

**DANIEL IN THE LION'S DEN**

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: DANIEL 5

*God preserved His people by His sovereign hand.***The STORY**

Pray with children to start class.

**Teaching Points for Class Discussion:**

**A trap is set for Daniel** – Jealous of Daniel, the other leaders under Darius conspired to trap Daniel by coming against his religious beliefs. They lied to the king saying that “all” the advisors and leaders of the kingdom agreed on their scheme. Of course Daniel, who was the most distinguished of their number, was not consulted.

**Daniel obeyed God instead of man and was sent to the lion’s den** – Despite the decree, Daniel went about his normal routine of praying toward Jerusalem. He was discovered by spies, and Darius was made aware of Daniel’s disobedience to the king. Try as he may, the king could not find a way to free Daniel. Daniel would have to be cast into the lion’s den according to the law. Influenced by Daniel, the king hoped that Daniel’s God may be able to save him (Daniel 6:16). Daniel was then cast into the lion’s den.

**Daniel emerged unscathed, and God was magnified** – The king returned in the morning with hope that Daniel’s “living God” would be able to save him. Those who accused Daniel (and their families) were then judged and cast into the very same den of lions. The lions immediately devoured them. This dispelled any idea that they might have been overfed the day before by the king in order to help Daniel. Daniel’s salvation came by the grace of God. The king’s declaration, like that of Nebuchadnezzar after the fiery furnace, demonstrated just how filled with awe he was. God, once again, preserved His people by His sovereign hand and was exalted by a heathen king. In a foreign land God was praised.

## THE GLORY BELONGS TO GOD ALONE

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### Where is Jesus?

*Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.*

Like Paul, we are all sinners. We have broken God's law and deserve a death sentence. God's law can not be repealed or changed. Similarly in Daniels day, the Law of the Medes and Persians could not be repealed. When the king's law was broken, the person who broke the law had to be punished. King Darius could not save Daniel. God, however, could save Daniel. Like Daniel, we have all broken a law that cannot be changed: God's law. But, we have a heavenly king who can save us, not by changing the law, but by taking the punishment we deserve. God saved Daniel from the lions by the angel and God has saved us by His Son, Jesus' death on the cross. Our God is a God who saves! By remaining in the lion's den overnight Daniel satisfied the law of the Medes and Persians. By taking our punishment on the cross Jesus satisfied the law of God.

"Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners - of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life." 1 Timothy 1:15-16



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### ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

Read the following Bible passage from the Old Testament. Use the following questions to help the children understand how this passage points to Christ in the New Testament.

**Bible Passage: Psalm 118:26**

#### Connecting the passage to Christ:

In Matthew 21:9 as Jesus is coming into Jerusalem those waving the palm branches are also calling out the very words from this verse and attributing them to Christ. All together this Psalm speaks of God becoming our salvation and this salvation comes through the blessed one who comes in the name of the Lord – Jesus!

#### Questions for reflection:

- Where have you heard this description before: "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord?" (The crowds waving palm branches shouted Hosanna and these words as Jesus entered Jerusalem.)
- Did the crowd know Jesus was the Messiah? (The crowd knew that Jesus had done great miracles like raising Lazarus from the dead. They thought He came to overthrow Roman rule. They did not realize that His kingdom was not an earthly kingdom. Jesus came to overthrow the rule of sin and death and claim for His Father those who would be redeemed by His obedient life and willing death upon the cross.)

### SWORD BIBLE MEMORY

#### BE A DOER OF THE WORD

*Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.*



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### ACTIVITIES & OBJECT LESSONS

*Use the following activities for practical application and discovery of this lesson. For the younger children, review the preschool questions and use them to help the children relate to the passage. For older children, ask them why they think this passage is in the Bible for us today. How is it supposed to affect our lives?*

#### WHO'S AFRAID?

Engage the class asking if anyone has ever been attacked by a dog. Ask them what it was like to find themselves in that situation.

If you know someone (an adult) that was attacked by a dog, share their story with the class (but leave out any gory details). The object is not to gross out the class but to put them in touch with a measure of logical fear over a real danger.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- When we are afraid, where do we turn to for hope and protection? (Hebrews 4:16 says we can turn to God who is our help in time of need.)
- What should be man's greatest fear? (Though many men fear pain and death, their greatest fear should be fear of God's wrath and judgment. Death lasts but a moment but God's punishment toward sinners will be eternal.)



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## COURAGE

### Supplies

- a tall cardboard box
- a hamster
- a small hamster box
- a pair of leather work gloves (three adults will be needed for this skit)

Act out or ad lib this skit in front of the class.

Teacher 1: "Hey [Teacher #2], guess what I just got?"

Teacher 2: "What did you get?"

Teacher 1: "I got a pet hamster. Do you want to see him?"

Teacher 2: "Sure. Where is he?"

Teacher 1: "He is in that box."

Teacher 2: "Why such a big box?"

Teacher 1: "Well, he came in a small box but when I first tried to take him out of the box he got upset and bit me. Somehow he got away and wouldn't let me hold him. I couldn't get him in the little box so I used this larger one."

Teacher 2: "I thought hamsters were supposed to be gentle."

