

Daniel in the Lions' Den

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Scene Summary

“Daniel in the Lions’ den tells the story of Daniel’s faithfulness to God, even when it might have meant death. Scenes include: some jealous rulers watching and criticizing Daniel...governors plotting to get rid of Daniel...two rulers speaking to the king...the king signing the decree...Daniel going to his house...Daniel prays near an open window...two spies report to the king...the king tries to find a way to save Daniel...he talks to Daniel to near the lions’ den...the king seals the doorway of the den...the king worries all night...the king hurries to the den in the morning and calls to Daniel...Daniel calls back...the king tells Daniel that we will honor God...Daniel is given greater responsibility in the government as a reward for his faith.

Scripture

(Dan 6 NIV) It pleased Darius to appoint 120 satraps to rule throughout the kingdom, {2} with three administrators over them, one of whom was Daniel. The satraps were made accountable to them so that the king might not suffer loss. {3} Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. {4} At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent. {5} Finally these men said, "We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God." {6} So the administrators and the satraps went as a group to the king and said: "O King Darius, live forever! {7} The royal administrators, prefects, satraps, advisers and governors have all agreed that the king should issue an edict and enforce the decree that anyone who prays to any god or man during the next thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be thrown into the lions' den. {8} Now, O King, issue the decree and put it in writing so that it cannot be altered--in accordance with the laws of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed." {9} So King Darius put the decree in writing. {10} Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed,

giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before. {11} Then these men went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help. {12} So they went to the king and spoke to him about his royal decree: "Did you not publish a decree that during the next thirty days anyone who prays to any god or man except to you, O king, would be thrown into the lions' den?" The king answered, "The decree stands--in accordance with the laws of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed." {13} Then they said to the king, "Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the decree you put in writing. He still prays three times a day." {14} When the king heard this, he was greatly distressed; he was determined to rescue Daniel and made every effort until sundown to save him. {15} Then the men went as a group to the king and said to him, "Remember, O king, that according to the law of the Medes and Persians no decree or edict that the king issues can be changed." {16} So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions' den. The king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!" {17} A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles, so that Daniel's situation might not be changed. {18} Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating and without any entertainment being brought to him. And he could not sleep. {19} At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lions' den. {20} When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?" {21} Daniel answered, "O king, live forever! {22} My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, O king." {23} The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God. {24} At the king's command, the men who had falsely accused Daniel were brought in and thrown into the lions' den, along with their wives and children. And before they reached the floor of the den, the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones. {25} Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations and men of every language throughout the land: "May you prosper greatly! {26} "I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel. "For he is the living God and he endures forever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end. {27} He rescues and he saves; he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions." {28} So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

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Players

- **Narrator** – The play's "catechist" or teacher, should be a good reader with a clear voice.
- **President 1, 2** – These characters are sinister and nefarious.
- **King** – This character is very proud, even arrogant.
- **Daniel** – This character is strong, yet humble in word and action.
- **Soldiers** – These characters command authority.

Special Props

- Normal items from the prop box such as cloaks, veils, robes and headdresses.

Script - Daniel in the Lions' Den

[The scene opens with Daniel at his desk.]

Narrator: Some of the rulers watched Daniel as he talked to the governors in Babylon.

President 1: See how those governors listen to Daniel. You would think that he was the king himself.

President 2: I wouldn't be surprised if the king made Daniel the chief governor, even over us!

President 1: [emphatically] We've got to get rid of Daniel!

President 2: [discouraged] But how? We've watched him for weeks. He never does anything wrong. He works hard and prays to his God.

President 1: [delighted] Ah! That gives me an idea! Listen...

[The scene change to the King's throne room – President 1 and President 2 standing before the King.]

President 1: King Darius, because you are such a great king, we would like to make a special law in your honor.

President 2: No one would be allowed to pray, except to you, for 30-days. Anyone who does otherwise will be thrown into the lions' den.

King: [very proud] Why, that is a fine idea. I'll sign the law. [Everyone smiles]

Narrator: The rulers knew that no one, not even the king himself, could change the law after it was signed.

