

Lesson 108

God Defends His Glory

God is sovereign over earthly rulers.

Studying God's Word

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

Introduction

Slide #3

Refer to Lesson 107 Theme Poster. In our last lesson, we learned about Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah who were taken from Judah to Babylon and chosen to be trained as servants to King Nebuchadnezzar. The king wanted them to forget about their home country and to obey him instead of God, so they were given Babylonian names: Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Their obedience to God was tested when they were told to eat the food from the king's table, but they refused.

Why did Daniel and his friends refuse to eat the king's food? The food had been offered to idols; it was food that God had commanded them not to eat.

The chief eunuch agreed to let Daniel and his friends eat only vegetables and drink water for 10 days. When they were compared to the other men in the palace, they looked healthier, so they were allowed to continue eating only foods that pleased

God. God rewarded their obedience by giving them knowledge, skill, and wisdom, and they became important servants of the king.

Later, Daniel's friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, were tested again. But this time, they would be faced with a much harder decision than deciding what to eat.

Have the Cue Cards ready.

The Fiery Furnace Test

Ask for six volunteers and hand out the Cue Cards. Today, I'm giving cards to some of you to read when I call on you.

Slide #4
Daniel 3:1

Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. Everyone turn to Daniel chapter 3. Listen and follow along as I read verse 1. Read the verse.

What did King Nebuchadnezzar make? An image of gold.

This image, or statue, of gold was about 90 feet tall and 9 feet wide. That's as tall as three school buses stacked on top of each other end to end! This image may have been a statue of King Nebuchadnezzar himself. After all, he ruled over a huge

kingdom, so he might have made this statue to show off his greatness and power.

The king called all his leaders and officials to gather in front of the statue. Then he gave a command, read by his herald.

Who has card #1? Please read the herald's announcement. Have student read card #1. What were all the people commanded to do when the music played? Bow down and worship the golden statue.

What would happen to those who didn't obey this command? They would immediately be thrown into a burning fiery furnace.

The people feared the king's punishment, so they obeyed his command. When they heard the music, they bowed down and worshipped the statue.

But not everyone obeyed! Some of the Babylonians knew about certain Jewish men who did not bow to the statue. So, they went to King Nebuchadnezzar to report them.

Who has card #2? What did these Babylonians tell the king? Have student read card #2.

Who would not bow down to the false god? Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

The king had given Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego important jobs, and some of the

Babylonians were jealous of them. They wanted to get rid of the three friends, so they told on them, hoping they would be thrown into the furnace. These men would not obey the king's command because they worshipped only the true God. When the king heard that they would not bow to his statue, he was very angry! He ordered that the men be brought to him.

Let's find out what the king said to them. Who has card #3? Have student read card #3.

The king gave the men another chance. They could worship the statue now—and live, or they could obey God by not bowing to the statue—and be thrown into a hot, fiery furnace. What a hard decision!

What would their answer be? Who has card #4? Have student read card #4. What choice did the three men make: to obey the king or to obey God? To obey God.

These brave men chose to trust in the Lord and obey him instead of fearing the punishment of King Nebuchadnezzar. This made the king even angrier.

Who will read what he said next from card #5? Have student read card #5.

The furnace was made seven times hotter than usual, and the guards tied up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Slide #5

Daniel 3:22–23

Let's go back to Daniel chapter 3. Who wants to read verses 22–23? Choose readers.

What happened to the guards who took the three men to the furnace? They were killed by the fire.

What happened to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego? They fell bound (tied up) into the burning fiery furnace.

The fire was so hot that it killed the guards, and the three men fell into the flames. As King Nebuchadnezzar watched, he expected the men to be burned up. But he saw something very surprising!

Who has card #6 with the king's words? Have student read card #6.

What surprised the king when he looked into the furnace? He saw four men instead of three. They were not tied up but were walking around in the fire. They were not hurt.

How did the king describe the fourth person in the fire? Like a son of the gods.

