



# 4

## God Protects

### Key Theme

- God is omnipotent.

### Key Passages

- Daniel 3:1, 3:4–6, 3:8, 3:12–18, 3:21–27, 6:10, 6:16–17, 6:22–23; James 1:2–3

### Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Describe the trust that the three men had in God.
- Explain how God protected Daniel.



## 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: God Protects Class Notes

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



### Studying God's Word

page 5

The captives in Babylon were faced with persecution. Nebuchadnezzar ordered Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego to bow down to an idol. He later forbade the young man Daniel to pray to God. All of these godly men witnessed God's mighty hand of protection when they chose to obey and honor God.



### Activity 2: In Jeopardy

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Students will play a game where teams compete for points by answering questions about the 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



### GOD PROTECTS CLASS NOTES

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

- God Protects Class Notes for each student
- God Protects Answer Key
- Pencils



### STUDYING GOD'S WORD

- Study the Prepare to Share section.
- Go Before the Throne.
- Print one Reader's Theater Script from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student.

- Student Take Home Sheets
- Reader's Theater Script for each student



### IN JEOPARDY

- Print one In Jeopardy Teacher Guide and Questions from the Resource DVD-ROM for your use.
- Print and cut out the four In Jeopardy Category Titles and four sets of the Point Cards from the Resource DVD-ROM.

- In Jeopardy Teacher Guide
- In Jeopardy Category Titles
- Four sets of the In Jeopardy Point Cards
- In Jeopardy Questions
- Poster putty or tape



## 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.

When we left Daniel and his three friends in Lesson 1, they had been torn from their homeland, had their names changed, and had been trained to stand in the court of the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar. After three years of training, these young Jews were promoted to places of prominence. God blessed them with wisdom and abilities far beyond any others in the court. Daniel served in the king's presence, and the other three were set in positions of authority in the government (Daniel 2:49).

Sometime after their promotion, King Nebuchadnezzar set up a golden idol and called all his governors and officials together to dedicate the idol (3:1–3). As the trumpet sounded and the musical instruments played, everyone was supposed to bow down and worship the image. If anyone refused, the penalty was death in a fiery furnace. What were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego to do? To obey the order from the king would be to bow down to a false god—something they knew was clearly condemned by God in the second of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:4–6).

As they demonstrated in their previous test of being expected to eat the king's food, they were committed to serving God above serving the king. Their failure to bow was brought to the attention of the king by other leaders who may have been jealous of the trio's quick rise to power. When Nebuchadnezzar heard of their disobedience, he was enraged and asked the three if the charge was true. The king offered them the chance to bow down to his idol. The three men responded that if they were thrown into the furnace, God could protect them. But even if God did not save them, they would rather face the king's punishment than disobey God. What trust! What loyalty to their God!

Enraged all the more, Nebuchadnezzar commanded the furnace be superheated and the three men bound and tossed in. Then, the king looked and saw four men walking unbound in the middle of the flames, and one had the appearance as the "Son of God." Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and knew that something supernatural was happening. As the three men emerged from the furnace, not only were they not burned, but also they did not even have the smell of smoke on their clothing.

Nebuchadnezzar recognized that God's angel had protected them. Nebuchadnezzar issued a decree

to put to death anyone who spoke anything against God, and he promoted the three men even more. Nebuchadnezzar recognized that there was a God who could thwart his kingly commands. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego had dramatically demonstrated their trust in God, and God showed Himself mighty to save them from the flames, and He received the glory for their protection.

Likewise, Daniel was placed in a similar situation in chapter 6. Although Daniel is commonly presented as a youth in pictures depicting this account, he was near 80 years old during the reign of Darius the Mede. Daniel had served the kings of the Babylonian and Medo-Persian empires as a counselor for at least 60 years at this point and had been blessed by the God he faithfully served. Likely because of jealousy, the other leaders hatched a plot to have Daniel killed. They convinced King Darius to issue a decree that no one could pray to any god but the king for 30 days.

Daniel knew of the decree and he faced a choice: continue to honor God by praying to Him or face being thrown to the lions. The men who set the trap had surely seen Daniel's habit of praying three times a day and were waiting for him to remain faithful to God. Seeing Daniel praying as usual, the other leaders took the charge before the king, demanding that Daniel receive the due penalty. Despite the king's efforts to reverse the situation, Daniel was thrown into the den with the lions.

As the morning dawned, King Darius ran to the den and called out to Daniel, asking if God had preserved him. To the king's delight, Daniel replied that God had sent His angel to shut the mouths of the lions to protect him. Because Daniel trusted in God, he was saved through this trial. In response, King Darius had the families of all those who had plotted against Daniel thrown to the lions where they were quickly devoured. Darius also wrote an edict that everyone in his kingdom should fear God; it seems that Darius came to truly trust in God. Daniel continued to prosper in the reign of Darius and then King Cyrus.

