

Daniel

Characters:

- Daniel 1.....
- Daniel 2.....
- Narr 1 (poss 2).....
- Azariah (Abed-nego).....
- Nebuchadnezzar.....
- Mishael (Meshach).....
- Chaldeans.....
- Hananiah (Shadrach).....
- Astrologers (sorcerers, wise men).....
- Melzar.....
- Audience Members 1 & 2.....
- Guard/Arioch.....
- Accusers.....

- Guard/Ashpenaz.....
- Counselors.....
- One who proclaims.....
- Voice from Heaven.....
- Lions.....
- Angel.....
- Belshazzar.....
- Queen.....
- Mighty Men.....
- Darius.....
- Prince 1.....
- Prince 2.....
- President 1.....
- President 2.....

Props:

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------------------|
| Bed | Lions Den |
| Throne | Gold & Silver Vessels (Cups) |
| Crown | Food |
| Robe | Ring |
| Sceptre | Signs |
| Scrolls (2?) | Window |
| Statue | Backdrop |
| Hats, clothes, etc. | |
| Fire | |
| Furnace | |

(Writing in parenthesis are stage directions not to be spoken)

Scene 1

(The scene begins in the middle of the luncheon. Abruptly and with great intensity, the story begins with the three men seated in different parts of the room...)

(Ashpenaz and Melzar on opposite ends of stage)

Daniel: *(standing up)* I can't eat this! This food will defile me!

Hananiah: *(standing up)* I was just thinking the same thing!

Mishael: *(standing up)* Me three!

Azariah: *(standing up)* Me four! But what can we do about it?

Daniel: *(all coming toward stage now)* We'll just have to speak to someone about it and see what can be done.

Azariah: Do you think that will work? You know how they've given us that pile of books to read and information to learn. They've changed our names and now given us food fit for the king himself.

Hananiah: Azariah, that may all be true, but we have to continue to do what is right and trust God to help us if He chooses. He always has before.

(A, D, H, M all worried look at each other)

Daniel: *(to the prince of the Eunuchs - Ashpenaz)*
It would go against our consciences to eat the food that has been provided and we would defile ourselves before our God. Please, may we have something else to eat?

Ashpenaz: I fear my lord the king. It was he that required this food for you, and if you start looking worse than the others, the king will have my head. What is more important, my life or your conscience? *(Ashpenaz exits the scene).*

Daniel: *(to Melzar)*
Please, let us show you, let us eat vegetables and drink water. After ten days see how we look, and if we look worse than the rest, you can do with us as you please.

Melzar: *(hesitantly)* Ok. 10 days. We'll see how you look.

Sign – 10 days later –

(Ashpenaz and Arioch enter)

Melzar: *(inspecting the appearance of the four) (to guards)*

Let them eat pulse and drink water from now on, but if their countenance changes, inform me immediately.

Sign – approximately 3 years later –

Narr: The prince of the eunuchs brought Azariah, Daniel, Hananiah, and Mishael before king Nebuchadnezzar. In everything that the king enquired of them he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in his entire kingdom. God was already at work in these young men, giving them knowledge in all literature and understanding. The young Daniel, only in his late teens or early 20's, already had understanding in visions and dreams...

Scene 2

Sign – 2nd year of Nebuchadnezzar –

(Guard – Arioch - standing outside Neb. Bedroom door)

(Neb sleeping on stage while dream appears)

Neb: *(frantic, disturbed and troubled)*
Guard, Guard...bring me the magicians! Bring me the astrologers and the sorcerers! *(pause as if finished)* And the Chaldeans! NOW!!!!

(Enter Astrologers, Sorcerers, Chaldeans from stage left)

I've had a dream, and I'm dying to know what it all means!

Chaldeans: Long live the King! We are your servants, tell us your dream and we will tell you what it means.

Neb: You tell it to *me*; aren't you the wisest in the land? If you don't, you will die...you and your families. I'll turn your houses into garbage piles. *(He pauses)* But, if you tell me the dream and what it means, you will be rewarded.

All: We *will* tell you what your dream means, but please, first tell us the dream.

Neb: You think you can fool me? You are just trying to buy time and lie to me! If you tell me the dream then I will know that you haven't made up a phony interpretation.

Chaldeans: There is no man in the entire world that could do this! No king has ever asked this of his men! You ask us to do the impossible! Only the gods in heaven could do such a thing!