Slide #6

Show the Lesson Theme Poster. This fourth person might have been the Son of God, who later came to earth and was named Jesus. Or he could have been an angel of God. Whoever this fourth man was, God

sent him to protect the three friends from the fire.

The king went to the door of the furnace and called for the men to come out. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego walked out of the furnace completely unharmed. The Bible says not even a hair on their heads or a piece of clothing was burned. They didn't even smell like smoke! But the fourth man the king had seen was gone!

Nebuchadnezzar realized that no other god could have saved the men from the furnace. He saw that God's power was much greater than the false Babylonian gods, so he commanded that no one speak against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Pass out the Class Notes

Let's start our Class Notes. In each sentence, circle the correct bold word or phrase.

Slide #7

Slide #8

Slide #9

Who will read #1 and give us the answer? Choose a reader. Statue. Have students complete #1.

And #2, who will read that? Choose a reader. Music. Have students complete #2.

Who will read #3 about the Babylonians' report? Choose a reader. Jewish. Have students complete #3.

And #4? What was the punishment for disobeying the king's command? Choose a reader. Furnace. Have students complete #4.

Who will read #5? Choose a reader.

Protected. Have students complete #5.

And #6? What did the fire do to the men? Choose a reader. No burns. Have students complete #6.

The Humbling of King Nebuchadnezzar

Since Nebuchadnezzar saw the three men saved from the furnace, he knew about God's power. But he still had a lot to learn about who God is.

One night, Nebuchadnezzar had a strange, scary dream. Raise your hand if you've had scary dreams before. Allow a show of hands. Of course, we all have strange and frightening dreams sometimes, don't we?

What do your parents usually say when you wake up after a bad dream and feel afraid? Don't worry; it was just a dream; there's nothing to be afraid of.

Yes. They want you to know that it was just a dream; it wasn't real. But Nebuchadnezzar knew that his dream wasn't just a dream. The Bible tells us that he was very worried about it.

Slide #10

Daniel 4:10

Who would like to read Daniel 4:10 to see what the king dreamed about? Choose a reader.

What did the king see in his dream? A tree in the midst of the earth/a very tall tree.

In the king's dream, the tree grew so tall and strong that it reached up to the heavens and everyone in the whole earth could see it! On the board, draw a large tree with clouds around the top. See sample illustration in the margin.

The tree had beautiful leaves and so much fruit that all living things could eat from it. Many animals found shade from it, and birds lived in its branches. Ask several students to add fruit, stick figure animals, and birds to the drawing or add them yourself.

Does this sound like a scary dream so far? No.

But then something happened. An angel ordered that the tree be chopped down, its branches cut off, and its fruit scattered. All the animals and birds would leave, and only a stump would be left. Erase the top of the tree and the animals from the drawing, leaving only the tree stump.

The tree stump would live in the grass with the animals and have the mind of a beast for seven years.

Of course, Nebuchadnezzar wanted to know what this strange dream meant. He asked all the wise men in his kingdom. But none of them were able to tell him the meaning. Whom do you think he asked next? Who had a special gift to tell the meanings of dreams? Daniel.

God allowed Daniel to explain the dream: The tree stood for Nebuchadnezzar, whose strength and power were known throughout the earth. The birds and animals living under the tree were the many people ruled by Nebuchadnezzar.

The order for the tree to be chopped down meant that Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom would be taken away from him. And instead of dwelling in his palace, the king would live in the fields with the animals—eating grass like an ox! This punishment would go on for seven years when Nebuchadnezzar would give up his sinful pride and understand that God was in control—even over “mighty” kings.

King Nebuchadnezzar was very proud of himself and of all that he had done. Even though it was God who allowed him to build his kingdom, Nebuchadnezzar wanted all

the glory. He needed to learn that God is in control of all things.
Do you think the king changed after this dream? Allow guesses.

