

PPT Title

God Rescues Daniel from the Lions

Main Point: God rescues His people.

Key Verse: (God) rescues people and sets them free by working great miracles. Daniel's God has rescued him from the power of the lions. - Daniel 6:27 NLT

Props: A "scroll" with Darius' decree (at end of lesson, or create your own!)

BACKGROUND/REVIEW



Say: Last week, we read the amazing letter that Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, wrote to the entire world. He told the story of how he once thought he was so great and powerful. But this was wrong thinking! God was the great and powerful One, and everything that Nebuchadnezzar had - his wealth, position, and kingdom - came from God. Because Nebuchadnezzar was proud, his heart was far from God. Then God took away all of the things that he was so proud of. God humbled Nebuchadnezzar. For seven years, the once-great King lived like a wild animal. Finally, he turned toward the one true God, and Nebuchadnezzar's twisted mind was made right. From that day on, Nebuchadnezzar knew that God was in control of all things. He learned that, "God makes everything work out according to His plan." (Ephesians 1:11b NLT) Nebuchadnezzar praised the Lord for who He is and what He does.

Additional teaching for older students: Looking back, we can certainly see that God worked out everything according to His plan. Back when the Israelites lived in Israel and Judah, the Israelite Kings and people stopped worshipping God. There were only a few Israelites who still trusted and followed God. So God allowed the Israelites to be kidnapped and taken to Babylon. Little by little, through the lives of Daniel and his friends, God revealed Himself to the Babylonian King, Nebuchadnezzar. Finally, that King came to know God and worship Him in front of the entire world. God worked out everything so that a foreign King would come to know Him and worship Him. So even while they were in captivity, God's people were led by a King who followed the One true Lord. This made the way for the Israelites to remain faithful to God.



Nebuchadnezzar ruled in Babylon for over forty years. Several years after Nebuchadnezzar died, the kingdom of Babylon was taken over - just as God had foretold! Do you remember when God gave the dream of a large statue to Nebuchadnezzar? God gave Daniel the meaning of this dream. He said that the golden head was a symbol for Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom, and after him would come another kingdom that was not as powerful as his (Daniel 2:39). This happened when Babylon was taken over by the Persians and the Medes. Today we are going to read about one of the kings who ruled this kingdom, King Darius.

KING DARIUS' DECREE (Daniel 6:1-9)

Say: Daniel was a faithful servant to King Nebuchadnezzar, and the kings after him. Daniel was such a wise and godly man that every King kept him in a high position. When King Darius was in power, he made Daniel one of the top three officials in Babylon.



Darius divided his kingdom into a hundred and twenty states and placed a governor 1



in charge of each one. In order to make sure that his government was run properly, Darius put three other officials in charge of the governors. One of these officials was Daniel. And he did his work so much better than the other governors and officials that the king decided to let him govern the whole kingdom.

The other men tried to find something wrong with the way Daniel did his work for the king. But they could not accuse him of anything wrong, because he was honest and faithful and did everything he was supposed to do. - Daniel 6:1-4 CEV

Say: The other leaders wanted to find a reason to arrest Daniel. **Ask:** If Daniel did everything so well, why do you think the other leaders wanted to get rid of him? *Listen for answers.* **Say:** I'm sure some were jealous of Daniel, but there is probably more to it than that. These men (Persian "Satraps") were appointed to help the King look after his kingdom and his wealth (Daniel 6:2). They collected taxes, judged court cases, and were in charge of the armies. These were very important jobs. Some men in this position were greedy and misused their position. With all that money and power, we can be sure that some of the men used their jobs to take money that belonged to the King. But Daniel would never do such a thing. These men were probably afraid that if Daniel were in charge of the entire kingdom, they would no longer be able to do what they wanted.



Note to Teacher: Daniel is described as standing out from all the other satraps and administrators because of his "exceptional qualities." Indeed, "they could find no corruption in him." (Daniel 6:3-4 NIV) If "no corruption" distinguishes him from the others, we can assume that corruption could be found in those who sought to get rid of him.

These men sound very much like the Pharisees who plotted to get rid of Jesus. Filled with corruption (Matthew 23), the Pharisees could find no fault in Jesus, and it made them furious. Jesus said, "Everyone who does evil things hates the light. They will not come into the light. They are afraid that what they do will be seen. But anyone who lives by the truth comes into the light. He does this so that it will be easy to see that what he has done is with God's help." (John 3:20-21) Like the Pharisees, these leaders plotted in secret to get rid of the innocent man (Psalm 64).



Application: People who do what's wrong don't usually like people who do what's right! (John 3:20) When you stand up for the right thing, you will almost always have to face people who will be mean to you (John 15:20). For example, if you refuse to cheat on a test, or take an extra cookie from the lunch line when the cafeteria worker isn't looking, you may be teased by those who are doing it themselves. Isn't it strange that the ones who break the rules are the ones who tease those who don't? When this happens, remember that you are in GREAT company. It happened to men like Noah, Moses, and Daniel. And it happened to Jesus.

