

**DANIEL & THREE FRIENDS CHOOSE TO OBEY GOD**

*First performed at South Brisbane Ecclesia Sunday School 2011*

**Characters**

Narrator

Nebudchadnezzar, King of Babylon

Ashpenaz, chief of court officials

Daniel/Belteshazzar

Hananiah/Shadrach

Mishael/Meshach

Azariah/Abednego

Hadad (is fat – Pillow stuffed in his shirt)

Saul

Nahash

Guard Sargon

Waiter 1

Waiter 2

**Song: Three good men lived very long ago, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.**

**Scene 1**

King is on his throne

Narrator: Nebudchednezzar, King of Babylon besieged Jerusalem and the LORD delivered Judah into his hands. Nebudchednezzar carried off the articles from the temple back to the treasure house of his god. He also brought prisoners from Judah back to live in Babylon.

Ashpenaz: (comes in and bows before king)

Nebuchzzr: Yes, Ashpenaz.

Ashpenaz: (bows low to the king) My King. Here are the Israelite prisoners, you requested. These are young men from the royal family. They are handsome, clever, and well informed. (7 young men enter stage and kneel down before the king)

Nebuchzzr: Very good Ashpenaz. (king walks around looking at young men).  
You have done well. Not for nothing did I make you my chief of the court officials.

Princes of Judah, listen to me. You have been chosen to serve in my palace. You will learn the language and literature of our mighty kingdom Babylon. After three years of training, you will enter into service. (princes remain kneeling)

Ashpenaz: I have given them new names which are more fit for Babylonian service. This was Daniel, who is now called Belteshazzar. This was Hananiah and is now Shadrach. This was Mishael, and is now Meshach, This was Azariah, and is now Abednego. This was Nahash....

Nebudchzzr: That is enough. You may depart. I will see you this evening Ashpenaz. See that these men are assigned food and wine from my table.

(7 young men depart off stage and move to in front of the stage)  
Curtains close – throne is replaced by dining table laden with food while young men are speaking

Nahash: Did you hear what the King said ? We get to have the same food and wine that he is served !

Saul: We'll be feasting every night

Hadad: (looking dreamy) The best wine...the best food...all the delicacies that Babylon can offer ! – So Awesome!.I can't wait for tonight.

Saul: I wonder what will be on the menu for tonight ?

Daniel: I wonder if it will be food we're allowed to eat ?

Hadad: Look, we're prisoners, we'll just have to eat what we are given.

Shadrach: But what if it is food that is forbidden by the LORD ? We have never eaten unclean food.

Nahash: Well, we have no choice in the matter. We are prisoners. We are expendable. We don't want to cause any trouble. Right?

Saul & Hadad: Right.

Daniel: God will not test us past what we can bear. He will give us a way out. I am resolved not to defile myself with unclean food, whether it be royal food or not.

*Ashpenaz enters*

Ashpenaz: Well my young men. It is time for dinner. This will be a great night for you. Going from prison food to the King's food. Come this way.

*Ashpenaz leads them up to the dining room. Guard Sargon attends the table – he salutes when Ashpenaz enters. One waiter stands ready to serve.*

Ashpenaz: Sargon (Ashpenaz nods his head to him) These are prisoners from the royal families in Judah. They have now entered into the King Nebudchadnezzar's service. For three years they will learn the excellent ways of Babylon. I appoint you to guard and care for them for the next three years. Do you understand ?

Guard: Yes sir !

Ashpenaz: Waiter, tell these young men what delicacies await their palates tonight.

Waiter 1: Entrée' is a choice of roasted avocado stuffed with crab meat, or goose liver shaped and baked into the form of our goddess of love Ishtar.  
*(Daniel and 3 friends look at each other in a concerned way)*  
Second course is roast pork, caviar, and boiled camel's tongue.

Ashpenaz: Mmmm, my favourite.

Waiter 1: Third course is

Daniel: Excuse me please Ashpenaz. I do not wish to offend you, but may we please have permission not to eat these foods. Our God, has asked us not to eat certain foods. I would not wish to defile myself by eating them.

Ashpenaz: What do you mean ? I do respect you Daniel, and you have my sympathy, but you have to eat this food. The king himself gave this order.

