

***The Prophet Daniel Play* by Shawn Cunningham**

Cast

Narrator/Town Crier	Crowd extras
Nebuchadnezzar	Darius (act III)
Wise Guy 1	Hananiah AKA Shadrach
Wise Guy 2	Azariah AKA Mishach
Wise Guy 3	Mishael AKA Abednego
Daniel	Arioch
Angel (no lines)	Furnace Guards Lions/Flames
Lions (kids holding toy lions and cats)	

Note: This script in its entirety is rather long. The director may decide that after the Introduction the performance will continue with Act I or, if preferable for length, jump to Act II.

Costumes and Props: Students could find pictures of Kings Nebuchadnezzar and Darius, and create costumes, beards, headdresses based on what they find. Costumes for other characters are up to the director and players.

The script calls for some characters to age as the play goes on. Grayer beards, age lines on the faces, slower pace of walking or speech, walking sticks etc. could suggest this. Other needed items are:

- Scrolls for narrator and Daniel. Director may want to copy out some of the longer speeches which will be read from scrolls. These speeches could be written on separate sheets and attached to scrolls, as needed, with removable tape.
- Sword for King Darius.
- “Gold” animal figure of some kind to represent idol.
- Musical instruments (any kinds students can play) or else toy versions of whistles, horns, bells, stringed instruments etc.
- Toy lions and cats, as noted in “Cast” listing above, for lion characters to hold. They might also have fur hats, animal-pattern mittens or gloves, painted whiskers, stiff paper tails.
- Groucho Marx glasses (if desired) for Third Wise Guy in one scene.
- Large open box with flames painted on sides, or perhaps made from construction paper and attached to the box, to represent fiery furnace.

Preparatory Notes: To make the play go smoothly, director and players should familiarize themselves with the pronunciations of various names in the play.

To become familiar in advance with the outlines of the Biblical history that the play will present, older students can read the account of Daniel, with Biblical references, on the OCA website. (See oca.org/saints/lives/2013/12/17/103559-prophet-daniel.) Younger students can read, with guidance, the somewhat abbreviated version that follows here. For both groups, you might want to find or have them find icons of Daniel online. Studying these, and identifying events and people, can enhance the reading.

For younger students:

Prophets are people who give God's messages to the world. Because they love God and pray, He trusts them to tell the world about His love, His plans, and His rules for the world He created.

One of the great prophets is Daniel. We know about him from the book of the Old Testament, the first part of the Bible, that is named for him.

The Babylonians, many centuries ago, conquered the city of Jerusalem and destroyed the great Temple. Some captives were taken to Babylonia, including the boy Daniel and his three friends. Their names were Ananias, Misael and Azarias.

In Babylon, King Nebuchadnezzar ordered that the four handsome boys be given fine clothing and royal food and wine, so that they would look good and healthy when they stood by his throne. He gave them Babylonian names. Daniel was Baltasar, Ananias was Shadrach, Misael was Mishac, and Azarias was Abednego.

Daniel and his friends, being good Jews who followed the Law of God, didn't want the rich Babylonian food. Daniel said to the royal servant who took care of them, "Please, let us eat only vegetables and drink only water."

The servant was worried. He said, "But if you get sick, the king will be angry with me." He agreed to let them have their simple meals for just ten days. After ten days, the boys looked wonderfully healthy and strong. King Nebuchadnezzar was very happy.

God gave Daniel great wisdom, and made him able to tell the king the meaning of his disturbing dreams. None of the royal magicians or stargazers had been able to do that, so Daniel became the king's closest advisor.

The king did a terrible thing. He had a huge gold statue made. Then he gave an order: "When the people hear the sound of horns, harps, bagpipes and other music they must fall down and worship the golden statue!" Ananias, Misael and Azarias refused, so the king had them thrown into a fiery furnace. It was so hot that the Babylonians could not come near it. But the angel of the Lord came into the furnace and cooled the flames. The three young men walked around in the furnace, praying and praising God. They were not hurt by the fire. When King Nebuchadnezzar saw this, he released the young men and worshipped the true God of Israel.

