

**WARM-UP**

- What's one of the hardest situations you have ever faced? How did you get through it?
- Tell us about the oldest person you know today. When was he or she born and what experiences has this person lived through?
- Would you say that you are aware of and involved in current events? What makes you say that?

**WORD** *<sup>26</sup>"I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for he is the living God, enduring forever; his kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion shall be to the end. <sup>27</sup>He delivers and rescues; he works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, he who has saved Daniel from the power of the lions."* **DANIEL 6:26-27**

(Read also **DANIEL 6:1-25, 28.**)

We're following the life of Daniel—one of the Hebrew exiles in Babylon recognized by kings for his excellence and wisdom. Now under the Medo-Persian empire, Daniel served King Darius. Daniel's faithfulness to the Lord was tested many times. This chapter contains one of his most severe tests: he was put in the lion's den for praying to God. In this lesson, we will look at the main character of the story of Daniel's life, of history, and of every event in the world: God.

## 1 | God rules over our circumstances.

*<sup>21</sup>Then Daniel said to the king, "O king, live forever! <sup>22</sup>My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm."* **DANIEL 6:21-22**

Daniel found favor with King Darius and served him faithfully and excellently. But when Daniel continued to worship God alone, Darius had to fulfill his decree to punish Daniel. He had Daniel thrown into the lion's den. But God showed up, shut the mouths of the lions, and spared Daniel's life. God remained faithful to Daniel from when he was a young man in Judah to an old man serving in a Medo-Persian kingdom. God had been present in all the twists and turns of Daniel's life. God delivered him from impossibilities—including the lion's den. How did the king try to help Daniel (Daniel 6:14, 16, 18-20)? How did God show Himself greater than King Darius?

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## 2 | God rules over history and nations.

*<sup>25</sup>Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: "Peace be multiplied to you. <sup>26</sup>I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for he is the living God, enduring forever; his kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion shall be to the end. <sup>27</sup>He delivers and rescues; he works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, he who has saved Daniel from the power of the lions."* **DANIEL 6:25-27**

How could the disobedience of Judah, the horror of exile, and the fall of the Babylonian empire turn into a story of a Persian king praising God? Nebuchadnezzar's dream in

Daniel 2 (of different kingdoms rising and falling) was coming to pass before Daniel's eyes. God always has a greater plan and purpose. He is over all rulers, kingdoms, and nations. He weaves the threads of history, He has a plan for our redemption, and His purpose will prevail. His hand remains steady over the rise and fall of nations. What was the decree of King Darius? To whom was this decreed? How did Darius describe God?

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### 3 | God rules over transitions.

*So this Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian. DANIEL 6:28*

God takes care of the small and big things in our lives and the world. He sustained Daniel and allowed him to serve Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius, and Cyrus. He allowed the rise and fall of kingdoms to fulfill His plan—He restored the remnant of Israel through Cyrus. When we go through transitions (whether personal, national, or global), God remains with us. He is in control. How is this true of past, present, and future transitions? Why should we rely on God, not ourselves or others?

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## APPLICATION

- Take some time to determine who or what you trust. Why is only God most worthy of our trust? How can you trust Him more starting today?
- Compare the history covered in the book of Daniel to your nation's history and situation. Do you believe God rules over all history and over every nation? How will you apply this truth to your life this week?
- Think of one person you know whose situation may be a bit like Daniel's: at risk of facing consequences for serving God. Make a plan to contact him or her, send encouragement, and pray for this person to experience God's faithfulness and protection even in the lion's den.

## PRAYER

- Pray that people in your nation will recognize God's sovereign hand over circumstances, history, and transitions. Pray for people to know God and for His plan to be fulfilled.
- Pray for the church to remain faithful to God and proclaim His truth to others in spite of persecution and danger. Pray for more people to serve God as Daniel did.
- Pray the leaders in your nation to make decrees that honor God, as Darius did. Pray for their eyes to be opened to who God is.