[The scene change to Daniel's home]

Daniel: [to himself] I wonder why the king made such a strange law. Perhaps someone suggested it to him. I wonder who?

Narrator: At home, Daniel knelt to pray to God by the open window, just as he always did, three times a day. And as he prayed, two rulers watched in the shadows and smiled slyly. Then they hurried to the palace to tell the king what they had seen.

[The scene change back to King's throne room.]

President 1: Your majesty. We are sorry to tell you that one of your presidents does not honor you.

President 2: It is Daniel! He does not obey your new law.

King: [wonder] Daniel?

President 1: Daniel prays to his God three times each day.

King: Daniel is a good man. He is my friend. I never thought about Daniel praying. Oh, why did I sign such a foolish law?! I must save Daniel... but how?

[The scenes change to the lions' den. Other students can make lion growls in the background]

Narrator: But the law could not be changed. Sadly, the king watched as Daniel was brought down to the door leading to the lions' den.

King: May your God, who you serve faithfully, keep you, Daniel.

Narrator: After the guards placed Daniel in the lions' den, they placed the heavy stone over the opening. King Darius sealed it with his own seal because even the king could not change the law.

King: [speaking to himself] Poor Daniel. Can his God save him? I wonder what has happened. Is he still alive? Oh, why did I sign such a foolish law! Daniel was a good man, my best president, and my friend.

Narrator: Early the next morning, the king went to the lions' den.

King: O Daniel, has the living God, whom you serve faithfully, been able to save you from the hungry lions?

Daniel: O king, live forever! My God sent his angel to shut the mouths of these lions. They have not hurt me because I have done nothing wrong before God or to you.

Narrator: Joyfully, the king greeted Daniel when the soldiers brought him up out of the den.

King: Daniel, I will make a new law that everyone in my kingdom shall honor the living God who has saved you.

Narrator: Then the king made Daniel the ruler over all his presidents and governors. And Daniel trusted God to help him do this important work.

The End

Supplemental Information

King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon marched his soldiers on a long journey to the city of Jerusalem. The men surrounded the city. King Jehoiakim and his people could not get out of their walled city, and no one could get in to them.

The army of the Babylonians easily captured the city. King Nebuchadnezzar commanded his men to bring to Babylon some of the people from Jerusalem. Many young men from important families were taken to Babylon which was several hundred miles away.

Daniel and other fine young men were not treated as prisoners. They were sent to school to learn how to rule over their own people. They were given Babylonian names. Daniel's new name was Belthshazzar.

Babylon was a beautiful city and the young men were given a fine place to live, good food, and good teachers. After their training, those who had been good students were given good government jobs. Daniel was the best student of them all, and he became an important ruler in Babylon.

Reflection questions

- Since Daniel was a good man and a hard worker, why do you think the other rulers wanted to get rid of him?
- Some of the rulers tried to catch Daniel doing something wrong so they could tell the king. Finally they gave up. Daniel always seemed to do what was right. Why do you think these rulers tricked the king into signing a new law?
- Can you think of any reasons why the king would sign such a law? Do you think he thought that anyone would really disobey the law and be punished?
- If you were Daniel, do you think you would have closed the doors and windows so no one would know you were praying? Why do you think Daniel didn't hide when he prayed?
- The law could not be changed. How do you think the king felt when he realized that he would have to tell the guards to put his good friend Daniel into a den of hungry lions?
- King Darius did not serve the true God, but he said to Daniel, "May your God keep you." Do you think he believed that God could really save Daniel from the starving lions? How do you think Daniel felt?
- The next morning the king hurried to the lions' den. He called out to Daniel. Do you think he expected Daniel to answer?
- After Daniel had been in the den for a while, he knew that God was keeping the lions from hurting him. If you had been Daniel, would you have been angry at the king for making such a foolish law?

- The king was so glad that his friend was safe. He made a new law that everyone in his kingdom should honor and respect Daniel's God. Do you think that it is a good rule to follow today?
- The king honored Daniel too. He made Daniel the ruler over all the presidents and governors of the land. Do you think Daniel trusted God to help him do this important work? Why?