



Daniel Obeys God

1

Key Theme

- God rewards faith and obedience.

Key Passages

- Daniel 1:7, 1:8–21; John 16:33

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Identify how the four young men obeyed God.
- Describe how God blessed the four young men.



Lesson Overview



Come On In

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Students will practice the memory verse by working on a crossword puzzle and reciting the verse to a friend.



Activity 1: Daniel Obeys God Class Notes

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Students will fill out the Daniel Obeys God Class Notes as you study the lesson.



Studying God's Word

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The king of Babylon was hoping to brainwash Daniel and his three young friends. He brought them as captives from Judah and wanted them to forget their home, their customs, and their God. The king wanted them to serve him! The four young men refused to eat the rich foods sacrificed to idols and instead asked to eat only vegetables and water. God blessed their obedience to Him and rewarded them with favor, knowledge, and wisdom.



Activity 2: Interview with Four Hebrews

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Students will act out a skit that reviews the events in today's lesson.

Lesson Preparation

WHAT YOU WILL DO

WHAT YOU WILL NEED



COME ON IN

- Print one Memory Verse Review Sheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student.

- Memory Verse Review Sheet for each student



DANIEL OBEYS GOD CLASS NOTES

- Print one Daniel Obeys God Class Notes from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student. Keep the answer key for your use.

- Daniel Obeys God Class Notes for each student
- Daniel Obeys God Class Notes Answer Key
- Pencils



STUDYING GOD'S WORD

- Study the Prepare to Share section.
- Go Before the Throne.

- Student Take Home Sheets
- Quarter 3, Lessons 10 and 11 Theme Posters



INTERVIEW WITH FOUR HEBREWS

- Print six copies of the Interview with Four Hebrews Script from the Resource DVD-ROM, one for each of the five parts and one for you.

- Six copies of the Interview with Four Hebrews Script
- Optional props: costumes for the four Hebrews



Memory Verse

Proverbs 21:1 The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes.

► **Pace your lesson!** Use the clocks to mark the time you want to finish each section. This will help you stay on track and finish on time. You may need to shorten or drop sections as necessary.





Prepare to Share

SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the lesson key passages along with this background.

Nebuchadnezzar overthrew King Jehoiakim of Judah and carried him in chains with articles from the Temple in Jerusalem—from the house of God—to Babylon in 607 BC (2 Chronicles 36:5–8). Nebuchadnezzar then ordered that young Jewish men be trained “in whom there was no blemish, but good-looking, gifted in all wisdom, possessing knowledge and quick to understand” (Daniel 1:4), to serve the king of Babylon in his palace. Daniel was one of these young men—ripped from a privileged life as the son of a nobleman in Judah (Daniel 1:3–4).

Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were four of those whom Nebuchadnezzar brought from Judah to serve in his court. Nebuchadnezzar wanted to train the Jewish captives in the Babylonian language and customs for three years to prepare them to serve him. Nebuchadnezzar was set on brainwashing these bright young Jewish men to forget their godly heritage.

Part of the brainwashing plan was to change the names of the captives. The four men mentioned above were no exception. Their Hebrew names giving honor to God were changed in order to give honor to the false gods of the land. Their names were changed as follows. Daniel means “God is my judge.” His name was changed to Belteshazzar, which means “Bel [chief god] protect the king.” Hananiah means “God is gracious.” His name was changed to Shadrach, which means “inspired of Aku [moon god].” Mishael means “who is like God?” His name was changed to Meshach, which means “who is like Aku?” Azariah means “God has helped.” His new name, Abed-Nego, means “servant of Nego (or Nebo) [the god of wisdom].” All of these changes were made in an attempt to remove their allegiance from the true God.

As future members of the court, these four young men, likely in their teens, were offered the fine delicacies of the king’s table. But “Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself” with the food and wine offered by the king (Daniel 1:8). As a Jew, he was called to honor God’s dietary laws as given to Moses. Daniel and the others were likely offered food that had been dedicated to false gods and that was prohibited by God (Leviticus 11—pork, shellfish, etc.). To

eat this food would be to compromise and blend the worship of false gods with the one true God. Daniel and his friends refused to compromise, even knowing it could bring them trouble with the king. The chief of the eunuchs, though, was not keen on the idea of changing up the menu, for if the men got weak and weary, he would be to blame (Daniel 1:9–10).

Daniel presented a challenge to the steward: he and his friends would only eat vegetables and drink water for 10 days, and then their health would be evaluated. At the end of the 10 days, Daniel and his friends appeared better and fatter than the young men who had eaten from the king’s table. God had blessed their commitment to honor Him, and they were allowed to continue to eat their diet of vegetables. God also gave them knowledge and skill and wisdom. Daniel, in particular, was able to understand visions and dreams. This gift of interpreting would play an important part in Daniel’s ministry to God, Nebuchadnezzar, and other leaders (see Daniel chapters 2, 4, and 5).

