



K-Ist Lesson

Introduction

Refer to Lesson 105 Flip Chart. In the last two lessons, we learned about the prophet Jeremiah. God sent Jeremiah to warn the people in Judah to turn back to God. But they would not listen. So, God finally sent the Babylonian army to capture Judah and take many of the people away to Babylon.

Refer to #28 on the Exodus to Malachi Timeline. During Jeremiah's life, the Babylonians attacked the kingdom of Judah three different times. The first time King Nebuchadnezzar captured many people, including Judah's king, and took them to Babylon. The second time, the next king of Judah was also taken as a prisoner along with many of the people. That's when Nebuchadnezzar chose Zedekiah to be the last king of Judah.

Refer to Lesson 106 Flip Chart. But when Zedekiah turned against him, Nebuchadnezzar attacked a third time. This time he destroyed the city of Jerusalem and the temple of the Lord. Many of those still alive were captured and taken away to Babylon far from home.

In our lesson today, we'll find out what happened to some of the people who were captured. But first we're going to start by thinking about names.

Bring out the stuffed animals/dolls you brought. I brought some friends with me today, and I want you to help me name them. Allow students to offer suggestions. Discuss why they chose those specific names. Have the class vote to decide the final names for each animal or doll.

- ? We all have names. Why is a name important? Allow discussion. It's what others call you; others know you by your name; it's part of your identity (who you are); it makes you different from others.
- ? Do any of you have a nickname or a special name your mom or dad calls you by? Allow answers.

- ? How do you feel when someone calls you by the wrong name? Allow answers.
- ? How would you feel if someone changed your name to something you didn't like? Allow discussion.

Four Names Are Changed

Let's talk about four young men who were given new names—and they weren't very good names. Like many of God's people, these men had names with special meanings. First there was Daniel; his name means "God is my judge." His friend was called Hananiah, which means "God is gracious." Then there was Mishael, which means "Who is like God?" And the fourth young man was Azariah. His name means "God has helped."

- ? What word did you hear in all the meanings of these four names? God.

Yes! God had chosen the Israelites to be his special people, so many Israelites had names with meanings that reminded them of the true God.

Remember, the king of Babylon captured Israelite people from Judah and took them away from their homes. When Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were taken to Babylon, their names were changed. King Nebuchadnezzar had commanded that all the good-looking, smart young men should be trained to serve him. He wanted them to forget about their home country of Judah and to forget about serving God.

So they were given names that didn't have anything to do with the true God. Instead, these names all had something to do with false gods of Babylon! Let's find out what their new names were in the book of Daniel.

Daniel 1:7

Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. Daniel is one of the major prophets in the Old Testament. Have the student with the Bible bring it up and turn to the sticky note. As I read Daniel 1:7, listen for the new names that were given to Daniel and his friends. Read the verse.

The chief of the servants was in charge of all the young men being trained to serve King Nebuchadnezzar.

- ? What name did he give to Daniel? Belteshazzar.
- ? How about Hananiah? Shadrach.

- ? What was Mishael's new name? Meshach.
- ? And Azariah? Abednego.

King Nebuchadnezzar hoped these men would forget about their God and serve only him from then on. But would these men forget God? Let's see what happened next.

Four Men Obey God

These four young men had new names, a new place to live, and many new things to learn. The king wanted them to do everything he told them to do—starting with what they should eat and drink. The men were told that they should eat the king's food and drink his wine. But there was a problem.

You see, the king wanted them to eat foods that were offered to idols, and many of his foods were things that God had commanded his people not to eat. Daniel did not want to disobey God by eating the food from the king's table.

God knew that Daniel and his friends were trying to obey him, and he rewarded them by working out their problem. When Daniel explained to the chief of the servants about the food, God led the chief to show kindness to Daniel.

The chief wanted to help, but he was afraid to go against the king's rules. He told Daniel, "If you don't eat the king's food, you might look thin and sick. If the king sees you like that, he'll be mad at me!"

Daniel 1:12

Daniel understood the chief's problem, but he had an idea. Listen to Daniel's idea in verse 12. Read verse 12.

- ? Daniel suggested a test. How long would this test last? 10 days.
- ? During the test, what would Daniel and his friends be given to eat and drink instead of the king's food? Vegetables to eat and water to drink.

After 10 days of eating vegetables and drinking water, the steward in charge would check Daniel and his friends to make sure they didn't look thin and sick.

Show the Lesson Flip Chart. So, the steward agreed to the plan. Daniel and his three friends ate only vegetables and drank water for 10 days. The rest of the young men being trained for the king continued to eat the rich food and drink the wine.

God Blesses the Four Men

Let's find out what happened at the end of the test.

Daniel 1:15–16

I'm going to read Daniel 1:15–16. Read the verses.

- ? So how did Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah look after the 10 days? Did they look better or worse than the others who ate the king's food? They were better in appearance/looked better and were fatter than the others!
- ? Yes, they looked better and fatter! Fatter means they looked healthy, not skinny and sick.
- ? Since they looked so good, what did the steward take away? The food and wine.
- ? And what did he give them to eat from now on? Vegetables.

God helped these four young men because they wanted to obey him. First, he led the chief and the steward to listen to Daniel's idea for a test so that he and his friends wouldn't have to eat the king's food. Then God gave them better health than all the other young men in the palace.

And God did even more for them. Because of their obedience, God blessed these men and helped them learn many new things. He gave them great knowledge and wisdom. And, God gave Daniel a special gift. Daniel could understand the meanings of visions and dreams.

At the end of their training, the chief brought Daniel and his friends before the king. When King Nebuchadnezzar spoke with them, he liked them and kept them close by as his own special servants in the palace.

The king already had officials and wise men to help him and answer his questions, but God made these four men ten times better than any of them. Whenever the king had questions, Daniel and his friends had such wisdom that they were able to give him an answer every time.

Daniel and his friends stayed faithful and obedient to God, even while they were being forced to serve a king in a country far from home. They knew God was still in control of everything, and he rewarded them with good health, learning, and wisdom!

Daniel and his friends chose to obey God.

