

Lesson 107

God Blesses Daniel

Four young men choose to obey God rather than man.

Studying God's Word

Don't forget! Review the Optional Supplements and determine where you can use them.

Introduction

Slide #3

Slide #4

Refer to Lesson 105 Theme Poster and Lesson 106 Theme Poster. In the past few 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 wicked Babylonians to capture Judah and move many of the people out of the land.

Refer to the Exodus to Malachi Timeline. During the Babylonians' first attack on Judah in 607 BC (point to #28 on the timeline), they captured many Judean people and carried them off to Babylon. Several kings of Judah were allowed to rule after this first attack, but we learned that the last king, Zedekiah, tried to rebel against King Nebuchadnezzar. That led to the total destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 588 BC, and the remaining people were taken to Babylon as captives. Jeremiah remained in Judah with the poorest people who were left.

Jeremiah's name means "Jehovah [God] establishes, appoints, or sends." That's a fitting name for a prophet who was sent by God to speak for him. Many Hebrew, or Israelite, names referred to God and his character or actions.

Have your device with a name website ready or bring a name book for students to look up their names.

Do any of you know what your name means? Share your name meaning and allow discussion. Use a name dictionary on a device to look up some students' names or use a name book to let students look up their own names and share their meanings/history.

In our lesson today, we will see how the Babylonians changed the names of four young Hebrew men to try to make them forget about God and their home country. The Hebrew people are all the descendants of Jacob (Israel), including those who lived in the nations of Israel and in Judah.

The Young Men Obey God

Have the Name Cards printed and ready to pass out.

The four young men, probably in their teens, were from Judah and were taken to Babylon in the first Babylonian attack, along with other Judeans, during the reign of King Jehoiakim.

They were likely the sons of noblemen or even relatives of the king! Their Hebrew names were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. I'm going to give name cards to four students who will represent these young men. When you get the card, read us the meaning of your Hebrew names, then fold the card and place (or hold) it in front of you. Give a name card to four different students and have them read the meanings of the names and place the cards in front of them or in their laps.

What did all the names have in common? Whom did they refer to? God.

Yes! Many Hebrew, or Israelite, names had special meanings or sayings about God. It made them unique from other peoples, who worshipped false gods.

When these four young men got to Babylon, they were selected to be taken to King Nebuchadnezzar's palace. Nebuchadnezzar was the king of Babylon. The king had requested that all the good-looking, smart young men be brought to his palace to be trained to serve him. The king wanted to brainwash these men. He wanted them to forget the God of Abraham. The king wanted these young men to forget all they knew of Judah and to serve Babylon and its king!

Pass out the Class Notes.

After Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were moved to the palace, their names were changed. This was part of the Babylonians' plan to brainwash the Hebrew men. Their Hebrew names were not to be used anymore in the hope that they would forget that part of their life.

Slide #5

Look at your Class Notes. We'll fill in the blanks as we go throughout the lesson. You may want to write answers on the board for students to copy or use the slides.

Encourage students to look in their Bibles for the answers, too.

Who will read #1 and tell us the country the young men were taken to? Choose a reader. Babylon. Have students complete #1.

And #2, who will read that one about King Nebuchadnezzar? Choose a reader. Serve. Have students complete #2.

Who will read #3? Choose a reader. Names. Have students complete #3.

Slide #6

Daniel 1:7

Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. Turn to the book of Daniel, chapter 1. What section of the Old Testament is Daniel in? Major prophets.

Who will read the new names the men were given in Daniel 1:7? Choose a reader.

What name was Daniel given? Belteshazzar.

Pass out the Belteshazzar name card to the student with the Daniel card. Read the meaning of your new name and then place the card over your old name. Have student read the meaning, fold the card, and place it over the Daniel one.

Slide #7

Go ahead and write Daniel's new name for #4 on the Class Notes. Belteshazzar. Complete #4.

Did you recognize the names Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego? Allow answers or show of hands.