After the three years of training, there were none like Daniel and his three friends. They excelled in wisdom and understanding. In fact, the Bible says they were 10 times better than the others. Each of the men served the king, and all were appointed to posts as governors, with Daniel serving the king directly as an advisor (Daniel 2:48–49).

God rewarded the obedience of Daniel, Mishael, Hananiah, and Azariah. God preserved their lives and prospered them. They would face other tests in the future, including tribulation, trials, imprisonment, and persecution. But they would continue to reveal the same conviction to honor and obey God. This is the attitude that all true followers of Jesus Christ should have.

In our culture today, many people have the misconception that becoming a Christian will bring an end to their trials. But our Lord Jesus made it clear that we will have tribulations in this world, but He has overcome the world, a truth that gives us peace (John 16:33). The tribulations we face in our culture may not be severe persecution for our faith like Daniel and his friends suffered. But if we are truly followers of Christ, trials and tribulation will enter into our lives (John 15:20; 2 Timothy 3:12). And as they do, we need to remember that Jesus said to expect the trials, be obedient through them, and trust God. Remember that Jesus Christ, by His Resurrection from the dead, has overcome this world and all of its trouble.

HISTORICAL/APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

Daniel is an intriguing figure. As a teenager, he found himself taken captive by a foreign king and put into a training program aimed at brainwashing him to be a loyal Babylonian. You might imagine being whisked away to Moscow in the 1960s and placed in a concrete building for three years of training in communist philosophy in order to be put in place as an advisor to the government officials. That is similar to what Daniel and his friends faced. To stand uncompromisingly on God's commands at a time like that would require true faith, not a minimal commitment equivalent to showing up at church every once in a while. Daniel's faith in God was evident even though he had been kidnapped, forced to serve a pagan king, and given a name that honored a false god. It is only by such faith that any believer can serve God in the face of trials.

Because of Daniel's integrity and servanthood, he found such favor that he endured through many kings and likely lived into his 80s. His service extended to the time of King Cyrus who would finally announce the end of the 70 years of Judah's captivity in 537 BC. In fact, Daniel likely witnessed the first Jews returning to Jerusalem under the leadership of Zerubbabel (Ezra 1–3).

The book of Daniel contains historical accounts of the events in Babylon. It also includes many prophecies about the Gentile rulers of the Middle East over the next 500 years. Further careful study of the book of

Daniel and these prophecies will provide confirmation of the supernatural accuracy of the Bible.



BEFORE THE THRONE

Dear sovereign Lord, you never change. I praise you and am comforted by that. I know that this lesson records events that happened long ago, in a land far away, but it rings true for me today in so many ways. Like Nebuchadnezzar, the enemy would love to brainwash me with the culture I'm living in. A rich diet is placed before me every day. It consists of more than forbidden food. Everything that would poison my soul is readily available to me and my students. But as long as our gaze is fixed on you, we can have the courage to say no to temptation like Daniel did. Holy Spirit, guard our minds from the brainwashing that is all around us that would make us doubt your Word and be unfaithful. Help us trust you in times of trials. I know that you will reward our faithfulness. Bring these heroes of the faith to life through this lesson, so that we are all inspired to trust you in trials, stand firm amid temptation, and be fully surrendered to you as they were.



COME ON IN

As students arrive . . .

- They will complete the Memory Verse Review Sheet. If time allows, have the students recite the verse together, to each other, or to you.

This time at the beginning of class should be used to review the memory verse. We have provided an activity sheet on the Resource DVD-ROM for you to use. You may have other ideas and ways to encourage your students to memorize the verse.



After all the students arrive, pray with them before beginning the lesson.



REVIEW

Using the Lesson Theme Posters provided with each lesson, quickly review the previous lesson(s) with your students. Take 5 to 10 minutes to reinforce the important truths the students have heard so far in your class.

Ask the children questions about the previous lessons as you display the Lesson Theme Posters. Reflect briefly on the passages you read, bringing the objectives and themes back into focus. This will refresh the truths in your students' minds and maintain continuity as you teach through the lessons.



Daniel Obeys God Class Notes

MATERIALS

- Daniel Obeys God Class Notes for each student
- Daniel Obeys God Class Notes Answer Key
- Pencils

INSTRUCTIONS

Print the class notes for each student. Pass them out at the beginning of class. Have students fill in the blanks as you study the lesson.