Many years later, the Babylonian Empire was conquered, as Daniel said it would be. Darius, the king of Persia who conquered Babylonia, respected Daniel and his friends. But jealous servants told the king that the four men still prayed to their God every day, even though Darius wanted people to pray only to him. So Darius had Daniel thrown into a den of hungry lions.

When Darius saw that the lions didn't hurt Daniel, he believed in the true God who had saved His prophet. Darius said, "He is the living God. His kingdom is forever, and shall not be destroyed."

Daniel and his friends never returned home to Israel. But Daniel always trusted God, and prayed for his people. He had wonderful visions of the Kingdom which would come one day—the Kingdom of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (end)

About the author: Shawn Cunningham is a member of St. Nicholas Orthodox Church in Mentor, Ohio. He and his wife Jenny have two daughters. Shawn develops and teaches software training classes, and is active in the parish as a church school teacher. He offers a play each year for the parish's feast day. You can see more of

Shawn's plays at BigCreekPress.com. We thank him for sharing his talent with all our church schools and parishes.

The Play:

INTRODUCTION

NARRATOR/ TOWN CRIER: Welcome to the play of Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. *(At times the narrator will look down at his or her scroll, oon which some of the longer speeches can be written out.)*

Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might.

He changes times and seasons

He removes kings and sets up kings (Dn. 2:20)

(Changing to a more conversational and informal tone): Speaking of Kings, here comes Nebuchadnezzar now. This King is the King of Babylon. Babylon has captured may Israelites and they are used like slaves. Daniel and his friends Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah are some these captives.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR: *(enters scurrying around and looking troubled)* I am the king am I not? And being the king, I should never feel bad. Oh, what to do, what to do, what to do? I need some counsel. *(Calling out)* Oh Wise Men, present yourselves.

(Wise men/guys enter.)

WISE GUY 1: You called us?

WISE GUY 2: You summoned us?

WISE GUY 3: You beckoned us?

NEBUCHADNEZZAR: No, Actually I called for wise MEN, but I guess you wise GUYS will have to do.

WISE GUY 1: Ha ha ha, you are so funny.

WISE GUY 2: Heh heh heh, you are so punny.

WISE GUY 3: Ho ho ho, your wit is cunning.

WISE GUY 1: We have come to do your bidding.

WISE GUY 2: Your will is our life-- it is only fitting.

WISE GUY 3: So speak with us, Sir, and stop your kidding.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR: You have helped me already. You see, I had some worries of a ... Royal nature, but when I see you I realize my royal pains are nothing. I have problems royally bigger than a few bad dreams.

(Wise Guys do not understand Nebuchadnezzar's point)

WISE GUY 1: So... we can go?

WISE GUY 2: I'm late for a show.

WISE GUY 3: Can I have my dough?

NEBUCHADNEZZAR: What have I done to deserve this?

WISE GUY 1: What has he done?

WISE GUY 2: What has he done?

WISE GUY 3: What has he done?

WISE GUY 1: Hmm. (humming in thought. These 3 hums can build a chord.)

WISE GUY 2: Hummmmm...

WISE GUY 3: Ummmmm....

WISE GUY 1: You took the Israelites from their lands.

WISE GUY 2: And make them toil in the sands.

WISE GUY 3: And laugh at blisters on their hands.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR: (*enraged*) WHAT?

WISE GUY 1: (*fearfully*) I mean you made the Hebrews very welcome.

WISE GUY 2: And you give them food and jobs and then some.

WISE GUY 3: And they, you know, are very gladsome.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR: Hummmmm. Much better.

END OF INTRODUCTION (but everyone stays onstage) PLAY CAN NOW CONTINUE WITH ACT I, OR SKIP ACT I AND GO TO ACT II

ACT I: THE DREAM

NEBUCHADNEZZAR: I have called for your counsel because I have had some terrible dreams and I want you to help me understand them.