But these names also referred to false gods. Let's find out what their Babylonian names meant. Pass out the three remaining Babylonian name cards to the three students: Hananiah=Shadrach, Mishael=Meshach, Azariah=Abednego. Have them read the meanings and place folded cards over the Hebrew name cards.

Let's write their names from verse 7 in the Class Notes for #5-7. Have students complete #5-7.

Who does it say gave them their new names? The chief of the eunuchs.

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

Slide #8

Slide #9

Slide #10

Slide #11

Daniel 1:8–14

The four young Hebrew men had new names, a new place to live, and new customs to learn. The king wanted them to do everything he told them to do—starting with what they should eat and drink. We are going to read Daniel 1:8–14. Assign readers.

What did Daniel resolve to do in verse 8? Not to defile himself with the king's food or wine.

Slide #12

Slide #13

Slide #14

From verse 8, how will you complete #8 in the Class Notes? Defile. Have students complete #8.

What do you think defile means? Allow discussion. Dishonor, spoil, violate.

Defile: dishonor, spoil, violate

Daniel didn't want to spoil or dishonor himself with the king's food and drink. You see, the king's food and drink was devoted to idols, and many foods were things that God's law commanded the Israelites not to eat. For example, the Israelites, or Hebrew people, did not eat meat from animals including rabbit, pig, or badger. Certain

seafood, birds, and even insects were also forbidden in the dietary laws Moses wrote in Leviticus.

Daniel wanted to honor God and his law. He did not want to eat the food he was offered—food that God had commanded his people not to eat.

Daniel and his friends had a problem. They didn't want to eat the king's food, but they were prisoners. And King Nebuchadnezzar wanted them to eat it. But God had already worked out this problem.

In verse 9, what did God do? God gave Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs.

What will you fill in for #9 on the Class Notes? Favor. Complete #9.

The chief of the eunuchs was in charge of all the prisoners. God moved this man's heart to like Daniel and feel compassion for him.

But what was the chief eunuch worried about in verse 10? He feared the king would see that Daniel and his friends were in worse condition. His life would be endangered.

The eunuch was afraid to go against the king. If he were caught disobeying, the king would have his head! Daniel understood that the chief eunuch was in a difficult

position, so Daniel suggested a test to the steward put in charge of him and his friends.

How long would the test take? Look in verse 12. 10 days.

What did Daniel want to eat and drink during those 10 days? Vegetables to eat and water to drink.

Let's answer #10 on the Class Notes. Who will read that and give the answers? Choose a reader. Vegetables, water. Complete #10.

The word for vegetables is a broad term that could include wheat and barley, too.

What would happen after the 10 days were up? They would be observed.

Yes. After the 10 days of vegetables and water, they would be observed or compared to the other men who were eating the king's food and drinking his wine.

Did the steward agree to this idea? Yes.

Slide #15

Show the Lesson Theme Poster. So, the plan was accepted by the steward. 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's service continued to eat the rich food and drink wine.

If you didn't bring food samples, skip the next paragraph. If you don't have enough samples for each student, just hold up the items to show the class rather than having them eat/drink them.

Have food/drink samples ready. To show what this test was like, I've brought some foods for you to try. Daniel and his friends had vegetables and water and possibly bread. Have the four volunteers representing Daniel and his friends eat some vegetables (e.g., carrots, cucumbers, tomatoes) and drink water. The other young men had the king's food and wine. Give the other students grape juice and a forbidden food, such as deli ham or bacon.

God Blesses the Young Men

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

Slide #16

Daniel 1:15–16

Who will read Daniel 1:15–16? Assign a reader.

So how did Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah look after the 10 days? They looked better and were fatter than the others!

Yes, they were better and fatter! Fatter was used to mean healthier, not that they were overweight.

Slide #17

Fill in "healthier" for #11 on the Class Notes. Have students complete #11. And what did the steward do for them based on how they looked at the end of the test? He let the young men continue their diet of vegetables and water. So did God honor their obedience to his law? Yes!