Neb: *(interrupting them, and absolutely furious, to guard - Arioch)*
Remove them from my sight! Destroy every last wise man in Babylon.

(Daniel meets with Azariah, Mishael, and Hananiah in back of hall during the following narration)

Narr: Arioch was sent to kill all the wise men immediately, but Daniel asked for time and prayed for the interpretation. Having received it, he thanked the God of heaven and faithfully came before the king.

(Daniel goes before Nebuchadnezzar)

Arioch: *(rushing in from back, pulling Daniel by the arm)*
I've found a *captive* from *Judah* who can give you the interpretation!

Neb: Can *you* tell me my dream and what it means?

Daniel: No. Not a man in the world could do this. God has shown me your dream. He has revealed to you what will happen in the future.

Daniel continues before the king and proceeds to tell Neb. his dream and its meaning.

Neb: *(Falls on face, worshipping Daniel and says)*
Surely your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of Kings, since you were able to reveal this mystery to me.

Nar: Daniel 2:48-49

Scene 3

Narr: read 3:1-3

Herald: read v 4-6
(Princes and presidents are gathered by Neb. All the people hear music, and worship)
(Shadrach, Meshach, Abed-nego off side of stage right)

Audience 1: They aren't worshipping! Do you think you can disobey the king and get away with it! You'd better start bowing down and worshipping!

Audience 2: Yeah! What's wrong with you? Worship like the rest of us.

Chaldeans: *(approach to speak with the king – from back of hall)*
Long live the King! You've made a decree that when we heard the music, we were to fall down and worship the image. Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, whom you have given leadership to, do not respect you! They do not serve your gods or worship the image you have set up. As your decree says, they are to be cast to the flames.

Neb: *(to Arioch) (Furiously Raging)*
Bring Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego before me, NOW!

(Arioch brings them onto stage)

Neb: Is it true that you dare to defy my orders? You know the penalty for disobedience. If you defy me again, you will be thrown into the burning fiery furnace. (**Chaldeans:** *(smirking, speaking to each other while Neb continues)* And it's VERY hot in there.) **Neb:** *(sarcastically in defiance)* And who is your God that He will deliver you from my hands?

Shadrach: O, King. We have no desire to defend ourselves before you.

Meshach: Our God is able to save us, and He will deliver us from your hand!

Abed-nego: And even if He doesn't, there's still no chance we will worship this image.

Neb: *(Raging Furiously)*
Add more fuel to the fire; *(turn on fans and lights in furnace)* I want it 7 times hotter than it's ever been! Bring the mighty men!

(mighty men come forward from back of hall)

Neb: Bind these disobedient mockers and throw them into the furnace!

(mighty men bind the 3 in their clothing (hats, garments, etc))

**flames slay the mighty men
(Neb goes to window of furnace, looks in)*

Neb: *(astonished and in haste) (to counselors)*
Did we cast three men in the fire?

Counselors: Yes, O King!

Neb: I see four unbound men, walking around in the fire and they are not harmed! The fourth looks like the son of God!
(goes to the mouth of the furnace)
You who serve the most high God! Come forward, come here!

*(Shad, Mesh, Abed come out, brushing off and checking their clothing)
(Princes, governors, captains, and counselors together see the men, astonished)*

Neb: Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who sent His angel and delivered his servants because they trusted in Him and went against the king's command, and risked their lives that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own.

(Neb promotes S, M and A.)

Proc: By the order of king Nebuchadnezzar, any person or nation, no matter what descent, who speak anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego will be cut in pieces and their houses destroyed, because there is NO other God that can deliver like He has!

(Stage change)

Narr: After some time Neb had another dream. Again, he turned to his wise men, and again, they failed him. Knowing that the most high God was with Daniel, he called Daniel before him once again to interpret his dream. Daniel was astonished at the details of the king's dream, but once again detailed the future for Nebuchadnezzar. His kingdom would come to an end. He had become strong and proud, but would soon be cut down like the great tree in his dream.... (Daniel continues the interpretation...)

Daniel: You will be driven away from men to dwell with the beasts of the field. You will eat grass as the oxen. Seven times will pass over you until you know that the most High rules in the kingdom of men and gives it to who ever he will. O king, let my words be acceptable to you and break off your sins by righteousness, showing mercy to the poor so that your days of peace may be lengthened.

