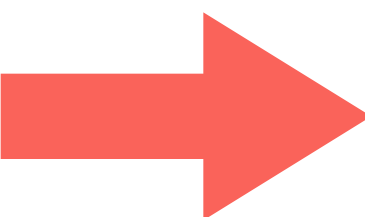


Stories of Christianity

Learning Objective:

To explore the story of Daniel and relate this to religious persecution today.





**If someone told
you that you were going
to be thrown into a pit with
a big lion, how would
you react?**



**How would
you feel?**

**What would
you do to try to
prevent it?**

**This actually happened to a man in the Bible called Daniel.
It is a famous story.**



**Have you ever
heard the story of Daniel
and the Lions' Den?**

**What do you think
might happen?**

During the reign of King Darius, there were three vice-regents who helped the king run the kingdom. Out of these three vice-regents, Daniel was by far the most impressive. He was so good at his job, and so wise and helpful to his king, that he was put in charge of governing the whole kingdom.



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The other vice-regents were jealous of Daniel and decided to try and make him fall from grace. They tried everything they could think of but they couldn't find any evidence of Daniel doing even one thing wrong.

“The only way we can get rid of Daniel is if we use his religion against him,” they said. They knew that Daniel prayed to his God every day and that he followed his laws. The other vice-regents conspired together, came up with a plan and went to see King Darius.

“We have spoken to all your governors and vice-regents. We all think you should pass a decree that forbids anyone to pray to any god or human except you for the next thirty days, Your Majesty. Anyone who does should be thrown into a den of lions. Put it in writing so the decree can’t be changed.” King Darius agreed and had the decree written up.