WISE GUY 1: Dreams can be sweet.

WISE GUY 2: Dreams can be neat.

WISE GUY 3: Dreams can shatter your very feet. (*All glare at Wise Guy 3; his rhyme is so silly*)

WISE GUY 1: Tell us your tale.

WISE GUY 2: In complete detail.

WISE GUY 3: Our interpretation can't fail.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR: No, no, no. If you are true fortune tellers, you can first tell me what I dreamed and then tell the meaning of my dream. If you cannot begin by repeating my dream, I won't know if you are soothsayers or just liars.

WISE GUY 1: Please tell us your dream.

WISE GUY 2: And we'll say what it means.

WISE GUY 3: Or at least how it seems.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR: Oh no, stop begging. I know your game. I am firm on this point. If you can't tell me both the dream AND what it means, I won't believe you.

WISE GUY 1: No sorcerer, wise guy or Chaldean has ever been asked this.

WISE GUY 2: We cannot fulfill this wish.

WISE GUY 3: Do not think us remiss.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR: Don't worry, my little rhymers. I won't think badly of you. I will not think of you at all after I have you killed. In fact, I will have all the wise men in my whole Kingdom destroyed if none of you can do what I want!

(Speaks to Narrator.) You! Announce to my whole kingdom that all Wise Guys, sages, sorcerers, Chaldeans, wizards, witches, fortune tellers, mind readers, et cetera, et cetera et cetera, are going to be killed due to incompetence.

NARRATOR: *(pretends to write on scroll; mumbles to self while writing)* Good King Nebuchadnezzar has declared that all Wise Guys, sages, sorcerers, Chaldeans, wizards, witches, fortune tellers, mind readers, et cetera, et cetera et cetera, must be killed.

Yes, yes. Right away, King Nebuchadnezzar.

(Faces audience. Holds scroll and shouts like a town crier to the right side of the house, as Nebuchadnezzar and others exit): Good King Nebuchadnezzar has declared that all Wise Guys, sages, sorcerers, Chaldeans, wizards, witches, fortune tellers, mind readers, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera, must be killed.

(Faces audience on left side of the house): Good King Nebuchadnezzar has declared that all Wise Guys, sages, sorcerers, Chaldeans, wizards, witches, fortune tellers, mind readers, et cetera, et cetera et cetera, must be killed.

(Faces audience in middle of the house): Good King Nebuchadnezzar has declared that all Wise Guys, sages, sorcerers, Chaldeans, wizards, witches, fortune tellers, mind readers, et cetera, et cetera et cetera, must be killed.

(Drops town crier voice and speaks to whole audience): Now, dear audience, remember that this play is about Daniel and the three Holy Youths, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. The Babylonians renamed Daniel Belteshazzar. Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were renamed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These four men were given great wisdom by the LORD our God, and even old Nebuchadnezzar could see this, so he made these four special men part of his group of wise men. Well, you just heard that the king declared that ALL the wise men would be destroyed, so this included our four young Israelites.

(Enter Daniel; Narrator addresses him): Daniel, it is good to see you. I know you need to hear what I am about to say. *(Opens scroll again and proclaims):* Good King Nebuchadnezzar has declared that all wise men, and wise guys, sages, sorcerers, Chaldeans, wizards, witches, fortune tellers, mind readers, et cetera, et cetera et cetera, must be killed. Good King Nebuchadnezzar has declared that all wise men, and wise guys, sages, sorcerers, Chaldeans, wizards, witches, fortune tellers, mind readers, et cetera...*(his voice fades as he strolls to stage left; he freezes there. Enter Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.)*

DANIEL *(greeting his three friends):* Glory to God!

HANANIAH, MISHAEL AND AZARIAH: Glory Forever!