Sign – Twelve months later –

Neb: *(walking in the palace talking to Arioch)*
Look at this city. Oh she is great! I have built her, this whole kingdom by the might of my own power and for the honor of my majesty.

Voice: Nebuchadnezzar, The kingdom is departed from you. You shall be driven from men and dwell among the beasts of the field. You shall eat grass as the oxen until seven times pass over you and you know that the most High rules in the kingdom of men and gives it to who ever he will.

Narr: The same hour all that was declared happened to Nebuchadnezzar: he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws.

Sign – 7 years later –

And at the end of the days Nebuchadnezzar lifted up his eyes unto heaven, and his understanding returned unto him, and he blessed the most High, and praised and honored him that lives for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation:...at the same time his reason returned unto him; and as for the glory of his kingdom, his honor and brightness returned unto him; and

his counselors and lords sought him; and he was established in his kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto him.

Scene 4

Sign – 10 years later –

Narr: In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had dreams and visions. These dream and visions showed Daniel the future plan God had for His people and for His saints. Daniel saw that after much time of great persecution God's chosen would be delivered and be given a kingdom which would last for ever and ever. Although this was encouraging to Daniel, it troubled Him to learn that his people would be persecuted. Nevertheless, Daniel pressed on and remained faithful to his God.

Sign – After some time –

Narr: Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before them.

Belshazzar: *(While tasting the wine)*
Bring the gold and silver vessels which my grandfather Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple in Jerusalem; my princes, my wives, my concubines and I would like to have a drink.

(Guards bring the vessels)

(ad lib - Belshazzar, princes, wives, and concubines drink wine from vessels while praising their gods)

(Writing on the wall – data projector)

Belshazzar: *(Belshazzar's countenance changes (troubled) – knees shake, cup drops)*

Bring the astrologers, the Chaldeans and the soothsayers!!

(guard leaves to get the wise men)

Whoever reads this writing and tells me what it means will be clothed with scarlet, have a chain of gold around his neck, and be exalted to the third ruler in the kingdom! I need an answer!

(All the wise men enter from back of hall, shaking their heads in confusion trying to read the writing)

(Belshazzar greatly troubled, lords astonished)

Queen: O king, live for ever! Do not be troubled! There is a man in your kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of your father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him, whom the king Nebuchadnezzar made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and Soothsayers; for an excellent spirit, knowledge, understanding, interpreting of dreams, showing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar: now let Daniel be called, and he will tell you what the writing means.

Belshazzar: Send for this Daniel immediately!

(guard leaves to get Daniel and then brings Daniel in from stage left)

Belshazzar: Are you Daniel, from the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Judah?

Daniel: I am

Belshazzar: I have heard about you, that light, understanding and excellent wisdom are found in you. The wise men, and the astrologers, have been brought before me, that they should read this writing, and make known to me the writing of it: but they could not tell me: I have heard that you can give interpretations, and dissolve doubts: if you can read the writing, and make known to me the meaning, you will be clothed with scarlet, have a chain of gold around your neck, and be exalted to the third ruler in the kingdom.

Daniel: I have no need of your gifts; I will read the writing to you, and make known the meaning. O king, the most high God taught Nebuchadnezzar this lesson many years ago. He made him powerful and honored. Many people feared him. But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was removed from his kingly throne, and turned into a beast of the field, until he learned that the most high God rules in the kingdom of men, and that he appoints over it whomsoever he will. And you his son, O Belshazzar, have not humbled thine heart, though you knew all of this; But you have lifted up yourself against the Lord of heaven in the same way, praising your own gods of gold, silver, brass, iron, wood and stone, which cannot see or hear. You have dishonored the God who gives your breath and life. And so he has sent you this message: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL; You are weighed in the balances, and are found wanting. PERES; Your kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.

Belshazzar: *((in astonishment, awe and fear)while he is speaking, servants carry out his commands)*

Clothe him with scarlet, put a chain of gold about his neck, make a proclamation that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom!

Narr: In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old.

Scene 5

(stage set in 2 parts, 1) throne room, 2) Daniel's room)

Narr: King Darius appointed a hundred and twenty princes to rule over his kingdom. 3 presidents were appointed to oversee the princes. Daniel, one of the appointed presidents, was favored over all others. The king saw that he had a wonderful spirit and wanted to set him as commander over the whole realm.