Say: Daniel did everything in the right way. He didn't cheat, lie, or steal. He was respectful and wise. The other leaders could not find anything that he did wrong. They knew they would have to set a trap for Him. They how knew faithful Daniel was to obeying God. They used this for their trap!

So the two leaders and the royal rulers went as a group to the king. They said, "King Darius, may you live forever! All of the royal leaders, high officials, royal rulers, advisers and governors want to make a suggestion. We've agreed that you should give an order. And you should make sure it's obeyed. Here is the command you should give. King Darius, **during the next 30 days don't let any of your people pray to any god or man except to you.** If they do, throw them into the lions' den.



"Now give the order. Write it down in the laws of the Medes and Persians. Then it can't be changed." So King Darius put the order in writing. - Daniel 6:6-9

Teacher: Show your scroll. Explain that it would have been passed out to every state. 2

DANIEL OBEYS GOD, NOT MEN (Daniel 6:10)

Say: Now we'll see why the leaders came up with this plan. Daniel had a wonderful habit of praying to the Lord three times a day. He didn't pray just anywhere. He had a special place to pray. He went upstairs in his house, and he prayed at the window that faced his homeland, the city of Jerusalem. This may seem a little strange. After all, we can pray anywhere, anytime. But Daniel had a really good reason for praying this way.



Way back, many years before Daniel was even born, King Solomon prayed a special prayer to the Lord, in front of all of the Israelites. He prayed in front of the Temple in **Jerusalem**. He praised God and asked God's blessings over the people. Solomon knew that Moses had prophesied that one day the Israelites would turn from God and would be kidnapped and taken to a foreign land (Deuteronomy 28:36). Solomon prayed for that time:

*"But suppose Your people change their ways in the land where they are held as prisoners. They turn away from their sins. They beg You to help them in the land where they are prisoners. They say, 'We have sinned. We've done what is wrong. We've done what is evil.'...There they pray toward the land You gave their people long ago. They pray **toward the city** You have chosen. And they pray **toward the temple** I've built for Your Name. Then listen to them from heaven. It's the place where you live. Listen to their prayer. Listen to them when they ask you to show them your favor. Stand up for them...Please forgive them. - 2 Chronicles 6:36-39*

Say: Daniel was one of the faithful few who prayed toward the Temple in Jerusalem the way King Solomon instructed. Daniel was asking God for help (Daniel 6:11). He asked God to forgive His people for turning away from Him. And Daniel did not hide his prayer. He prayed where others could see him. He did this because he was not ashamed to pray to the one true God. Perhaps as a leader of his people, he also wanted to set an example for his fellow Israelites that they, too, should pray toward Jerusalem and ask God's forgiveness.

Daniel's Choices:

- pray to King Darius,
- stop praying for 30 days,
- pray to God secretly, or
- continue to pray toward Jerusalem as he always had.

After Daniel heard the King's order that no one could pray unless they prayed to King Darius, he had a choice to make.

- He could pray to King Darius,
- He could stop praying for 30 days,
- He could pray to God secretly, or
- He could continue to pray at his window as he always had.

Ask: Who would like to read Daniel 6:10 nice and loud so we can find out what Daniel chose to do? **Choose a volunteer to read aloud.** **Say:** Daniel continued to pray just as he had every single day. Daniel was not trying to defy the King, but the King's order was directly opposed to what He knew God wanted - His people, remembering His promises, praying to Him and seeking His forgiveness. Daniel would not spend one day without praying to His Lord. But he would not pray in secret. He would let everyone know that He depended on God every day, even if it meant facing a den full of hungry lions.

Say: The men who set this trap for Daniel were clever, in a very bad way. They knew that they were setting a law that was against what God wanted. They knew that Daniel would either have to disobey the King or disobey God (Psalm 64:2-6).



Application: Daniel chose to obey God, not men. Daniel did what was right even when the man in authority over him ordered that he do what was wrong. You may have times of decision like Daniel. For example, you might go to a friend's house to watch a movie. His or her parents may rent a movie that you know your parents would not allow you to watch. God's word says to obey your parents. Your friend's parents may say it's no big deal. They won't tell your parents. What should you do? *Listen for answers.* **Say:** Choose to obey God, and let Him take care of the rest!

DANIEL FACES THE LIONS (Daniel 6:11-15)



Say: The sneaky trap-setters waited for Daniel to pray at his window, then they went to the King to “tattle” on him. But before they mentioned Daniel’s name, they said, “O King, didn’t you make an unchangeable law that no one can pray to anyone but you for 30 days? If someone breaks that law, won’t he be thrown into a den of hungry lions?” Of course, the King agreed.

Then they spoke to the king again. They said, "Daniel is one of the prisoners from Judah. He doesn't pay any attention to you, King Darius. He doesn't obey the order you put in writing. He still prays to his God three times a day."