DANIEL: Friends, we have some trouble on our hands. It seems that the king is going to kill all the wise men and wise guys, including us, unless someone can tell the king his secret dream AND the interpretation. So we must all pray and seek mercy from God.

HANANIAH: Is the king ever going to realize that he only has power because the LORD our God lets him have it?

MISHAEL: He'd better figure it out soon, or the LORD our God is going to let him have it.

AZARIAH: Yep. If old Nebby doesn't shape up soon, I'm afraid he's going to GET IT.

They pray PSALM 134 as follows:

HANANIAH: Come, bless the LORD, all you servants of the LORD

AZARIAH: Who stand by night in the house of the LORD

MISHAEL: Lift up your hands to the holy place, and bless the LORD!

DANIEL: May the LORD bless you from Zion, he who made heaven and earth!

(They lie down to sleep. As they sleep an Angel enters, wakes up Daniel, whispers in his ear and hands him a scroll)

NARRATOR: In the morning Daniel went to talk to Arioch, the man responsible for killing all the Wise Guys. *(Daniel's friends remain lying down on stage)*

DANIEL: Arioch, hello. Do not destroy all of us wise men and wise guys. Let me speak with the king and I will tell him his dream AND its interpretation.

ARIOCH: OK. *(shouts offstage)* King Nebuchadnezzar, Belteshazzar needs to have a word with you. *(Nebuchadnezzar enters)*

NEBUCHADNEZZAR: *(enters)* Yes, what is it?

DANIEL: I know your dream and the interpretation. It's a bit long, so I'm going to use this scroll.

(Reads Daniel 2:31-45)

"You looked, O king, and there before you stood a large statue--an enormous, dazzling statue, awesome in appearance. The head of the statue was made of pure gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of

bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of baked clay. While you were watching, a rock was cut out, but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were broken to pieces at the same time and became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth.

"This was the dream, and now I will interpret it to you, O king. You, O king, are the king of kings. The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory; in your hands he has placed mankind and the beasts of the field and the birds of the air. Wherever they live, he has made you ruler over them all. You are that head of gold.

"After you, another kingdom will rise, inferior to yours. Next, a third kingdom, one of bronze, will rule over the whole earth. Finally, there will be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron--for iron breaks and smashes everything--and as iron breaks things to pieces, so it will crush and break all the others. Just as you saw that the feet and toes were partly of baked clay and partly of iron, so this will be a divided kingdom; yet it will have some of the strength of iron in it, even as you saw iron mixed with clay.

"In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever. This is the meaning of the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands--a rock that broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold to pieces.

"The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and the interpretation is trustworthy."

NEBUCHADNEZZAR: You have been able to reveal this mystery. *(He prostrates before Daniel and rises.)*
Wise Belteshazzar, truly your God is the most powerful God.

AZARIAH: And He is the ONLY God.

MISHAEL: *(sitting up)* These pagan kings never understand that.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR: Belteshazzar, I am going to make you the manager of all my lands. You are now the head of all my WISE GUYS.

DANIEL: Thank you, king. As my first official duty I would like to make my friends whom you call Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego the business managers of all the lands.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR: It is done. Boys, you are promoted.

If you have chosen to end your production here, end as follows:

NEBUCHADNEZZAR: All hail the God of Israel. *(Everyone cheers)*

The End.

(If continuing to Act II or Act III, skip the preceding line and go on to the following line:

NEBUCHADNEZZAR: Well, now finally I can get some rest *(exits)*

NARRATOR: The king did get some rest, but eventually he forgot about the greatness of the God of Israel, and went back to his pagan ways.

