

## ***Daniel 6-Lion's Den***

### **Daniel 6:1-28**

*Based on NLT*

#### **Transition**

*Daniel continued to prosper because God was with him, and the kings under whom he served loved him.*

#### **Daniel 6:1-5**

*One of the kings liked Daniel so much that he...made plans to place him over the entire empire. Then the other government officials began searching for some fault in the way Daniel was handling government affairs, but they couldn't find anything to criticize or condemn. He was faithful, always responsible, and completely trustworthy. So they concluded, "Our only chance of finding grounds for accusing Daniel will be in connection with the rules of his religion."*

#### **Daniel 6:6-9**

*So the other government officials went to the king and said, "Long live the king! We are all in agreement...that the king should make a law that will be strictly enforced. Give orders that for the next thirty days any person who prays to anyone...except to you, Your Majesty—will be thrown into the den of lions. And now, Your Majesty, issue and sign this law so it cannot be changed..." The officials knew that, in those days, once a king signed the law, it could not be changed. So the king signed the law.*

#### **Daniel 6:10-15**

*But when Daniel learned that the law had been signed, he went home and knelt down as usual in his upstairs room next to his window. He prayed...just as he had always done, giving thanks to his God. Then the officials went together to Daniel's house and found him praying and asking for God's help. So they went straight to the king and reminded him about his law. "Did you not sign a law that for the next thirty days any person who prays to anyone, divine or human—except to you, Your Majesty—will be thrown into the den of lions?"*

*"Yes," the king replied, "that decision stands; it is an official law...that cannot be revoked."*

*Then they told the king, "That man Daniel, one of the foreign captives,...is ignoring you and your law. He still prays to his God..." Hearing this, the king was deeply troubled, and he tried to think of a way to save Daniel. He spent the rest of the day looking for a way to get Daniel out of this predicament, but he couldn't find a way to do it...*

#### **Daniel 6:16-23**

*So at last the king gave orders for Daniel to be arrested and thrown into the den of lions. The king said to him, "May your God, whom you serve so faithfully, rescue you." A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den. The king sealed the stone with his own royal seal...,so that no one could rescue Daniel. Then the king returned to his palace and didn't eat anything, and couldn't sleep. Very early the next morning, the king got up and hurried out to the lions' den. When he got there, he called out in anguish, "Daniel, servant of the living God! Was your God, whom you serve so faithfully, able to rescue you from the lions?"*

*Daniel answered, "Long live the king! My God sent his angel to shut the lions' mouths so that they would not hurt me, because I have been found innocent in his sight. And I have not wronged you, Your Majesty."*

*The king was overjoyed and ordered that Daniel be lifted from the den. Not a scratch was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.*

#### **Daniel 6:24-28**

*Then the king gave orders to arrest the men who had maliciously accused Daniel. He had them thrown into the lions' den, along with their wives and children. The lions leaped on them and tore them apart before they even hit the floor of the den. Then the King...sent a message to the people of his kingdom, saying that all of them should worship\* the God of Daniel, because he is the True God...*

*So Daniel continued to prosper...*

## Why This Story?

This story has been used effectively as part of a larger *Purpose* story set. The stories from Daniel in this set portray Daniel as a young man who follows God in difficult circumstances, and finds God's kingdom purpose for his life. Daniel also effectively lives out his faith in a foreign culture. These stories have been powerful reminders to believers that God's purposes for them, despite their difficult circumstances, are good and are used for his glory. Believers can serve in a non-believing community with integrity and without compromising their faith.

## Story Crafting

In the audio version of the story, we have omitted Daniel 6:24, thinking that it may distract from the main point of the story.

We have omitted the name of the king for ease of remembering the story.

The *government officials* in this story were administrators and officers who governed different provinces for the king. Daniel oversaw these officials.

**Your Majesty** was a title of respect that Daniel used for the king. You should use an equivalent title in your culture.

According to the verbs used in this story in the original language, it was Daniel's custom to pray like this every day, three times a day.

**The rules of his religion** means that they were aware that Daniel prayed only to God and refused to pray to any living person or any idol. Daniel also kept the dietary laws as seen in the story from Daniel 1. Your audience may need this

explanation in order to understand why the men plotted in the way they did.

## Words/Phrases to

### Consider

#### Pray

If you are telling this story to certain audiences, you may want to choose a word for **pray** that indicates that Daniel was talking to God, thanking him, and pleading with him, rather than that he was using a formulaic reciting of mantras or already crafted prayers. This is particularly important in this story, as some of the other indicators of formulaic praying---a certain number of times a day and towards a certain direction---are present.

#### Worship\*

Worship's foundation is the idea of 'service,' shown through showing awe and wonder to God (*IVP New Bible Dictionary*). Patriarchs thought this worship could take place anywhere God had revealed himself. The Old Testament sets up a complicated sacrificial system in the Temple. Jesus made it clear that this sacrificial system of worship was no longer necessary, and that our worship was based on our love for God. Different cultures and languages have different words for worship, some of which refer only to certain ceremonies or rituals one must do. In every story in this story set where 'worship' is used, it implies more than just performing rituals; it includes the heart of love, awe and wonder of the worshiper for God. Be sure that the word or combination of words you choose for worship includes this idea.

## Intra-Story Cohesion

This story is best understood in a mini-series of stories from Daniel where Daniel's position in the court and faithfulness to the True God is set up, and where in subsequent stories his favor with God is shown.

Use the same words for **prayer** and **worship** as you have been using in previous stories.

## Worldview

We have included the information that in that culture, signed laws could not be revoked, to explain why the king could not prevent Daniel's punishment. The original audience would have probably known this.

Daniel knelt down and prayed by his upstairs window. Kneeling was the posture of prayer that God's people often used, so you may need to indicate that. God's people (the Israelites) seem to have prayed facing Jerusalem in remembrance of the temple being there, and these windows are described in the text as facing that direction. Most audiences will not understand this, but if it's helpful to your audience to know that he prayed facing Jerusalem, you may include that in this story. The text also states that Daniel prayed three times a day, and that it was his custom. There is some indication that it may have been a custom of those times (David said he prayed three times a day in Psalm 55). We have omitted this fact in this story, not wishing to imply that one should pray a certain number of times per day. However, if the number of times Daniel prayed in this way every day is helpful for your audience or indicates Daniel's integrity as a man of God, you may

include it in this story. Be sure that your audience does not think that praying three times a day while facing Jerusalem is a rule that we believe we must keep today, but use this fact as a way to show that Daniel was close to God, if it's helpful to your audience.

## Story Set Themes

**Purpose**  
**Victory**  
**Leadership**