These four young Hebrew men loved God and wanted to obey him. They did not want to defile themselves by eating the food of the Babylonians. God had commanded they eat only certain foods—and the foods of the king were NOT what God had commanded. God honored their obedience by allowing them to eat the food they requested and by strengthening their bodies to look healthier and better than all the other men. Some people may read this account and think that we should all eat only vegetables and drink water to be healthy.

But do you think it was what they ate or the Lord who enabled Daniel and his friends to be healthier and look better than the other men? The Lord.

The point here is not what they ate but that the Lord blessed them for obeying his law.

Although vegetables and water are good for you, we don't need to follow that as a strict "diet" to obey God today.

Does that make sense? Allow questions or discussion.

Slide #18

Slide #19

Daniel 1:17-20

So, God was blessing these men while they lived in captivity under a wicked king. And he blessed them in more ways beyond protecting them from defiled food.

Let's read those blessings in Daniel 1:17-20. Choose readers.

Daniel 1:17 states three things God gave the men. What are those three things? Learning, skill in all literature, and wisdom. And God gave Daniel a special gift. What was that? Understanding of visions and dreams.

So, when King Nebuchadnezzar spoke with the men, what did he think of them? None of the other men were like them. They were 10 times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his kingdom.

Daniel and his friends were better than the other people serving the king throughout his entire kingdom. What does it mean when it says they stood before the king? They served the king.

God had blessed the obedience and trust these four men had in him with good health and strength. God also gave them knowledge, skill, and wisdom. And because of the blessings they received from God, the king would keep these young men close by as his own special servants in the palace! God also gave Daniel the ability to interpret dreams and visions.

Slide #20

How will you answer #12 on the Class Notes? Wisdom. Complete #12.

And #13? Who will read that? Choose a reader. Dreams. Complete #13.

And the last one, #14? How will you answer that? Choose a reader. Serving. Have students complete #14.

Application

Slide #21

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. Daniel and the other young men were taken from their homes and forced to live in the king's palace against their will. But when they were served rich food dedicated to idols from the king's table, Daniel and the others refused to eat it. Instead of eating the rich food, they asked to eat only vegetables and drink only water. God blessed them by granting them favor with the chief eunuch and by making them healthier than the other young men at the end of the 10-day test.

They were allowed to continue their diet, and they became officials for the king.

Refer to the four students with name cards. Belteshazzar (Daniel), Shadrach (Hananiah), Meshach (Mishael), and Abednego (Azariah) sure had trials! They were taken from their homes as young men and moved to a foreign country. They were taken to the king's palace where their names were changed, and they were told to live like the foreigners. But they remained loyal to God. They obeyed God and trusted him to help them, and God was faithful.

You know, we will have trials, too. And in the midst of these difficult times, we must remember that God is in control. We need to obey God and trust him. God does give great gifts to his children, and we should be grateful for all of them. But it is in the trials of life that we come closer to God, that we cry out to him, pray to him, and look to him for comfort. Let's see what Jesus had to say about trials and tribulations.

Slide #22

John 16:33

Turn to John 16:33 in the New Testament.
Who will read that? Assign a reader.
What does Jesus say we will have in this world? Tribulation.
Does anyone know what another word for tribulation is? Allow discussion.

Tribulation can mean a lot of things. It can mean pain, suffering, hardship, trouble, trial, misery, difficulty. And we can have tribulations at any age.

What are some tribulations that kids your age may have? Allow discussion. Moving, illness, hurt feelings, parents' divorce, death, etc.

Daniel and his friends wanted to be obedient to God even in the tribulation they faced of obeying the king's instructions or obeying God's laws. Jesus faced tribulations on earth, too. He was obedient to endure a painful death on the cross. But because Jesus died and rose again, we can trust his Word that he has overcome the world! His death and resurrection assure those who repent and believe in him that they will leave this world with all its tribulations and one day spend eternity with him. That is comforting news when we go through hard times.

Lesson Review

We all learn best with review and repetition! We encourage you to play a lesson review game.

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