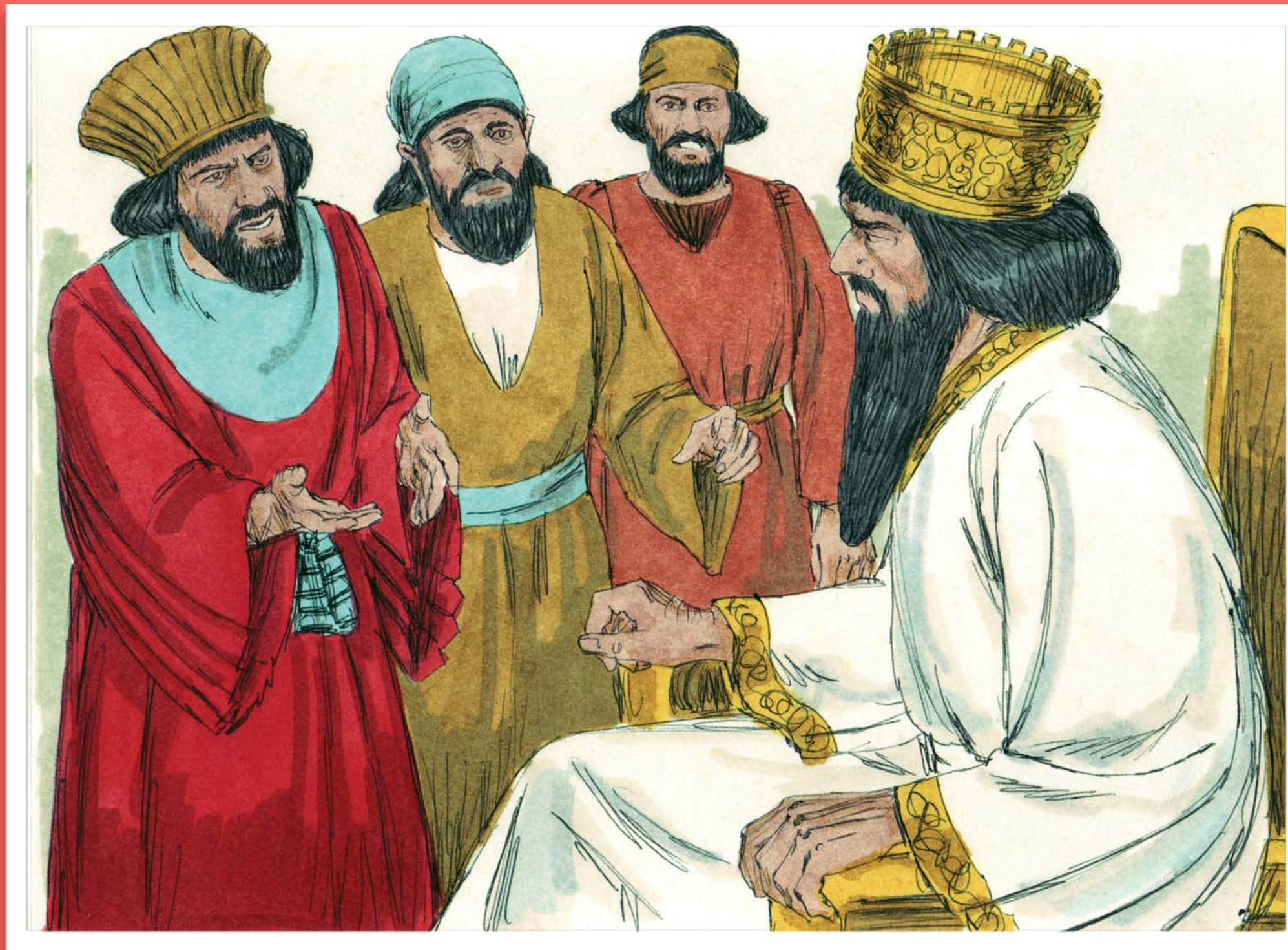


Daniel heard about the decree but continued to pray to God three times a day at his window, just as he had always done. He knew that worshipping God was more important than any law a man could make.



The vice-regents went to Daniel's house, knowing exactly when he would be praying. They immediately went to tell King Darius that they had found Daniel going against the new decree.

When King Darius found out that Daniel had broken the decree he was very troubled. He thought of everything he could to save Daniel from facing punishment but there was nothing he could do. “The law says a decree can’t be changed,” the men reminded him.





There was nothing Darius could do to save Daniel. He gave the order and the men seized Daniel and threw him into the lions' den. "Let's see your God rescue you now!" they sneered. They dragged a stone over the mouth of the den and left Daniel inside.

King Darius went back to the palace with a heavy heart. He fretted all evening and couldn't eat. He couldn't sleep either as he was so worried about Daniel and what he would find when he went back to the lions' den in the morning.

At first light, Darius raced back to the den. To his utter amazement, he saw Daniel standing among the lions - and he was completely unharmed! “What happened?” asked the king.



“The Lord sent his angels and they closed the mouths of the lions,” replied Daniel. “They didn’t hurt me because God knew I had not done wrong by him. Nor have I done wrong by you, my king.”

The king was overjoyed and gave orders for Daniel to be lifted out of the den. There wasn't a scratch on him. At the king's command, the men who had accused Daniel were thrown into the pit. Before their bodies hit the floor, the lions overpowered them and crushed their bones.

King Darius knew that Daniel's God was the one true God so he wrote to all the people and nations, telling them about what had happened and that they should worship the Lord God who could perform such incredible miracles.