(*NEBUCHADNEZZAR reenters. To indicate the passage of time, his beard, hair or costume might be changed*)

ACT II: THE GOLDEN STATUE

(*In this scene, if any of the actors or actresses play band instruments, try to assemble a small band. Keep the band small because some people also need to bow down to the idol. The first showing of this play was near Christmas. The golden statue was a spray-painted reindeer lawn ornament, and a single saxophone band played a simple version of "Rudolph" while some younger kids shook maracas and tambourines*)

NEBUCHADNEZZAR: Since I am a pagan king, it's high time I created a new god. Oh, Wise Guys, come here. (*WISE GUYS enter.*) I'm going to have a golden statue built and put it in the plain at Dura. Then I'll have musicians hoot and toot on all kinds of instruments, and this will be a signal to my people that they should bow down and worship this new god.

NARRATOR: Well, the king did all that, and then some. Listen to this new announcement I have to deliver:

Hear ye, Hear ye, all peoples. When you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, the (list band instruments) tambourine, and every kind of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. If you do not follow this order, you will be thrown into the fiery furnace.

Hey, look, here it comes now.

(*WISE GUYS enter pulling the golden statue to center stage*)

WISE GUY 1: To this you must bow when you hear the horn wail.

WISE GUY 2: When you hear the tunes, this statue you must hail.

WISE GUY 3: The will of the king must truly prevail

WISE GUY 1: Now let's watch out for a slacker.

WISE GUY 2: (*marching down right places hand on brow*) I'll be the head tracker.

WISE GUY 3: (*marching down left*) And I'll be the catcher. (*Makes snatching motion in the air*)

(*Crowd, including Narrator, enters. Some are holding instruments. Narrator goes downstage center to talk directly to audience*)

NARRATOR: Well, the musicians brought out the instruments, and soon we all heard the sound of the horn, pipe, the (band instruments) tambourine, and every kind of music. (*Instruments are played.*) And most of the people fell down to worship the fake god made of gold, but the holy men devoted to the one true God, known as Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, did not fall down and worship the false god.

(*Music, crowd members prostrate themselves, but the 3 youths literally stand out in the crowd as they do not prostrate*)

WISE GUY 1: *(to the holy youths)* Is this something I've dreamt?

WISE GUY 2: Do you think you're exempt?

WISE GUY 3: We are filled with contempt.

WISE GUY 1: You stand out in this crowd,

WISE GUY 2: And seem quite proud,

WISE GUY 3: This is not allowed.

HANANIAH: But we have a law that we must follow.

MISHAEL: The LORD is our God and we must not have strange gods before Him.

AZARIAH: And that golden thing is really, really strange.

WISE GUY 1: We'll see about that!

WISE GUY 2: To the king we will rat!

WISE GUY 3: You'll be squashed like a gnat!

(They walk across the stage to the king)

WISE GUY 1: Oh King Nebuchadnezzar

WISE GUY 2: Oh you the great repressor

WISE GUY 3: It is us, your Wise Guys the lesser.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR: What is it?

WISE GUY 1: Oh king, we need to talk about the exiles

WISE GUY 2: We tried to make them bow, but it was futile *(pronounce with long "i" to rhyme with "exiles")*

WISE GUY 3: They really have no style.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR: *(furious and shouting)* They don't bow to my god????

WISE GUY 1: No.

WISE GUY 2: Oh.

WISE GUY 3: Whoa!

NEBUCHADNEZZAR: *(shouting)* Well, stoke up the furnace 7 times hotter than it usually is. Tie them up and throw them in.

WISE GUY 1: Ow!

WISE GUY 2: Wow!

WISE GUY 3: Ciao (chow)

(They exit)

(Bring furnace onstage. It can be a large open box with no lid and flames painted on sides. Two guards lead out the holy youths.)

GUARD 1: Is it hotter than usual?

GUARD 2: Yep. I'd say 7 times hotter.

(Angel enters stage left but the guards do not notice him or her. The guards take the 3 youths, and push them into the center of the flames. The angel walks into the fire with the 3 youths)

GUARD 1: This fire is really, really hot. AHHHHH *(falls down dead.)*

GUARD 2: AHHHHHHHH *(falls down dead)*

HOLY YOUTHS: *(from the furnace the youths sing out- maybe in choir format)*

Blessed are you, O Lord, God of our fathers, and worthy of praise, and your name is glorified forever.