When the King heard that, he was very upset. He didn't want Daniel to be harmed in any way. Until sunset, he did everything he could to save him. - Daniel 6:13-14

Say: Poor King Darius was in a mess! Daniel was the best, the wisest, and the most honest man in the whole kingdom. King Darius really liked Daniel, and now he would have to throw him to the lions! The King tried to think of any way to get out of this terrible situation, but there was no way. The men reminded him that once a law was passed, it could not be changed. Because of his own law, Darius was now powerless to rescue Daniel.



King Darius wasn’t a bad guy. He never wanted to harm Daniel. The trouble was that he listened to men who had evil intentions. He did not think through the law that he passed. Just imagine how different things would have been if he had prayed and asked what God thought about the law!

Application: You must be very careful whom you listen to! It is great to have friends of all kinds - both believers and non-believers. You should have friends who are not believers, so that you can share God’s love and truth with them. But you should not be influenced by people who do not know God’s truth, as King Darius was. If you are ever unsure whether a friend’s advice honors God and brings His blessings, look into God’s word.

GOD RESCUES DANIEL (Daniel 6:16-28)



"May your God, whom you serve so faithfully, rescue you."

So at last the king gave orders for Daniel to be arrested and thrown into the den of lions. The king said to him, "May your God, whom you serve so faithfully, rescue you."

A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den. The King sealed the stone with his own royal seal and the seals of his nobles, so that no one could rescue Daniel. Then the King returned to his palace and spent the night fasting. He refused his usual entertainment and couldn't sleep at all that night. - Daniel 6:16-18 NLT

Say: King Darius knew that Daniel’s fate was no longer in his hands. Daniel was well known for his faithfulness to the Lord, and King Darius encouraged Daniel by saying, “May your God rescue you.” No doubt Darius had heard the stories of how God rescued Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego from the fiery furnace. The King spent a sleepless night, staring out his window, waiting for daybreak.

As soon as the sun began to rise, the King got up. He hurried to the lions' den. When he got near it, he called out to Daniel. His voice was filled with great concern. He said, "Daniel! You serve the living God. You always serve Him faithfully. So has He been able to save you from the lions?"



Daniel answered, "My king, may you live forever! My God sent His angel. And His angel shut the mouths of the lions. They haven't hurt me at all. That's because I haven't done anything wrong in God's sight. I've never done anything wrong to you either, my King."

The King was filled with joy. He ordered his servants to lift Daniel out of the den. So they did. They didn't see any wounds on him. That's because he had trusted in his God. - Daniel 6:19-23

Say: Wow, this seemed like an impossible situation! There was nothing that Daniel could do, nor was there anything that the King could do. But God can do ANYTHING! The Bible tells us, "The things that are impossible with people are possible with God." (Luke 18:27 NASV) God had a rescue plan for Daniel. He sent His angel to shut the mouths of the lions! Don't you wish there were video cameras back then? I would LOVE to see what that looked like! This may have been the same angel that stepped into the fiery furnace with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.



Then King Darius gave another order. It was about those evil men who tricked the King into making the bad law. **Ask:** What do you think was a fair punishment for these men? **Listen for answers.** **Say:** They were thrown into the lion's den. These men did not trust in God, and they were crushed by the lions.



King Darius then sent this message to all people of every nation and race in the world: "Greetings to all of you! I command everyone in my kingdom to worship and honor the God of Daniel. He is the living God, the One who lives forever. His power and His kingdom will never end. He rescues people and sets them free by working great miracles. Daniel's God has rescued him from the power of the lions."

All went well for Daniel while Darius was king, and even when Cyrus the Persian ruled. - Daniel 6:25-28 CEV

Say: Here we have another non-Israelite King praising the name of the one true Lord. God's plan is incredible, and because Daniel trusted God, he was right in the middle of God's plan and God's blessings!

Application: Time and time again in the Bible, we see that God rescues His people. He rescued Noah and his family from the flood, He rescued Moses from the Nile River, He rescued the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, He rescued Daniel's three friends from the raging furnace, and He rescued Daniel from a pride of hungry lions. God is ABLE to rescue, because there is nothing that God cannot do. And He is WILLING to rescue, because He is so good and He loves us so much. God is happy to show people that He is a Rescuer (Exodus 10:1-2, 11:9).

God's rescues from fire, flood, famine, war, and even wild beasts are AMAZING! But the **greatest** rescue that God offers is the rescue from our own sin. Our sin brings death and punishment. Our sin separates us from God forever. But God is ABLE to rescue you. He sent His perfect Son to become the sacrifice that is ABLE to take away your sin. And God is WILLING to rescue you because He is so good. He loves you and wants you to be with Him forever. When you place your trust in Jesus, God's rescue plan, you will be saved from the punishment of your sin.

If you have been rescued, won't you tell others about God, the Rescuer? Tell them that God is ABLE and WILLING to rescue them.

PPT Key Verse

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PPT Main Point

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By Decree of King Darius:

For 30 days
no one shall pray
to any god or
man except
King Darius.

Or else, be
thrown into the
Lion's Den!