**What message
do you think this story
gives to Christians
today?**

**What can they
learn from it?**

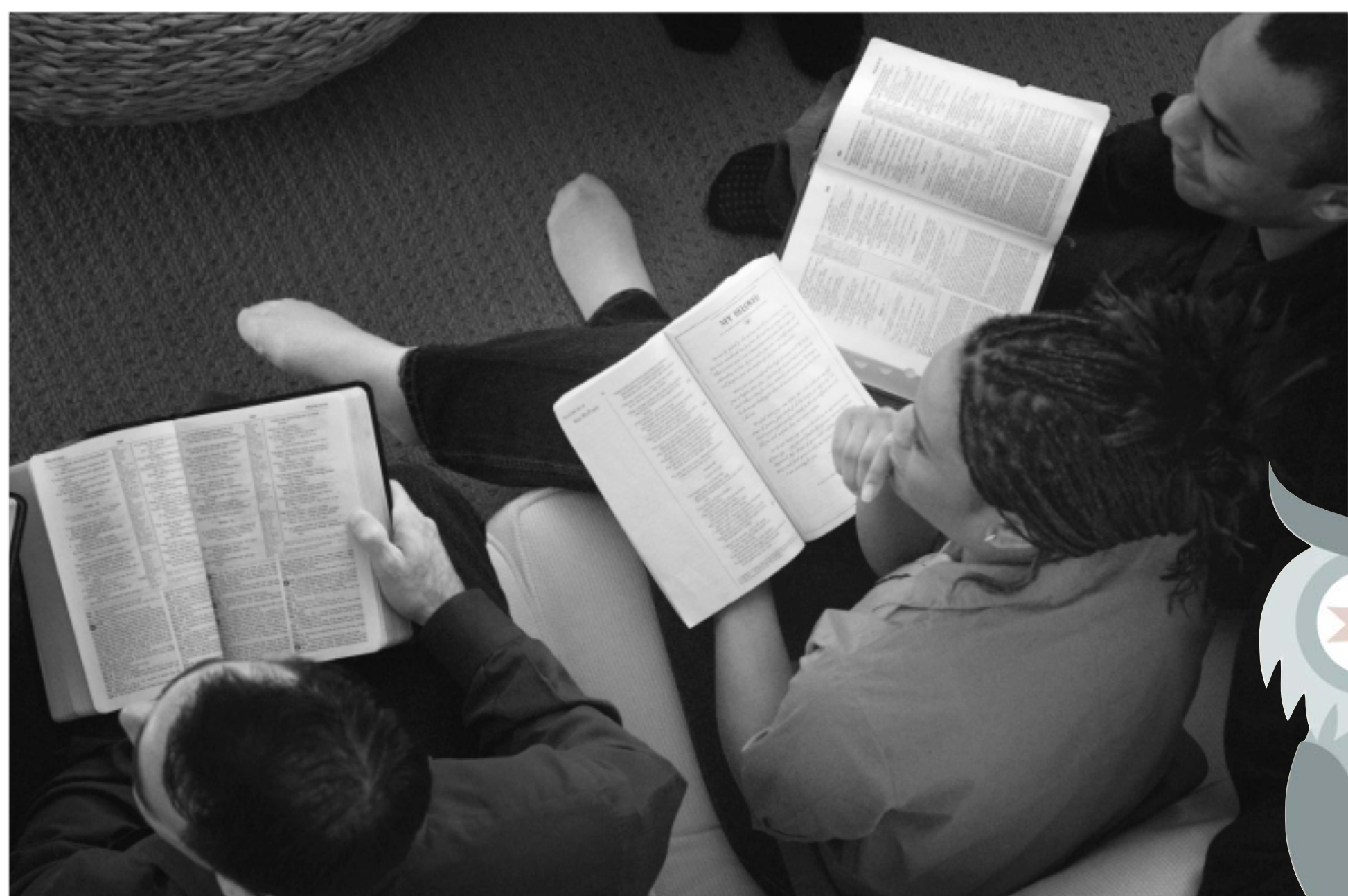


In many parts of the world today, there are laws saying that Christians can't worship God. If they are found worshipping, they can be put in prison, face physical abuse or even be put to death. This kind of treatment based on someone's beliefs is known as persecution. There are millions of persecuted Christians in the world who cannot worship openly.



Why do you think these Christians don't just pretend not to be Christians instead of facing such horrible punishments for their beliefs?

For persecuted Christians, just like for Daniel, their relationship with God is the most important thing in their lives. The Bible tells Christians that even though they might face persecution for their beliefs, God will always be with them and will always use a situation for good, no matter how difficult it may seem. The Bible also states that those who suffer for believing in Jesus will be richly rewarded in Heaven.



In many parts of the world, Christians have to meet in secret to worship because they aren't allowed to go to church. How do you think this makes them feel?