We will be completing these class notes as we study the Bible today. Do not work ahead.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

As we complete the class notes today, we will see how God rewarded the faithfulness of Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.



Studying God's Word

READ THE WORD

Refer to Quarter 3, Lessons 10 and 11 Theme Posters. In the past few lessons, we learned about God's 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 in to capture Judah and move many of the people out of the land.

Daniel was a young man in Judah who was taken to Babylon during this attack. He was taken with three of his friends, Hananiah, Mishael, and

- Use the History of Israel Poster included with your teacher kit to show your class where the biblical accounts you study chronologically fit into this timeline.

Azariah. When they got to Babylon, these young men were taken to King Nebuchadnezzar's palace—he was the king of Babylon. The king had requested that all the good-looking, smart men be brought to his palace. The king of Babylon wanted to brainwash these men. He wanted them to forget the God of Abraham, whom they honored, obeyed, and worshipped. The king wanted these young men to forget all they knew of Judah and to serve Babylon and its king! Today, we are going to see if that worked out for the king. We'll see if Daniel and his friends would remain true to God or be persuaded to turn away from God and serve the king of Babylon.

After Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were moved to the palace, the first thing the king did was to change their names! This may seem a bit odd to us. But this was part of their 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.

Daniel 1:7

At the top of your class notes is a verse. It is Daniel 1:7. Will someone read that to the class? *Assign a reader.*

Very good! Now let's take a look at 1–4 on your class notes. We can complete that with the information we just read in Daniel 1:7. Who can answer those for us? *Call on students to complete 1–4. 1) Belteshazzar. 2) Shadrach. 3) Meshach. 4) Abed-Nego.*

Daniel 1:8–14

The four young Hebrew men had new names, a new place to live, and new customs. The king wanted them to do everything he told them to do—starting with what they should eat and drink. That's where we are going to start reading today. We are going to read Daniel 1:8–14. *Divide the passage and have students read the passage aloud.*

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

Defile:

Dishonor, spoil, violate

- ? Let's study this a bit. What did Daniel purpose in his heart? *Daniel 1:8. Not to defile himself.*
- ? What do you think defile means? *Allow discussion. Dishonor, spoil, violate.*
- ? So Daniel didn't want to spoil or dishonor himself. What did Daniel think would defile him? The answer is in Daniel 1:8. *The king's delicacies and wine.*

Yes. The delicacies of the king included rich foods that God's Law did not allow His people to eat. Daniel worshipped the one true God and 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.

- ? Will someone read #5 on your class notes? How will you complete that? *Assign a Reader. Delicacies.*

Daniel and his friends had a problem. They didn't want to eat the king's delicacies, but they were prisoners. And King Nebuchadnezzar wanted them to eat it. But God had already worked out this problem. Someone read Daniel 1:9 again. *Assign a reader.*

? In this verse, what did God do? *Daniel 1:9. God brought Daniel into favor with the chief of the eunuchs.*

? Do any of you know what that means? *Allow discussion.*

The chief of the eunuchs would have been the man the king put in charge of all the prisoners. He was also called the steward. God moved this man's heart to favor Daniel. In other words, the man liked Daniel. When Daniel told the man he could not eat the king's food but would rather have something else, the steward listened.

? Will someone read #6 on your class notes? How will you finish that? *Assign a reader. God.*

? Now, let's move on to Daniel 1:10. Will someone read that again? This is what the steward said when Daniel asked for different food. *Assign a reader. Daniel 1:10.*

? Who did the eunuch fear? *The king.*

? What did the eunuch think would happen if Daniel and his friends ate the different food? *Their faces would look worse than the other men.*

The eunuch was afraid to go against the king. If he were caught disobeying, the king would have his head! But remember, God moved the eunuch's heart and he liked Daniel. So Daniel offered the eunuch a test.

Let's read Daniel 1:11–14 again. *Assign readers.*

Daniel 1:11–14

? How long was the test to be? *Daniel 1:12. 10 days.*

? What did Daniel want to eat and drink? *Daniel 1:12. Vegetables to eat and water to drink.*

? OK. Now let's read #7 on the class notes. How will you answer that? *Assign a reader. Ten days.*

? And will someone read #8 on the class notes? How will you complete that? *Vegetables, water.*

? What would happen after the ten days were up? *Daniel 1:13. They would be examined.*

Yes. After the ten days of eating vegetables and water they would be examined and compared to the other men who were eating the king's delicacies and drinking his wine.

? Did the steward agree to this idea? *Daniel 1:14. Yes.*

Daniel 1:15–16

So, the plan was accepted by the steward. Daniel and his three friends ate only vegetables and drank water for ten days.

