

## **“Prohibiting Prayer: The Daniel Decree” Sample Page #2**

Scene two: Throne Room (Play Track #2 of the soundtrack.)

**Actions during the next paragraphs:** *The Scribe and his son come onstage, and take a position off to the side. The Scribe carries a scroll and his son carries a rectangular piece of wood. The scribe writes on the scroll as the king and his guests speak. His son holds the board for his father to place the scroll on to write on. The two princes enter about the same time, and stand at the bottom of the stage awaiting permission to come closer. The King comes in, walking slowly and regally, accompanied by his guard. The dramatic music, with no dialog, underscores his royal status as he ascends to sit on his throne. The King is seated as the crescendo of the arabic music is reached and becomes quiet. Once he has sat down and arranged his robes, he looks up, and the guard beckons to the princes, who draw nearer to the King, bowing deeply before him as they walk. Once in front of him, they begin speaking flattery, and Mazaeus holds up a scroll, which he opens and displays for the King to inspect. Artabazus indicates lines on the scroll to the king, speaking to him about it. The king looks pleased as he takes the scroll and examines it for himself, as they continue speaking to him in turn. When they are finished, the King stands for a moment and walks to the side a little, considering their words as he strokes his beard in thought. He looks up, as the narration tells what he is thinking, the thought of the potential honor causing him to smile to himself as he considers it. He hands the scroll to the scribe, who takes it with a bow and places it on a nearby table. The king takes the stylus and signs the document. As he completes the action, the two princes exchange meaningful glances of satisfaction with each other. The Scribe looks up and meets the eyes of Prince Artabazus, who is looking at him with a grim smile of malicious intent. The scribe appears shaken as he looks back down at his work. Once again, the dramatic Arabic music underscores, with no narration, the King's exit from the Throne Room. Everyone stays in place as he does, bowing as he passes. Once he has left, everyone straightens, and the princes turn and leave, speaking in low tones to each other, but the scribe and his son stay a moment, as he writes more on his tablet with the stylus. He and his son converse a moment before his son practically drags him out to go see Daniel.*

**Main Narrator:** The next morning, we went to the palace for a meeting scheduled in the King's court to hear a petition by some of his advisors. Knowing as I did the reason for it, I was not looking forward to being witness to the treachery of the princes who were out for Daniel's blood. (The royal music, with no dialog, underscores the King's entry.) With their usual words of flattery, the two princes, Artabazus and Mazaeus approached the king to present their petition, holding up their writing and saying "King Darius, live for ever. All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which alters not."

I did not miss the pleased expression of King Darius, as he considered the glory that the decree would confer upon him. "Why," he must have thought, "such a law places me above any of the gods that the people worship... and rightly so, am I not the supreme ruler of the mightest empire in the world?" Pride and vanity caused his eyes to be blinded to the reason behind the decree, and with a satisfied expression he signed the writing into law. I was not blinded, however, and I could plainly see the smug glance exchanged between the princes when the decree was endorsed by the king. I also could not miss the telling look in Artabazus' face when his eyes met mine... something that had never happened before in the palace. I understood what it meant... and I understood what the law meant for Daniel.

*(The royal music , with no dialog, underscores the King's exit.)*