

"Prohibiting Prayer: The Daniel Decree" Sample Page 1

Opening Narrator: (Different from the main character.)

Sometimes, when reviewing Biblical stories, it's easy to let our familiarity with them blunt the impact they once had. So we are presenting you with a unique form of re-telling, that takes a different approach to make it fresh and new again. Harnessing the power of the imagination, we see the events of the Bible from the perspective of someone that might have been there as a witness. By seeing the story through their eyes, putting ourselves in their position, we feel the impact it must have had in the lives of actual participants on the side-lines.

To supply a bit of back-story, we recall that the nation of Israel, due to disobedience, had been taken captive by the Babylonians. Young Daniel had survived and thrived over the years with God's help under the Babylonian rulership of King Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar. After the Persian conquest of Babylon, Daniel, now in the later years of his life, had become one of three senior administrators of the empire in the reign of King Darius the Mede. In our version, we hear the story of Daniel and the Lion's Den, told from the hypothetical viewpoint of a man named Sadalbari, who was the king's Chief Scribe and Historian. Sadalbari, an honorable man who is grooming his son to take his place someday, finds himself in the middle of the action when Daniel's refusal to compromise puts him in a situation that only God could deliver him from.

Scene one: Street outside Daniel's house

Actions during the next paragraphs: *The extras begin to come onstage and walk back and forth, stopping and talking to each other here and there. The scribe and his son walk slowly onto the stage, the father speaking to his son as they go. The Scribe carries a scroll and his son carries a rectangular piece of wood. Daniel is seen coming onto the side of the stage that represents his house, and we see him kneel in prayer, alternating between kneeling down with his face to the ground, then lifting up his face to heaven and praying with clasped hands, then raising his hands up in praise. The Scribe and his son stop to watch from a short distance and talk about Daniel's habit of prayer. The scribe draws his son back away from the street and close to the back of the stage, away from the extras, and they sit down to talk more.*

Main Narrator: When I was appointed to this position years ago, I spent most of the hours of the day taking down all of the king's words, and those of his visiting ambassador, princes, presidents, satraps, and other important people. Eventually, however, after the birth of my firstborn son, I began to relinquish some of my duties to my underlings, and now I only personally take down the interactions of the King with those he sees in his court. My staff of 12 historians divided their time between writing down the all the rest of the king's words and actions, and copying the notes into the bound chronicles of the kingdom. I now share among my primary concerns the upbringing and training of my son Homam, who will someday replace me. He accompanies me as I work in the palace, and is a studious learner. One day, as my son and I walked home in the evening, we came to the home of Daniel, foremost of the Kings' top three most trusted advisors. These three men represented a great many others under them. Daniel was a kind elderly man, who was different from the proud and haughty members of the royal court. Daniel often spoke to me kindly, unlike the others to whom I was essentially invisible. His honesty, humility and wisdom had endeared him to King Darius, and to all those who knew him.