The presidents and princes tried to find a way to get Daniel in trouble with the king but were not able to because he was so faithful to God and the king, nevertheless they still tried to find some way to get the king to be upset with Daniel.

(Presidents and princes approaching from back of hall while talking)

President 1: We will *never* be able to find anything that Daniel does wrong. He's downright incorruptible!

President 2: Yes, the king seems very pleased with him... *Unless.....*we need to find something about the law of his God!

(Presidents and Princes continue to conspire against Daniel.)

(Presidents and princes assemble together before the king)

Pres & Prin: O King, Live Forever!

Prince 1: All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counselors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree.

Prince 2: Whoever asks a petition of any God or man for thirty days, except of you, O king, he should be thrown into the den of lions.

President 1: O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which can't be changed.

Darius: Ah, I think that is a fantastic law! Where do I sign?

President 2: Right here by the X, your majesty.

(Everyone leaves the king, attention moved to Daniel)

(Daniel enters into his room, kneels facing towards Jerusalem and prays to God. After prayer exits back of hall)

(Presidents and Princes gather together outside Daniel's room and see him praying, making disgusted faces, and return to the king in haste)

Prince 1: O King, Did you sign a decree saying that every man that makes a petition of any God or man within thirty days, except to you, should be thrown into the den of lions?

Darius: Yes I did, I signed it according to the law of the Medes and Persians which never changes.

President 1: Daniel, a child of the captivity of Judah does not respect you, O King, or the decree which you signed. He prays to his God *three* times a day!

Darius: This can't be...there has to be something else we can do; maybe I should talk to him? *(Darius pacing back and forth)* Was there any fine print in the paperwork?

Prince 2: O King, the law of the Medes and Persians is that no decree or law which you establish may be changed. After all, you are the king!

Darius: *(Saddened)* Bring me Daniel.

(presidents and princes exit to look for Daniel)

(stage change while above takes place, lions in den)

(Daniel brought in from stage left)
(lion's roaring)

Daniel, my hands are tied...I'm sorry, there's nothing I can do. *(to guards)*
Cast him in the lion's den.

(Daniel cast in the lion's den.)

(climbs ladder - to Daniel in the lion's den) Your God who you serve at all times, He WILL deliver you! I know it!

(angel in den, lions hushed)

Sign – Next Morning –

Darius: *(walking toward the den)* I haven't slept all night! Daniel! Daniel! O Daniel, servant of the living God, was your God, the God you always serve able to save you from the lions? Daniel are you there? *(climbs ladder)*

Daniel: O King, Live forever! My God sent His angel to protect me and to close the mouth of the lions; they have not hurt me. For I was found innocent before God, and before you O king, I have done nothing wrong.

Darius: Get him out of there now! *(Daniel removed from the lion's den)* Where are those who accused Daniel of wrong?!?!

(princes and presidents frightened, brought forth by guard)

Because you tried to kill an innocent man, you will suffer the same punishment!

(guard throws them in den, Lions roar during following narration)

Narr: So Darius commanded that the princes and presidents along with their families be cast into the lion's den and the lion's mouths were opened and their bellies were filled! And a proclamation was made to all people...

Proc: Hear ye, Hear ye all people, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth. Peace be multiplied unto you. I make a decree, in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and steadfast for ever, and His kingdom shall not be destroyed, and His dominion shall be forever. He delivereth and rescueth, and shows signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, and delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.

Narr: So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.
And Daniel lived for many more years, serving the king and His God. God loved Daniel and revealed to Him more of the future and the plan He had for His chosen people. At times Daniel was saddened by what he learned, and all he could do was trust in God and move forward in faith, knowing God would always be a rock for those who put their lives in his hand. God comforted Daniel! Daniel was given a precious promise, the same promise that has been carried down to us. There will be times of tribulation, trouble and sorrow but there will come a day when Michael, the great prince who stands for God's children, will stand up and everyone whose name is written in the book of life will be delivered. Our loved ones and those who have gone before us who have fallen asleep will be awakened and they who are wise and turn many to righteousness will shine, as the brightness of the firmament, forever and EVER AND EVER!

Our lives have not been promised to be free of troubles, but as He did for Daniel, God will give us comfort and send His angels to carry us through. May we all wait in patience, placing our lives in our Father's hands as the 3 friends did. And may we, as Daniel, be consistent in our discipleship, and "go our way, and receive our inheritance" when the King returns, and Daniel's prophetic visions are completed.