

## Lesson 109

# Daniel Serves Faithfully

God speaks through Daniel to several earthly kings.

# Studying God's Word

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

## Introduction

### Slide #3

Write the coded message on the board so students have time to try and solve it before class begins. Have paper and pencils available.

Before class, write the following coded message on the board: 19-26-13-23-4-9-18-7-18-13-20 12-13 7-19-22 4-26-15-15. Make sure there is enough space between each numbered "word." Explain that whoever solves it first before class begins will get a prize (e.g., treat, dollar). Don't give any hints or help. Have paper and pencils for students to use to work out the code individually.

Who thinks they solved the message on the board? Allow answers. Award a prize to the winner, if it was solved. The answer is HANDWRITING ON THE WALL. If it wasn't solved, write on the board Z=1, Y=2, A=26. Ask students if they can solve it with the hint (it's a backwards number-to-letter alphabet code) or write the alphabet on the board and solve it together.

This was a tough code to crack. In today's lesson, we'll see how God miraculously wrote words on a wall, but no one could read or understand what they meant! Before we see what the message was and who solved it, let's do a quick review.

### Slide #4

Refer to Lesson 108 Theme Poster. Last lesson, we talked about God's sovereignty and how he showed his power by protecting Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fiery furnace.

Who did God send to be with these three Jewish men in the furnace? Either the Son of God (Jesus) or an angel appeared and walked with them.

The three men were faithful to obey God rather than the king's command, and God was pleased to protect them from harm and deliver them from the furnace. God showed his power over the fire and over the king who defied him. Then we saw how God further demonstrated his sovereignty over King Nebuchadnezzar by humbling him to live like an animal in the wild until he recognized the power of the Most High God.

Refer to the Exodus to Malachi Timeline. Today, we are going to look at how Daniel faithfully served God during the reigns of several foreign kings. These kings ruled during the 70 years of captivity of God's people. Although the nation of Judah was under the control of foreign powers while the people were in exile, God was still working out his purposes.

## Daniel Interprets Dreams

Who remembers the special ability God gave Daniel? He used it in the last lesson for King Nebuchadnezzar. The ability to interpret dreams.

That's right! God blessed all four of the men from Judah by giving them wisdom and knowledge and success in their work for the king of Babylon. But Daniel was given the ability to understand and interpret dreams.

When Nebuchadnezzar dreamed about the mighty tree that was chopped down, who did he call first to come and interpret it for him? His wise men, magicians, and sorcerers.

When his wise men failed to interpret his dream, King Nebuchadnezzar called for Daniel. Daniel was the only one who could interpret the dream because it was from God. Daniel knew that his wisdom and understanding came directly from God, and he always gave God the credit and glory for it.

We've seen how Daniel served faithfully for King Nebuchadnezzar. About 20 years after Nebuchadnezzar's death, we see Daniel in the Babylonian court under the rule of another king named Belshazzar.

Belshazzar was in a desperate situation because his kingdom was under attack by the Medo-Persian army. To try to make everyone feel better, Belshazzar hosted a great feast. A thousand of his rulers were drinking wine and eating together. Then Belshazzar made a bad decision. He commanded that the golden vessels that had been taken from the temple of God in Jerusalem be brought in to the party. The king and his wives and his leaders praised their false gods as they drank wine from these special cups. They were drunk and treating God's holy vessels as common items.

Pass out the Class Notes.

How do you think God felt about this? Allow answers. He was not pleased to see the holy vessels being used at a pagan feast for drunkenness and idolatry.

Slide #5

Let's look at the Class Notes. We'll fill in the blanks as we go through the lesson. Who will read #1 and give the answer? Choose a reader. Temple. Have students complete #1.

Slide #6

Slide #7

Slide #8

Daniel 5:5-9

Turn in your Bibles to Daniel 5. Let's read Daniel 5:5-9. Choose readers.

What miraculous thing happened in verse 5? A human hand appeared and wrote on the wall of the king's palace.

How did Belshazzar respond to seeing the hand write on the wall? He was greatly alarmed.

Who did the king call for to interpret the writing on the wall? The wise men of Babylon, the enchanters, Chaldeans, and the astrologers.

Could the king's wise men interpret or read the writing on the wall? No.

Slide #9

How will you answer #2 on the Class Notes? Choose a reader. Hand. Complete #2.

None of the Babylonian wise men could tell the king what the words on the wall meant. It was kind of like looking at a coded message, like the one we solved at the beginning of class, but no one knew the code to figure it out! This terrified the king even more. But the queen knew about Daniel and his ability to interpret dreams for King Nebuchadnezzar, and she went to Belshazzar and told him to call for Daniel.

Daniel was brought before King Belshazzar, and the king promised to give him rewards. Daniel refused the king's rewards but said he would read the writing and tell him the interpretation. But, before he did, he told the king that it was the Most High God who had given the kingship to Nebuchadnezzar and made him great. Daniel reminded Belshazzar of how God humbled King Nebuchadnezzar, by making him eat grass in the field like an animal until he knew that God was in control.

Slide #10

Slide #11

Slide #12

Slide #13

Daniel 5:22-28

Let's read what Daniel told the king in chapter 5 verses 22 to 28. Choose readers.

What sins did Daniel say Belshazzar had committed in verses 22-23? Pride, idolatry (praising false gods), refusing to honor God or recognize his sovereignty.

Who did Daniel say sent the writing on the wall? The Lord of heaven; God. What words did the hand write on the wall? Mene, Mene, Tekel, and Parsin. What did the words mean? Mene meant that God had numbered the days of the kingdom, and it was repeated to show it was certainly going to happen. Tekel meant that Belshazzar had been weighed and found wanting. Parsin (plural of Peres) indicated that his kingdom would be divided and given to the Medes and Persians.

