



# Message Guide

FOR AUGUST 24, 2025

## STORYTELLER- 3: STORY IN A HOSTILE LAND (DANIEL 6:10-23)



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We are in the third week of our series called, “Storyteller”, based on the third part of the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1. In our current teaching series, we’re following the stories of those in Jesus’ family tree which Matthew divides into three parts—Abraham to David, David to the Babylonian Exile, and the Babylonian Exile to Jesus.

In the previous two sections, we spent time unpacking stories of the individuals and what difference that makes to us. In this third part, we’re unpacking stories of those who endured the Babylonian Exile. We’re looking at Stories in a Hostile Land.

You may be feeling that within your own family, or among friends, or at work, or school, or within our country as a whole, there are varying degrees of hostility toward what you believe. The question is, How do we live our faith among people who may not share our faith? We can all learn from what Scripture teaches us about living a life with purpose and mission, even when we face challenges and obstacles. Just like we see in the story we’ve been working our way through the past couple of weeks from the book of Daniel.

Quick recap: Daniel and his friends were Jews who were deported to Babylon sometime in the 6th century BC. Daniel becomes one of the king’s top three advisors in Daniel 6. And Daniel 6:3 tells us: *Then this Daniel became distinguished above all the other high officials and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him. And the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom.* **(Daniel 6:3, ESV)**

So, imagine you’re one of the other two high officials. Daniel, the outsider, the Jewish man from Judah, who was brought to Babylon (which has now become the Persian Empire under the new king, Darius), is elevated above you, he is going to become your boss. What?

Verse 4 says, *Then the high officials and the satraps sought to find a ground for complaint against Daniel with regard to the kingdom, but they could find no ground for complaint or any fault, because he was faithful, and no error or fault was found in him.* **(Daniel 6:4, ESV)**

These high officials then had to dig a little deeper. They scheme together to find a way to discredit Daniel, and they come up with a plan. They know Daniel prays to the Jewish God very openly. He doesn’t hide his



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faith. He's not secretive or discreet. And they devise a plan to use Daniel's openness to his faith in YHWH, in God, against him. They go to King Darius and have him agree that he would establish an ordinance and enforce an injunction that says this, verse 7: *Whoever makes petition to any god or man for thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions.* **(Daniel 6:7, ESV)**

The king signs the document and injunction which then becomes an irrevocable law, even by the king. Verse 10 goes on to say, *When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously.* **(Daniel 6:10, ESV)**

This whole thing was a set-up. It was a trap. And sure enough, Daniel fell right into it. Those who plotted against Daniel caught him in the act—imagine that—OF PRAYING, and they went directly to the king and said, "Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or the injunction you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day." **(Daniel 6:13, ESV)**

The king's hand was forced to follow through, and verse 16 tells us: Then the king commanded, and Daniel was brought and cast into the den of lions. The king declared to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, deliver you!" **(Daniel 6:16, ESV)**

Most scholars believe Daniel was probably about 80-years-old now. So, imagine an 80-year-old man thrown into a cave with ravenous lions that haven't been fed for days. A stone is brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king seals it with his own signet.

**1. This would appear to be a really dark moment for Daniel. Can you relate? You probably haven't been thrown into a literal cave with actual lions, but when was a time where you trying to do what is godly but was "set up?" Or just found yourself in a dangerous predicament?**

In our darkest moments, we can forget that God still shines bright. And, sure enough, at the break of day, verse 19 says, the king rushes to the cave and discovers that Daniel is alive and well. Daniel said to the king: *My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm.* **(Daniel 6:22, ESV)**



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Yes, sometimes God rescues us from a den of lions. And other times, He delivers us ... but only in the life which is to come. The writer of Hebrews, in chapter 11, often called “The Faither Chapter,” tells us [There were those] who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions.... [But] others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. (**Hebrews 11:33, 36 ESV**)

The question is whether God delivers us now or in the life to come, how can we remain faithful? How do we not give up? Remember the key question we started with? How do we live our faith among people who may not share our faith?

And here’s what we learn from Daniel:

Faith is a way of life, not a crutch in crisis. The reason Daniel was able to endure when things got tough was because he developed his faith in the good times before he hit the bad times. Go back and look at verse 10 again: *He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously* (**Daniel 6:10, ESV**).

“As he had done previously.” This was not a time Daniel was scrambling to pray to God, because he heard about the king’s decree, and he was in trouble. This was routine. This was daily. This was constant. Daniel had healthy rhythms that shaped him, forged him, developed him to be a man of character, integrity, and deep faith. Daniel didn’t have God as a “get-out-of-jail card” that he kept in his back pocket for emergencies. This was a deep, abiding faith that Daniel had as a way of life.

## 2. How is your prayer life? Do you scramble in times of trouble to pray? Or is prayer a consistent way of life that has helped you abide more deeply in Jesus?

Here’s the good news for us. We don’t have to be “super-Christians” in order to live out our faith among people who don’t share our faith. Anyone can do what Daniel was doing. He created healthy rhythms of prayer, and he stuck with it. He was developing his faith as a way of life so that when he really needed his faith, his faith muscle was already strengthened, and he was ready to go!

Living a life of consistent surrender and daily discipline make a difference in other people’s life too. Just think about King Darius. Somewhere along the way, Darius knows about the God Daniel serves. He’s seen Daniel and most likely heard Daniel talk about his faith and about the God he served. When he casts Daniel



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into the lions' den, he cried out, "May your God, whom you serve continually, deliver you!" (**Daniel 6:16, ESV**)

How did he know Daniel served God continually? It's because Daniel didn't keep his faith hidden. And that's a second lesson we learn in How to live our faith among people who may not share our faith:

Faith is lived openly, not hidden secretly. Everyone knew about Daniel's faith, which is what got him in trouble! When the other officials were trying to trap Daniel, they couldn't use any moral failure, or he was embezzling money, or he had a drug problem. No, according to them, he had a faith problem. He believed in YHWH, and he was public about it! That was it! They knew they had him, because he lived out his faith where everyone could see it. Look at v. 10 one more time: *When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem...* (**Daniel 6:10, ESV**).

### 3. In what ways do you think people can tell that faith in Christ is part of your daily life? How might they see it if they were looking closely?

This is perhaps the most significant step we can take when we live among people who may not share our faith. We live out our faith openly not secretly. Not bombastically—in your face—I'm a Christian, and I'm right! But humbly, graciously. In the NT, the Apostle Paul writes to the church in Colossae, Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. *Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.* (**Colossians 4:5-6, ESV**)

It's not people standing on street corners preaching through a bull horn. It's families living out their faith among other families. It's Jesus followers choosing radical obedience in a world that is increasingly apathetic towards anything of faith. And that's what will continue to turn the tide here as well—in homes, neighborhoods, places of work and schools. It's families living out their faith among other families. It's Jesus followers choosing radical obedience in a world that is increasingly apathetic towards anything of faith.

### 4. What step is God prompting you to take in living your faith in Jesus more openly among people who do not share your faith?