Daniel: Please sir,

Ashpenaz: No, I am afraid of my lord the king, who has himself assigned your food and drink. Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men of your age? The king would then have my head because of you.  
Now, I must go and eat with the king. Sargon, remember you're in charge of them now. (Ashpenaz nods to Sargon and leaves the room)

Sargon: (salutes)

Hadad: Good one Daniel. You nearly got us into trouble. Now sit down and eat. (Hadad, Nahash and Saul start oohing and aahing and mmmmming over the food and stuffing themselves)

Waiter 2: Would you like some wine sir? (to Abednego)

Abednego: Uh, no, thankyou. Do you have any water ?

Waiter 2: Well, I guess I can find some somewhere ? (waiter goes off)

*Hadad, Nahash & Saul pour lots of wine for themselves, and stuff themselves with food.*

Abednego, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach talk together.

Shadrach: We cannot eat this food. Yet the king has ordered it. What shall we do?

Meshach: Let's all pray. (they bow their heads and pray to themselves briefly. Waiter returns with water)

Waiter 2: Right ... here we are, one water coming up (Pours water for Abednego).

Daniel: Sargon, My three friends and I (gestures to them) seek your permission not to eat this food. We want to obey what our God has told us.

Sargon: You heard what Ashpenaz said.

Daniel: Please, test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you see.

Sargon: Oh alright. But only for ten days - and don't tell anyone else about this. Waiter ! Bring some vegetables for these men to eat, and serve them only water.

Waiter 1: What !

Sargon: Obey ! And don't tell anyone about it. I want to keep our heads on our necks.

Curtains close. Person bearing a sign that says "10 Days Later" walks past.

Curtains open on the dining room scene. Hadad is still eating and much fatter. Saul has blotchy face and bags under his eyes. Nahash is asleep from too much wine, his hand around his cup. Daniel and his 3 friends are sitting at the table eating an apple and studying their books.

Nahash: Oh, I have got such a headache. It's killing me.

Hadad: (laughs) Too much partying hey !

*Sargon enters*

Daniel: Good evening Sargon (as Sargon enters)

Sargon: Good evening to you Daniel. Well, Belteshazar, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, the ten days of trial are over, and I have to say that you look healthier and much better nourished than these young men who have been eating the royal food.

Waiter 1: Yes, they are really are much healthier looking. And do you know what Guard Sargon? they are smarter too. For they spend hours studying our books, and learning the Babylonian laws, while the other young men are drinking and partying.

Sargon: Excellent. I then give the command that you are to be served vegetables and water for as long as you wish. You have my permission to abstain from the royal food and wine.

D, Shad, Mesh, Abed: Thankyou Sargon. Thankyou for allowing us to obey the LORD our God.

Sargon: You will have to tell me more about this God of yours. He certainly looks on you with favour.

Waiter 1: Yes, me too. I'd like to hear about a God who makes rules about what you can and cannot eat. It is very curious.

Daniel: Yes. Of course we can.

#### CLOSE CURTAINS

Narrator: So, at the end of the three years of training, Ashpenaz presented the men to King Nebuchadnezzar. The king talked with them and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's service. In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanterers in his whole kingdom.

## **DANIEL IN THE LIONS DEN**

Narrator

King Darius

Daniel - Administrator 1

Marduk - Administrator 2

Nadin - Administrator 3

Berossus - Satrap 1

Menander - Satrap 2

Angel

Lions

Servants 1 & 2

**Song: Daniel was a man of Prayer**

### **Scene 1**

*King Darius on his throne, with Daniel and Administrators 2 & 3 before him.*

Narrator: Many years later Daniel served King Darius. Darius the Mede took over the Babylonian kingdom at the age of 62. It pleased Darius to appoint 120 satraps to rule throughout the kingdom, and then three administrators to rule over them. One of these three administrators was Daniel.

King D: Daniel, this is great, all the accounts are in fine order. The satraps in your area are working well with you. I am fortunate to have such a trustworthy administrator. In fact, you always work hard, you are honest, and you don't accept bribes.

(Marduk and Nadin look on jealously)

Daniel: Thank you, O King.

King D: In fact Daniel, you have done so well, that I am planning to set you over the whole entire kingdom.

Marduk: What, rule over us too?

Nadin: Daniel, is good at what he does O King Darius, but , but so are we.

King D: I have given this a great deal of thought, and my plan is that at the beginning of the next year, Daniel will be over the whole kingdom. Including you, Marduk and Nadin.