Let all who do harm to your servants be put to shame, let them be disgraced and deprived of all power and dominion, and let their strength be broken. Let them know that You are the Lord, the only God, glorious over the whole world.

HANANIAH: Do you feel what I feel?

MISHAEL: Yes, I feel a moist wind surrounding me and protecting me from the fire.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR: Look in there. We put in three people, but I see four, and one of them looks like he must be a son of the gods. All four of them are just walking around as if they don't feel any heat at all. *(Calls to the three in the furnace):* Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, come out from there.

(They come out, and Wise Guys and king look them over.)

WISE GUY 1: They're OK.

WISE GUY 2: It's as you say.

WISE GUY 3: What a weird day!

NEBUCHADNEZZAR: Not a hair of their head is burnt and they don't even smell like smoke. I now make a decree. If anyone speaks badly about the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, he shall be torn limb from limb, and his house will be smashed. No other god can do the things that their God does.

WISE GUY 1: Especially your statue of Gold.

WISE GUY 2: That you popped out of a mold.

WISE GUY 3: So much for our gods of old.

If ending the play here, close with the following:

NEBUCHADNEZZAR: All hail the God of Israel!

(Everyone cheers.) The End.

If continuing to Act III, everyone but Narrator exits.

ACT III: DARIUS

NARRATOR: Well, Nebuchadnezzar died a short time after recovering from a severe bout of insanity that forced him to live in a field and eat grass. And his son, Belshazzar, came to rule. This king, however, saw the writing on the wall and was quickly thrown out by Darius who invaded and took over. *(Darius comes in. He could be dressed in a nice suit like a businessman.)*

DARIUS: I am Darius the Mede, and I am in charge now. What kind of a kingdom do we have here? Let me check out the royal council. Oh, Wise Guys, present yourselves.

(Enter the 3 rhyming Wise Guys. Enter Daniel, Hananiah, Azariah, Mishael. They might now have beards to indicate passage of time.)

DARIUS: (to the Narrator) Who are you? I've seen you loitering around here.

NARRATOR: King Darius, I am the news and propaganda voice. You really need me.

DARIUS: OK, fine. *(Addresses Wise Guys)* What kind of organization do we have here? How is the council structured?

WISE GUY 1: Good Darius, live forever!

WISE GUY 2: May your head and neck be never severed.

WISE GUY 3: And your Wise Guys always clever.

WISE GUY 1: Belshazzar whom you smashed,

WISE GUY 2: Had a plan of amazing panache,

WISE GUY 3: And it, you know, could not be surpassed.

DARIUS: His plan could not be surpassed? I am Darius the Mede, and I am in charge now. I think my plan has already surpassed his plan. *(Raises sword)* Don't you agree?

WISE GUY1: Since I first met you I have agreed!

WISE GUY2: You are Darius the Mede!

WISE GUY3: Please, oh please, don't make us bleed.

DARIUS: Good answers. Now tell me how your last king organized things. How did he make decisions?

WISE GUY 1: Well, you see, we have this committee

WISE GUY 2: That forms oversight committees

WISE GUY 3: To order sub-committees

WISE GUY 1: We talk and talk, you see

WISE GUY 2: And then drink many cups of tea

WISE GUY 3: And wait for a royal decree

DARIUS: So you just waste time until someone takes charge?

DANIEL: That pretty much sums it up.

DARIUS: *(To Daniel)* What is your name?

DANIEL: Daniel.

DARIUS: I am Darius the Mede and now I am...

WISE GUYS: *(in unison)* In charge!

DARIUS: You catch on quickly. *(Raises sword over his head.)* It's time to re-organize you. *(Wise Guys cower. Darius walks around dramatically for a few seconds and then puts sword on the ground. Wise Guys sigh in relief when they realize the sword is not for their heads)*

DARIUS: You will be part of my team of sycophant minions out there acting as Wise Guys and minor governors. I will have 120 of them. They are called satraps. Now, I'm going to set 3 Presidents over them.