Daniel 4:29–33

Slide #11

Slide #12

Slide #13

Slide #14

One year later, King Nebuchadnezzar was walking on the roof of his palace, looking out over the wonderful temples, gardens, walls, and other buildings of his great city. Let's find out what he was thinking. Listen and follow along as I read chapter 4, verses 29–30. Read the verses.

The king said he had built Babylon by whose power? His own mighty power. Had he changed, or was he still full of pride? He was still full of pride.

Immediately, even before he had finished speaking, the king heard a voice from heaven. Let's hear what this voice said in verses 31–32. Read the verses.

Where did we hear these words before? What are these verses describing? The meaning of his bad dream.
Who would like to read the next verse, 33? Choose a reader.

Immediately, Nebuchadnezzar's dream came true. He was driven from his kingdom and began living like an animal.

What did he look like after a while? His hair was very long (as eagles' feathers) and his nails were as long as birds' claws.

Slide #15

Show the Lesson Theme Poster. For seven years, Nebuchadnezzar lived in the fields with the animals. He probably looked wild and scary with his long hair and nails! His body was wet with dew, and he ate grass like an ox—just as he saw in his dream.

Slide #16

Daniel 4:34

Let's find out if Nebuchadnezzar changed his ways after this punishment. Follow along as I read verse 34. Read the verse.

At the end of seven years, what did Nebuchadnezzar do? Where did he lift his eyes? To heaven/God.

That's right. His reason, or his mind, came back to him, and he blessed the Most High—he began to praise and honor God because he finally understood God's greatness. Nebuchadnezzar now knew it was God who had allowed him to build his kingdom. He had learned that God is sovereign.

Refer to the Attributes of God Poster. What does sovereign mean? In complete control of everything; does all that he pleases.

God used those seven years of punishment to change Nebuchadnezzar. Instead of walking in pride, thinking that he was great and powerful, Nebuchadnezzar was humbled. He now knew God was much greater than he was. God showed mercy and kindness to Nebuchadnezzar by ending his punishment and giving his kingdom back to him.

Slide #17

Slide #18

Let's finish the Class Notes. Who will read #7 about Nebuchadnezzar's dream? Choose a reader. Tree. Have students complete #7. For #8, why was Nebuchadnezzar punished by God? Choose a reader. Pride. Have students complete #8.

What did Nebuchadnezzar learn about God in #9? Choose a reader. Sovereign. Have students complete #9.

And #10, how did Nebuchadnezzar change? Choose a reader. Humble. Have students complete #10.

Application

Slide #19

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. When God saved Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fiery furnace, he showed his power and glory to King Nebuchadnezzar. He proved that he is above all false gods and above all people, even great rulers on the earth.

But Nebuchadnezzar was still prideful. It took God's punishment to make him understand that he needed to humble himself before the one true God.

When people believe they have done great things in their own power, like Nebuchadnezzar did, they are full of pride. This kind of pride is a sin because you are taking credit for things that God has allowed you to do.

Sometimes we hear about another kind of pride which is not a sin. Has a parent or teacher ever told you that they are proud of you or that you should take pride in your work? What does that kind of pride mean? Allow discussion.

There is nothing wrong with feeling good about yourself when you've done your best. As long as you give God the credit, you are not being prideful.

But why should we do our best? Allow discussion.

The Bible tells us that all of God's works are perfect. He always does everything in the

best way possible. And since we are made in his image, we naturally feel happy when we've worked hard and have done a good job doing what he has made us to do. And when we do our best and give God credit, it shows others a good example of what God is like.

Can you think of some ways to give God glory and credit in your life? Allow discussion. When someone compliments you on a job well done, tell them God is the one who gave you the ability or talent to do well. Don't brag about what you did. Thank God for allowing you to do well.

Throughout your life, give thanks and glory to God for all that you have. You can give him credit for all the good things he helps you do because you know that he is in control. Be humble before God and obey him, just as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did, and he will continue to bless you as you follow him.

Lesson Review

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

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