Marduk & Nad: Yes, O King, may you live forever. (with blank faces hiding their annoyance)

King D: Come this way to the map room Daniel, and I will show you my plans for organizing the administration divisions.

(King Darius & Daniel exit stage)

- Marduk: Is Daniel is going to be head over us ?
- Nadin: No way
- Berossus: No way
- Menander: No way
- Marduk: We need to find out something bad about Daniel to bring him down.
- Nadin: Down
- Berossus: Down
- Menander: Down.
- Marduk: Something which shows that he is just as corrupt or negligent as the rest of us.
- Nadin: I've already been digging through his rubbish bins, looking out for letters that might implicate him in some way. But there's nothing.
- Berossus: I've had people spying on him, but all they can say is he goes to work on time, goes home for lunch and a prayer, and then goes back to work for the afternoon. Those stupid spies tell me he should be called Daniel the diligent. He prays three times a day !
- Menander: I've looked all through his accounts, and there's no money missing. There's no sign of negligence. He's honest all right.
- Marduk: We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless, hmmm, unless it has something to do with the law of his God.
- Nadin: Um, like what ?
- Marduk: I have just thought of a cunning plan (eyebrows go up and down a few times)  
Daniel prays to his God three times a day did you say?
- Berossus: Yes
- Marduk: What if we convince the king that people should pray only to him, and that if they pray to any other God, then they will be thrown into the lions' den.
- Menander: Do you think the King will fall for that ?
- Marduk: Trust me, the King will willingly agree to it for his own glory. He won't even consider about people who refuse to obey such a law.
- Berossus: Won't Daniel just obey the law?
- Marduk: No, he is to hmmm good. So all we need to do is ...(group huddle whisper a conspiracy)
- Menander: Alright, lets go see the king (all exit stage)

## Scene 2 King Darius on throne

Admin & Satrps: *Come in and bow before the king*

King Darius: Yes, you may speak

Marduk: O King Darius, live for ever !

Admin & Satrps: Live for ever !

Marduk: 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.

King Darius: (nods head). I like that idea.

Nadin: (hands king a tablet which king signs) It's all ready here for you to sign, O king.

Belorossus: (winks to the audience) Remember O king, in accordance with the laws of the Medes and Persians this decree cannot be repealed.

King Darius: Wonderful, wonderful.

Admin & Satrps: (go off stage, rubbing their hands together and gloating)

## **Scene 3:** Daniel is his room/Throne room

Narrator: Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened towards Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before. (Daniel doing action of praying ?try back corner of stage)

(admin and satraps with binoculars and telescopes watching from floor area in front of stage)

Narrator: Then these men went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help. So they went to the king and spoke to him about his royal decree:

Menander: O King, Live for ever. 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 ?

King Darius: The decree stands – in accordance with the laws of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed.

Nadin: 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

King Darius: (mime great distress)



Narrator: When the king hear this, he was greatly distressed; he was determined to rescue Daniel and made every effort until sundown to save him.

Marduk: Remember, O king that according to the law of the Medes and Persians no decree or edict that the king issues can be changed.

Narrator: So the king gave the order and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions' den. The king said to Daniel....

(admin and satraps go from king and get Daniel from his room)

King Darius: May your God, whom you serve continually rescue you !

Narrator: The king spent the night without eating and without any entertainment being brought to him. And he could not sleep.

(King paces up and down in throne room. Little servant offers tray of food which he waves away, and returns to pacing)

#### **Scene 4 Lions Den**

Daniel kneels down and prays to God, lions come near him but don't hurt him.

Angel standing behind Daniel, then goes around wagging finger at lions, then patting them.

.....

Narrator: At the first light of dawn (cock crow),the king got up and hurried to the lions den.

King Darius: Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually been able to rescue you from the lions?

Daniel: O king, live for ever ! My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me.

Narrator: The king was overjoyed and gave the order 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.

(servants lift Daniel out and put his cloak back on him)

Narrator: At the king's command, the men who had falsely accused Daniel were brought in and thrown into the lions' den.

(ambassadors and satraps thrown into lions, and lions overpower them).

Servant 1: (reads from a scroll) King Darius writes to all peoples, nations and men of every language throughout the land.

Servant 2: (reads from scroll) "I issue a decree that in every part of my kngdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel. For he is the living God and he endures for ever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end."

The End.

**Song: It's me, it's me, it's me, O LORD, Standing in the need of prayer**