



24. March 2026
LENTEN SPIRITUAL RETREAT
Day 35: “Daniel and the Lions - Prayer Request”

How does one survive for several days in a lions’ den after being thrown in to be devoured by seven hungry lions? In today’s reading (Dan 14:27–42), Daniel gives us an answer.

Why did the Babylonians want to get rid of Daniel? The reading recounts that they went to King Cyrus of Persia and said: *“Hand Daniel over to us, or else we will kill you and your household.”* Faced with this great violence, the king was forced to hand him over (vv. 29–30).

What had happened before? It turns out that the Babylonians worshiped an idol named Bel and brought him daily offerings of *“twelve bushels of fine flour and forty sheep and fifty gallons of wine”* (v. 3). When King Cyrus, who held Daniel in high esteem, asked him why he did not worship Bel, Daniel replied: *“Because I do not revere man-made idols, but the living God, who created heaven and earth and has dominion over all flesh”* (v. 5). Then Daniel demonstrated to the king that it was the priests of Bel who devoured all the food, and not the idol (vv. 7–21). When Cyrus realized the deception, he ordered the priests of Bel to be put to death (v. 22).

However, in addition to Bel, the Babylonians also worshiped a great dragon (v. 23). Once again, it was Daniel who demonstrated to the king that this was not a living god but an idol made by human hands, which he could easily destroy (vv. 24–27).

These actions of Daniel aroused the wrath of the Babylonians, who now wanted to throw him into the lions’ den. However, the lions did him no harm, even though they had not been fed, unlike usual. The Lord not only tamed the lions but also ensured that Daniel was fed: He sent the prophet Habakkuk to him through an angel, and Habakkuk gave him food (vv. 34–37).

“Thou hast remembered me, O God, and hast not forsaken those who love thee.’ So Daniel arose and ate.” (vv. 38–39)

How did the story end?

“On the seventh day the king came to mourn for Daniel. When he came to the den he looked

in, and there sat Daniel. And the king shouted with a loud voice, 'Thou art great, O Lord God of Daniel, and there is no other besides thee.' And he pulled Daniel out, and threw into the den the men who had attempted his destruction, and they were devoured immediately before his eyes." (vv. 40–42)

Thus, the initial question has been answered. One can survive even in a lions' den when the Lord protects and provides for us. Then the "humanly impossible" can happen.

Today I would like to address all those who follow my meditations with a special intention. I am currently in Jerusalem, and since February 28, a war has broken out here against Iran and its allies.

On Israel's part, this war has been named "Operation Roaring Lion," while the last war against Iran, in June 2025, bore the name "Operation Rising Lion." On this occasion, the United States, under the leadership of President Trump, has been actively involved from the start. They have named their attack "Operation Epic Fury."

This is not the appropriate setting, nor is it my task, to analyze the events in detail. In general, wars always entail destruction, suffering, and death. Many innocent people are affected—people who likely neither desire nor approve of this war. Franciscan Father Ibrahim Faltas describes the situation in Jerusalem in these terms:

"The sky over the Middle East remains heavily overcast: rockets, drones, and mutual attacks pierce the clouds day and night to bring death to people who do not even know one another and to destroy life, history, and nature. The sky covers everything and everyone; the tools of death have no eyes or heart, they make no distinction between nationalities or religious beliefs, they do not see the fragile bodies that have already suffered enough: it is a violence that renews itself time and again, and each time shakes us anew."

In this regard, I cordially invite you to pray the following prayer, intended to stop unjust violence, whoever may be perpetrating it. Only God can judge whether the violence employed exceeds what is necessary for self-defense or for intervening in situations of abuse. This prayer is directed, in particular, against the evil spirits who take advantage of these circumstances to carry out their wicked plans. Undoubtedly, it would be beneficial to share this prayer to offer spiritual resistance to this war that threatens to spread.

Beloved Heavenly Father, we turn to you full of confidence, believing firmly that you will come to the aid of the peoples. Look upon the suffering caused by so many forms

of unjust violence, and intervene with your power to weaken the Evil One. We especially ask you to intervene in the war in the Middle East, and to resist all those who practice, support or encourage unjust violence, whether physical or spiritual, whether humans or fallen angels. Bring true peace! We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Meditation on the reading of the day: <https://en.elijamission.net/in-god-there-will-always-be-a-solution/>

Meditation on the Gospel of the day: <https://en.elijamission.net/faith-in-christ/>