WISE GUY 1: I was waiting for this moment.

WISE GUY 2: I'll get my new appointment

WISE GUY 3: This job is Heaven-Sent!

DARIUS: Not so fast. *(Walks up to the third Wise Guy)* I don't like you. You're fired. *(Turns to Daniel)* Daniel, you're in. Boys, meet your new director, Daniel. *(3rd Wise Guy scowls and exits)* And remember, I am Darius the Mede and I am...

WISE GUY 1 AND 2: In charge! *(Daniel rolls his eyes and shakes his head at the Wise Guys. Darius nods and stands in the position of someone powerful and in charge.)*

WISE GUY 1: So we have a new architecture?

WISE GUY 2: Yes, we have a new director.

WISE GUY 3: *(Enters wearing Groucho Marx glasses)* And Daniel is the inspector.

DARIUS: OK, guys, now get to work. *(Darius and Daniel exit by opposite sides of the stage. Wise Guys remain.)*

WISE GUY 1: This must be stopped.

WISE GUY 2: This must be chopped.

WISE GUY 3: His bubble must be popped.

WISE GUY 1: We will stop this Dan.

WISE GUY 2: And take back our land.

WISE GUY 3: I've got a plan!

WISE GUY 1: Do tell

WISE GUY 2: Speak well.

WISE GUY 3: Daniel we SHALL quell.

WISE GUY 3: We get Darius to make an edict.

That only He will be worshipped.

Daniel will fail, I predict.

(All Wise Guys do high-fives and cheer "Oh yeah!" Darius enters)

WISE GUY 1: Good king, you don't get enough credit.

WISE GUY 2: Your image needs a small edit.

WISE GUY 3: Here is our plan and you may have it.

WISE GUY 1: For the next thirty days

WISE GUY 2: Only you will be praised.

WISE GUY 3: No prayers to other gods can be raised.

WISE GUY 1: No prayers about Zion

WISE GUY 2: Law breakers to the Lions.

WISE GUY 3: And tolerate no crying!

DARIUS: That is a great plan. I love it. *(To Wise Guy 3, still in the Groucho glasses)* You look familiar, but I just can't place you. *(To Narrator)* You are the town crier, right? Take this and announce it across this entire kingdom. *(Hands him scroll.)*

NARRATOR: *(looks over scroll)* Wow. Hmmm. Well Ok.

NARRATOR: Let it be known throughout the lands that Darius the Mede is in charge, and to prove just how awesome he is, he has decreed a new order. He will be the only one worshipped for the next 30 days. I repeat that order, the King Darius will be the only one worshipped for 30 days. *(Now speaks as if in a TV commercial)* That order, one more time is: Only worship the king for the next 30 days. No idols, statues, deities minor nor major, no sun, moon, stars, or other natural phenomena, and no gods of other lands-- particularly that God of Israel--will be worshipped. Punishment for breaking this is law thus: You will feed one meal to the lions

WISE GUY 1: That' not quite right.

WISE GUY 2: Do you have problems with sight?

WISE GUY 3: Here, let me recite.

NARRATOR: (hands over the scroll) here you go.

WISE GUY 2: (reading) blah, blah, blah, blah. hmmm. bla blaataah. Here it is. You will BE one meal to the lions not you will Feed one meal to the lions. Nice try.

NARRATOR: Can't blame me for trying.

DANIEL: We'll see about that!

(All exit but Daniel. Hananiah, Azariah, Mishael enter)

HANANIAH: Daniel, have you heard that we are not allowed to worship our true God anymore?

DANIEL: I heard that Darius does not want us to pray, but God is all-powerful, and God will be praised. I am not afraid of Darius because I will do what God wants me to do.