All four of these Jews were faithful and maintained a positive testimony before kings. The writer of Hebrews undoubtedly had these two events in mind when he penned 11:33–34 and spoke of those who had "stopped the mouths of lions" and "quenched the violence of fire." And we are called to follow their example of faith in God. By faith in God's omnipotence and sovereignty, we must honor Christ whatever the cost.

## HISTORICAL/APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

Throughout the Old Testament, God appeared to man. The angel that protected the three in the furnace may have been an appearance of God the Son—Jesus Christ before He came as a babe. Though the text is not perfectly clear on this point, some translations render verse Daniel 3:25 as “the Son of God” and verse 28 as “His Angel” to make that connection. Christophanies, the appearance of the Son in the Old Testament, are also found in Joshua 5:13–15 and Judges 6:11–24, as well as other places. Likewise, the protector of Daniel in the midst of the lions may have been Jesus Himself.

The Apostle Paul told his young disciple Timothy that “all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12). Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah are living examples of that verse. God’s people have always been persecuted for their faith in God and for obeying His commands. We see the apostles in the book of Acts responding in a way similar to Daniel and his friends. When commanded not to preach in the name of Jesus, they refused because God’s authority and commands trump the commands of men: “We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:27–32). This is the same refrain, in different words, that Daniel and the other three men proclaimed.

In 1 Peter 3:13–17, Peter also wrote of persecution for the sake of Christ and the gospel. We are called to honor God by telling others of the hope we have, but expecting that we will suffer for it. God may choose to

protect us from the suffering, as He spared Daniel and the others, or He may allow us to experience imprisonment, beating, or death, as many Christians have suffered throughout the ages. Regardless, we are to take up our crosses and follow Jesus, being faithful to obey everything that He has commanded us. We are to trust His omnipotent care for us and make His name great among the nations. Pray that God would give you the strength to obey Him and trust fully in His care for you.



### BEFORE THE THRONE

Dear Almighty One, I stand amazed at your power and sovereign grace. I am humbled as I study the lives of your servants in Babylon. What would I do—how would I react in the face of such severe persecution? Holy Spirit, grow strength and courage in me as I study your Word. And grow my faith as I take opportunities to be faithful in the small things. When I face trials, I’ll try to count it all joy, knowing that you are building my character and faith. Let my students gain these deep truths from this study. This lesson points out YOUR omnipotence—not the power, courage, and strength of any man. We are weak, Lord, but you are strong! Through you alone can we have hope and courage to live victoriously! Reach my students with these truths, I pray.



## 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.



## God Protects Class Notes

### MATERIALS

- God Protects Class Notes
- God Protects Class Notes Answer Key
- Pencils

### INSTRUCTIONS

*Print the class notes for each student. Pass them out at the beginning of class. Students will complete them during the lesson.*

We will complete the class notes as we study the Bible passages. Do not work

ahead. I'll let you know when to fill something in.

*After filling out each point on the class notes, have the students re-read the statement together or call on individual students to read it.*

### CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

As we complete the class notes today, we will witness God's power as He worked in the lives of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego.



## Studying God's Word

### READ THE WORD

*Refer to the Lesson 1 Lesson Theme Poster. Remember Daniel and his three friends—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego? They were Jews and had been brought from Judah as captives into the court of the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar. The king wanted them to turn away from the God they loved, obeyed, and worshipped. But these young men would not deny*

- 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.

their holy God. They stood up to the king and were obedient to God. They would not eat the king's food—which had been forbidden by God's Law. Their courage to stand firm came from God. And the Lord blessed them in many ways.

However, we will see that things were about to change for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. You see, the king issued another command. This command tested the faith of these young men again. Let's read what the king wanted the people to do.

## Daniel 3:1, 3:4–6

*Pass out the Reader's Theater Scripts to all students. We are going to read some of today's lesson from this Reader's Theater Script. Let's start by reading Part 1. This is from Daniel 3. Choose students to read for the Narrator and the Herald. Read Daniel 3:1, 3:4–6.*

### EXAMINE THE WORD

Use the Reader's Theater Script to find the answers to the questions I'm asking if you need help.