Basically, the message of the words on the wall meant that Babylon would fall to the Medo-Persian Empire. Belshazzar rewarded Daniel as he'd promised, even though the rewards ended up being meaningless because the king was killed that very night. The Medo-Persian army captured Babylon, and Darius the Mede was set over the kingdom.

Slide #14

Slide #15

Who will read #3 on the Class Notes? Choose a reader. Message. Complete #3.

And #4? What was the message? Choose a reader. Persians. Complete #4. To answer #5, how soon did the Babylonian kingdom fall? Choose a reader. Night. Complete #5.

Just as we've seen before, God used Daniel to deliver his message to an arrogant king who considered himself supreme. God once again showed his sovereignty over the kings of earth. And again, Daniel demonstrated that though he may work for different kings, he truly served the Lord. God rewarded his loyalty by continuing to grant him favor and to remain a high official under the new king, Darius.

Who will read #6 about the king who ruled after Belshazzar? Choose a reader. Darius. Complete #6.

## God Protects Daniel

In the last lesson, we talked about the trial that Daniel's friends faced because they chose to honor God. Today we are going to read about a similar situation Daniel faced. This happened when Daniel was older—almost 80 years old. He had served foreign kings for a long time and was now serving King Darius the Mede.

A time came when some leaders of Babylon got jealous of Daniel because he was the king's favorite. They decided to set up a trap for him. It was very much like the trap set for his friends in the fiery furnace. King Darius was tricked into signing a law that everyone must pray **ONLY** to the king. No one was allowed to pray to any other god, including Daniel's God—the only true God.

Slide #16

Slide #17

Let's fill in the blank for #7. Who will read that? Choose a reader. King. Complete #7.

### Daniel 6:10

What did Daniel do about this law? Who will read Daniel 6:10? Choose a reader.

Where did Daniel go after he knew King Darius signed the law that forbade him to pray to God? To the upper chamber (room) of his house.

What did Daniel do? He knelt down and prayed in front of the window, just as he had always done three times a day.

Slide #18

Slide #19

How will you complete #8 in the Class Notes? Choose a reader. Three. Complete #8.

This was what Daniel did every day. He gave thanks to God and prayed. Now while Daniel was praying, officials in the king's court spied on him and reported to King Darius what he was doing so he would get in trouble.

### Daniel 6:16–17

Let's read Daniel 6:16–17 to see what the king would do. Choose a reader.

After the king found out that Daniel had disobeyed him, what did he command? Daniel should be brought and cast into the den of lions.

Kings back then used some pretty horrible punishments, didn't they? Nebuchadnezzar had Daniel's friends thrown into a fiery furnace because they refused to obey his command to worship a golden image, and Darius had Daniel thrown into the lions' den because he refused to pray to the king. But unlike King Nebuchadnezzar, King Darius realized that the leaders had plotted against Daniel even though he was innocent. Darius didn't want to punish Daniel, but the law that he had signed could not be undone.

Slide #20

Slide #21

Slide #22

Slide #23

Who will read #9 in the Class Notes? Choose a reader. Lions' den. Complete #9.

So, Daniel was thrown into a den of hungry lions! A large stone was placed at the entrance of the den after Daniel was put in. Normally, the lions would eat anyone in their den. King Darius was worried about Daniel and didn't want him to die. He refused to sleep or eat all night while Daniel was in the lions' den.

Daniel 6:19–23

Let's see what happened in the morning. We'll read Daniel 6:19–23. Choose readers.

What was King Darius hoping that God had done for Daniel? Delivered him from the lions.

How did God protect Daniel? God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths. The king was really happy that Daniel was alive! What did he command when he heard that Daniel was not harmed? That Daniel be taken up out of the lions' den.

When Daniel came out, there was NO injury on him. According to Daniel 6:23, why was no harm found on him? He trusted in his God.

Slide #24

Slide #25

Let's complete the Class Notes. Who will read #10? Choose a reader. Angel. Complete #10.

Show the Lesson Theme Poster. This is another example of God protecting a man who trusted and believed in him. God gave Daniel the courage to face the hungry lions in their den. Then God protected him by sending an angel to close the mouths of the lions. Daniel came out of the lions' den without even a scratch.

King Darius commanded that the men who had set the trap for Daniel be thrown into the lions' den with their families, and they were all destroyed. Darius believed that Daniel's God was the true God and made a law that all people in his kingdom must fear the Lord.

God clearly demonstrated that he is more powerful than kings, leaders, and lions! There is none like him.

## Application

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. We can look to Daniel and others in the Bible as examples of acting in faith. Daniel didn't stop praying to God just because a law was made. He did what was right even when it looked like it would cost him his life in the lions' den. In Daniel's case, God chose to miraculously protect him and show his power. The result was King Darius believing that God was the true God!

How is Daniel a good example to us in his prayer life? Allow discussion.

Daniel prayed faithfully (Daniel 6:10). While we don't necessarily need to pray three times a day, we should still pray regularly and faithfully. Also notice that he was not just asking for what he wanted. Daniel 6:10 says he was giving thanks even when he knew his life was in danger. We should use our prayers to praise God and thank God as much as we ask for things from God.

How could understanding God's attributes change how we pray?  
Allow discussion.

Refer to the Attributes of God Poster. If we really understood the power and sovereignty of our God, we would be bold in our trust and our requests. In the same way, if we truly recognize who he is, it should not be hard to spend time in praise and thanksgiving, recognizing that he is merciful and gracious, faithful and immutable, holy and just. Because of what Jesus has done for us, Paul tells believers that we can have confidence to bring our prayers to God and they will be accepted (Ephesians 3:11-12). Let's pray together now and thank God for his wonderful attributes.

## Lesson Review

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

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