Bible, and sit down. I’d read the verses as is my custom. I’d pray, as is my custom. If the government said, no more church on Sunday, I trust that I’d climb in the car on Sunday morning and make my way to the front door and unlock it… and maybe even invite the law to stay for service.

Daniel’s enemies report him. The King follows through, even though he regrets signing the decree, and casts Daniel into the Lion’s den with these parting word - ***But the king spoke, saying to Daniel, “Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you.”*** He closed the stone and sealed it, leaving Daniel alone with his thoughts, alone with the lions, and alone with his God.

Sometimes, through no fault of our own, we find ourselves alone in the dark, with our thoughts, hungry lions all around, and God. Where do we lean when the lions are near? Where do we lean when we feel their breath hot against our neck? Where do we lean when the stone closes out the last of the light and we realize that the stone has been sealed shut? God, God, God! He will deliver us – the God whom we continually serve! He will deliver us, but we mustn’t lose heart, when the darkness closes in and we hear hungry mouths somewhere in the dark.

We know how the story goes, the king rises in the morning and comes to the pit. He has worried the whole night. He opens the pit and he calls in ***“Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?”21Then Daniel said to the king, “O king, live forever! 22My God sent His angel and shut the lions’ mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you.”*** Daniel is alive! God sent an angel to shut the mouth of the lion. Notice, Daniel stays humble and obedient to authority. He was delivered, not because he was found innocent before men, but because he was found innocent before God. God decides and God delivers. Verse 23 - ***Now the king was 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 injury whatever was found on him, because he believed in his God.*** Remember Mishack, Shadrack, and Abedego… when they were pulled from the fiery furnace, they were completely untouched! Even their clothes were unharmed. When God places a shield around us, nothing on this earth can touch us! But it is in His sovereign will how He uses us. Daniel was meant to come out of the Lion’s Den and inspire generations! Christ was meant to be crucified and deliver countless souls. It’s up to God to decide and up to us to praise Him for that decision.

Let’s finish with verse 24 ***And the king gave the command, and they brought those men who had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions—them, their children, and their wives; and the lions overpowered them, and broke all their bones in pieces before they ever came to the bottom of the den.*** Psalm 141:10 tells us - Let the wicked fall into their own nets, While I escape safely. In the book of Esther, we see Haymon hanged on the 75 foot tall gallows he’d built for Mordecai. God will turn the plans of the enemy against the enemy. Listen to ***Isaiah 54:17, No weapon formed against you shall prosper, And every tongue which rises against you in judgment You shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, And their righteousness is from Me,” Says the Lord.*** Before the enemy reached the bottom of the same den that Daniel had spent the night in, the lions landed on them and overpowered them. No angel was shutting the mouth now.

We all go through hard, harrowing times in this life. We all have times that the den is dark, we hear the lions breathing, and our fate seemed sealed. Trust that the God that we serve without ceasing has not forgotten and is at work even now. When we’re living in the Lion’s Den, that is when we need to be Leaning most heavily on our Everlasting God.