Teacher 1: "Not this one. At least not so far. Hey why don't you get him out of this big box for me and put him back in this one." (Shows a very small box to Teacher #2.)

Teacher 2: "No chance (looking into the box with fear). "I'm not sticking my hand down there only to get bitten up."

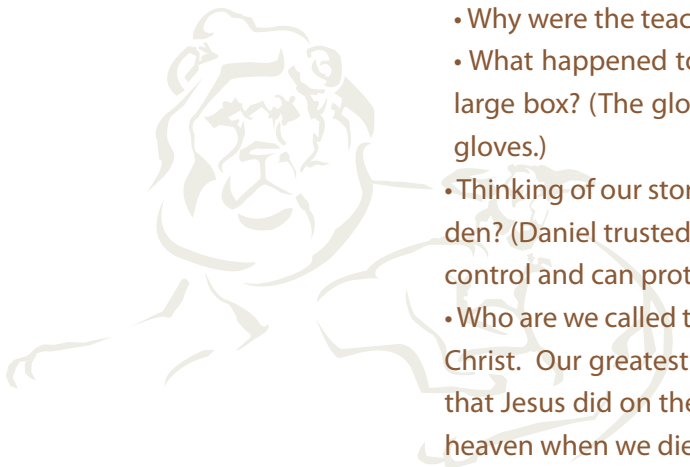
Teachers go back and forth trying to convince each other, making a real scene, until a third helper enters the conversation.

Teacher 3: Hey guys, I've got a solution for you. (Teacher 3 gives them a pair of leather work gloves).

Now both Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 want to get out the hamster to show the other up. The skit ends with one of the teachers using the gloves to take the hamster out of the large box and place it in the small box.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- Why were the teachers so afraid? (They didn't want to get bitten by the hamster.)
- What happened to give them courage enough to retrieve the hamster from the large box? (The gloves protected them from a bite. They placed their trust in the gloves.)
- Thinking of our story from today, what gave Daniel the courage to endure the lion's den? (Daniel trusted God to protect him. Just like the gloves, if we believe God is in control and can protect us, we can do His will with confidence.)
- Who are we called to trust in our lives? (We are called to trust God, specifically Jesus Christ. Our greatest fear should be death and judgment but if we trust in the work that Jesus did on the cross we can live confident that we will go to be with Jesus in heaven when we die; free from sin and free from judgment."



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### NOT ALL LIVES ARE SPARED

After telling the story of Daniel to the children, read to them the account of the stoning of Stephen in the New Testament (Acts 7:54-60).

It is important for them to understand that it is not God's obligation or plan that everyone who trusts in Him will be spared. In fact, the Bible tells us that since Jesus was persecuted so will we be.

That does not mean we will all face death, but we can assume we will be ridiculed for our faith in Christ. Like in Daniel's day, many today are forbidden to worship Christ and are thrown in prison or even killed for their faith. Though we celebrate Daniel's rescue, we also celebrate Stephen's stoning as God used it to spread the Gospel to many unbelievers, see Acts 8:1-8.

## PRAYER

Pick several children to pray based on the day's scripture passages.

## IN CLASS PROJECT

The first and second grade children can use the preschool coloring sheet and questions. Have the older children draw a picture of Daniel coming out of the lion's den unharmed.



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## FOR OLDER GRADES

**Supplies:**

pencil and worksheet  
provided

Use 2 Timothy 3:12, 2 Corinthians 4:8-16, Matthew 5:10-12 to write out a paragraph of how you would counsel Daniel if he was being thrown into the lion's den for praying to God. We would want to encourage Daniel that God could save him. We would want to have the perspective represented in these scriptures.

There is a special honor in being like Christ through persecution. We must remember our reward comes ultimately in the life to come not in this life. Using Foxe's Book of Martyrs share a few stories with the class. Explain to them the persecution that is currently going on around the world.

We celebrate the deliverance of Daniel which is a picture of the coming salvation through Jesus. Now, we place our hope in Jesus and a life everlasting with Him in heaven.

Paul is a great example, he refused to give up preaching the gospel in spite of the many persecutions he received, see 2 Corinthians 11:23-25.

Take time to pray for those in the world that are currently under persecution. Ask God to give them the faith of Daniel and to preserve them like Daniel and use their suffering for the promotion of the Gospel.

As another activity, you can compare the prayer of Darius after Daniel's deliverance in Daniel 4:34-35 with Nebuchadnezzar's prayer in Daniel 4:3. It is interesting to see just what comes from a man's mouth when exposed to the power of God.



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### A LITTLE BIT MORE

**Persecution** – Persecution is being mistreated for what you believe. In the case of Christianity it is being mistreated because you believe in Jesus Christ. Persecution should be no surprise for the believer. Because Jesus is the stumbling stone and rock of offense He was persecuted and we will also be persecuted, see John 15:20. In Christianity, Jesus claims to be the only way of salvation. As a result, it confronts all other systems of belief. Jesus said:

I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (John 14:6)

This message is offensive to those who reject Christ. When we are persecuted we are called to rejoice because God will reward us in heaven, see Matthew 5:12.





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**WORKSHEET**

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