(Daniel hold his hands outstretched in prayer and prays chanting from Psalm 91, as follows:)

He who lives by the help of the Most High
will pass the night in the protection of the God of Heaven.
I will say to the Lord, "You are my protector and my refuge, my
God, and in You I will hope."
For He will deliver you from the trap of the hunters
and from the deadly disease.

AZARIAH: Daniel, you are very brave.

(3 Wise Guys come in to snoop but are unnoticed by Daniel and others)

DANIEL: Do you remember how powerful the one true God of Israel is? I have no fears.

MISHAEL: Yes, He protected us in the furnace.

HANANIAH: (like a cheer) No Fears!

AZARIAH: No Fears!

MISHAEL: No Fears!

DANIEL: No Fears!

DANIEL: *(Continues from Psalm 91, but in a quieter voice so the Wise Guys can be heard over him. The Wise Guy lines overlap the psalm verses.)*

For You, Lord, are my hope;
You made the Most High Your refuge.
No evils will come to you,
and no scourge will come near your dwelling.
For He will command His angels regarding you
to guard you in all your ways.
They will lift you on their hands,

lest you strike your foot against a stone.
You will step on the asp and the adder;
the lion and the serpent you will trample underfoot.

WISE GUY 1: Your time on top has passed.

WISE GUY 2: You silly enthusiast!

WISE GUY 3: We've got you at last!

(They run off and return with Darius.)

WISE GUY 1: Here is your proof.

WISE GUY 2: This is no spoof.

WISE GUY 3: Just Daniel's big goof.

DARIUS: *(interrupting the psalm)* Daniel!

DANIEL: *(with a robust and cheerful spirit)* Hello, Good King, and how are you today?

DARIUS: Daniel, you know the laws here and you're breaking them. You disappoint me. I love you and I hate to do this, but you've forced me to make an example of you. Off to the lions' den!

NARRATOR: Well, things didn't look too good for Daniel. This king had a big underground pit full of lions and when he wanted to get rid of someone, he just put the poor person in. *(Lions enter and circle around the narrator.)* Daniel was off to the lions' den. *(Looks around at lions)* and I'm getting out of here.

(Enter Darius and Wise Guys, who are holding Daniel's arms. The lions stay in a group to one side. The Wise Guys push Daniel toward the lions. He stands in the middle of the group of lions, which are on all fours. They make motions as if licking him and gently patting him with their paws, and look at him with curiosity.)

DANIEL: Just so you know, Darius, I have no fear of this. God is more powerful than those lions. *(Lions lie down to sleep. Daniel, standing, and lions, sleeping, freeze in position.)*

NARRATOR: Well, the night passed and Darius got almost no sleep. He really loved Daniel and didn't want to put him in the lions' den but he knew he had been tricked by the Wise Guys and did not want to look like a weak leader. In the morning Darius rushed to the den to see what was left of Daniel.

DARIUS: *(nervously)* Urn... Hello?

DANIEL: *(joyfully)* Hello!

DARIUS: Why, Daniel, you're still alive?

DANIEL: Good King, live forever! God has saved me from the lions because I have done no wrong before Him, nor before you.

DARIUS: Well, come on out. Where are the Wise Guys?

WISE GUY 1: Here at your service.

WISE GUY 2: Here for your purpose.

WISE GUY 3: (looking shocked and pointing to Daniel) I hope you won't hurt US.

DARIUS: Daniel is still alive. His God is obviously very powerful. Let's find out how powerful your gods are.
(He pushes them into the den; lions wake up and roar, making threatening motions with their paws)

WISE GUY 1: Shoo kitty!

WISE GUY 2: Oh pity, pity!

WISE GUY 3: This doesn't look pretty!

(Lions chase the wise guys around and off the stage.)

DANIEL *(reciting from Psalm 57:6)* They prepared a trap for my feet and they bowed down my soul. They dug a pit before my face and fell into it themselves.

DARIUS: I make a new decree: The God of Daniel and his people is a very powerful God, and He will reign always!

Everyone cheers.

THE END