Let's find out what happened. Someone read Daniel 1:15–16. *Assign reader.*

- ? So how did Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego look after the ten days? *Daniel 1:15. They looked better and were fatter than the others!*
- ? Look at #9 on your class notes. Complete that now. *Better and fatter.*
- ? Yes, they were better and fatter! And what did the steward do for them? *Daniel 1:16. Took the delicacies away and gave them vegetables to eat.*
- ? Right! So did God honor their obedience to His Law? *Yes!*

Discover the Truth

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.



READ THE WORD

Daniel 1:17–21

God was blessing these men. And He still had blessings to give them. We are going to read about those now. Let's read Daniel 1:17–21. *Choose students to read Daniel 1:17–21.*

EXAMINE THE WORD

Sounds like some high praise for the Lord's men, captive in Babylon. I want you to answer a few more questions from this text.

Observe the Text

- ? Daniel 1:17 states three things God gave the men. What is one of the things? *Daniel 1:17. Knowledge.*
- ? And another? *Skill.*
- ? And the third? *Wisdom.*
- ? God honored their obedience. Someone read #10 on your class notes. How will you complete that? *Assign a reader. Wisdom.*
- ? And God gave Daniel a special gift. What was that, also in Daniel 1:17? *Understanding of visions and dreams.*
- ? Could someone read #11 on your class notes? How will you complete that? *Assign a reader. Understanding.*

- ? So, when King Nebuchadnezzar interviewed the men, what did he think of them? *Daniel 1:19. None of the other men were like them!*
- ? And what did the king have them do? *Daniel 1:19. They served the king.*

Discover the Truth

God had blessed the obedience and trust these men had in Him with good health and strength. God also gave them knowledge, skill, wisdom, and understanding. And because of the blessings they received from God, the king would keep these fine young men close by as his own special servants in the palace!



Interview with Four Hebrews

MATERIALS

- Six copies of the Interview with Four Hebrews Script
- Optional props: costumes for the four Hebrews

INSTRUCTIONS

Assign students for the roles. Repeat using different students if time allows.

We have a skit to perform for the class.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

These four Hebrew men were blessed by God when they honored Him by obeying His

Law during their time as captives in Babylon. God blessed Belteshazzar (Daniel), Shadrach (Hananiah), Meshach (Mishael), and Abed-Nego (Azariah) with special abilities that made them stand out among the king's servants. God rewarded these men for their faithfulness and obedience. Daniel lived a long life and served many kings. In future lessons we will learn more about Daniel and how God used him.



Applying God's Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

Daniel and other young men were taken from their homes and forced to live in the king's palace against their will. The king wanted them to forget everything about their old home in Judah, so he tried to brainwash them and change their loyalties. The king wanted them to turn away from the God they loved, obeyed, and worshipped. He wanted them to be thoroughly changed in heart and mind and follow the Babylonian gods and lifestyle. But when they were served rich food from the king's court, Daniel and the others refused to eat it. That type of food was forbidden

according to the Jewish dietary laws. Instead of eating the rich food, they requested to eat only vegetables and drink only water.

The Lord blessed them in many ways. He gave them favor with the king's steward. And after a ten-day test, the youths looked better and fatter than the others who ate the rich food. God also blessed them with skill, knowledge, wisdom, and understanding. God gave Daniel the ability to interpret dreams and visions. All four of these men were chosen to serve the king in important places. Daniel went on to serve many kings. His ability to interpret dreams became famous.

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

Beltshazzar (Daniel), Shadrach (Hananiah), Meshach (Mishael), and Abed-Nego (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 stood up to the king's steward and said they couldn't eat the food of the king because it would be disobeying God! They obeyed God and trusted Him to help them.

You know, we will have trials, too! And in the midst of our trials 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 tribulations.

John 16:33

Look at the verse at the bottom of your class notes. It is John 16:33. Someone read that for me. *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 might be some tribulations that kids your age have? *Allow discussion.*

Moving, illness, parents' divorce, death, etc.

Jesus tells us that in this world we will have tribulation. And Jesus had tribulation. The people rejected Him and killed Him on the Cross. But because Jesus died on the Cross, and because He rose again, we can trust His Words, 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 good news.

➤ Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind the students to practice the memory verse this week.

? How will you answer #12 on your class notes? Will someone read that for us? *Assign a reader. Tribulation.*



MEMORY VERSE

Proverbs 21:1 The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes.



GROUP PRAYER TIME

- Praise God that He is wise and faithful. If we are His children, He will always do what is best for us.
- Thank God for examples like Daniel and Jesus who encourage us to trust God and obey Him through our trials.
- Ask God to help us to obey Him when the pressure to disobey is strong.