#### Observe the Text

- ? What did King Nebuchadnezzar make? *Daniel 3:1. An image of gold.*
- ? Yes. The king made a large, golden image. Then the king sent his herald out to make an announcement. What was that announcement? *Daniel 3:5. The people were commanded to fall down and worship the gold image.*
- ? And what would happen to those who refused to fall down and worship this idol? *Daniel 3:6. They would be thrown into the fiery furnace.*
- ? Look at #1 on your class notes. Will someone read that for us? How will you complete it? *Assign a reader. Image.*
- ? And how about #2? Who can read that for us? How will you complete it? *Assign a reader. Fiery furnace.*

This wasn't good news for anyone who loved God and wanted to obey. Remember, God commands that we worship Him alone. And the king was demanding that the people worship this false god—a golden image! Well, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego would not bow down to the false god—they worshipped the true, holy God and no other. But someone found out, and they were caught! Let's read Part 2 of the Reader's Theater Script from Daniel. It is Daniel 3:8 and 3:12–15. *Assign readers to read the text.*

## Daniel 3:8, 3:12–15

- ? The Chaldeans or Babylonians came to the king. What did they say about Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego? *Daniel 3:12. They do not serve the king's gods or worship the gold image.*

The Bible says they did not bow down to the gold image. They would not serve the false gods or worship the gold image.

- ? Someone read #3 on your class notes. How will you answer that? *Assign a reader. Not.*
- ? What did King Nebuchadnezzar do when he found out the men were not going to obey him? *Daniel 3:13. He ordered the men to come before him.*
- ? How did the king feel about their disobedience? *Daniel 3:13. He was angry.*
- ? I'd say! Someone read #4 on your class notes. How will you finish that? *Assign a reader. Angry.*

Of course Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego knew what would happen to them. They heard the command. If anyone refused the king, he would be thrown into the fiery furnace. The king was furious. But they would not obey him. They could not. They served the real God—the Creator of the universe! The king told them again, “Obey or you will die! You will be thrown into the fiery furnace.” What happened? You will see that God gave these men amazing courage. They stood strong. What did they say to the powerful king? Let’s read Part 3 of our Reader’s Theater Script for the answer. *Assign readers.*

Daniel 3:16–18

- ? Who did they trust in? *Daniel 3:17. Their God.*
- ? And what did they believe God could do? *Daniel 3:17. Deliver them from the furnace and deliver them from the king’s hand.*
- ? The young men knew that God is all-powerful to save. Which attribute of God describes Him as all-powerful? *Omnipotent.*

**OMNIPOTENT**  
(Refer to Attributes Poster)

Yes! They knew that their God could rescue them at any time because He is omnipotent. Nothing is impossible for God. And Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego would be obedient to God whether He saved them or not! These men stood strong against the king.

- ? Someone read Daniel 3:18 again. *Assign a reader.* What did they say to the king? *Daniel 3:18. We do not serve your gods. We will not worship the gold image.*
- ? Look at #5 on your class notes. What did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego do before the king? Who can read which statements apply? *Assign a reader. Check boxes a, b, c, d.*

These men were letting King Nebuchadnezzar know that they had no regrets and no doubts about their decision. Their faith and trust in God went beyond any fear they may have had. They believed God could save them if He wanted to. But even if God didn’t save them, they would not disobey Him.

So, what happened to them? Did the king go through with the harsh punishment? Did God save them? Some of you may know the outcome, but let’s all read it together. Look at Part 4 on the Reader’s Theater Script. It is Daniel 3:21–27. *Assign readers.*

Daniel 3:21–27

? Where did the king throw the three young men? *Daniel 3:21. Into the burning fiery furnace.*

? How many men had King Nebuchadnezzar thrown into the fiery furnace? *Daniel 3:23. Three men.*

? How many men did King Nebuchadnezzar see? *Daniel 3:25. Four men, and they were not hurt.*

Yes! The king saw four men instead of three, and the men were not hurt. He said the fourth was like the Son of God!

? Let's move on to #6 on your class notes. Who will read that for us? How will you answer it? *Four.*

? So what did the king do? *Daniel 3:26. He went to the furnace and spoke to the men.*

? Yes. And what did he say to them? *Daniel 3:26. Come out and come here.*

? So what happened? What did they do? *Daniel 3:26. They came out.*

### Discover the Truth

How could that be? The king saw four men in the fiery furnace. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego walked out on their own. And the Bible says that there was not a hair on their heads that was burned. Their clothes were not burned. They didn't even smell like smoke! And did you notice that the fourth man the king had seen did not come out? He was gone! God had sent Him to protect the men in the furnace.

God had protected them. They believed and trusted in the one true God. He is the omnipotent one. He is all-powerful to protect and save if that is His will. He had power over the fiery furnace! God's power—God's omnipotence—allowed these men to walk right out of that furnace without any burns, without any smell!



### READ THE WORD

Daniel wasn't one of the men thrown into the fiery furnace. But God did have a trial and a test for him, too! This happened when Daniel was older—almost 80 years old. He had served the foreign kings for a long time. But he had always worshipped and obeyed the true God.

A time came when the leaders of Babylon got jealous of Daniel because he was the king's favorite. So they decided to set up a trap for him. It was very much like the trap set for his friends in the fiery furnace. A law went out that everyone **MUST** pray **ONLY** to the king. The king's name at this time was Darius. No one was allowed to pray to any other god and that included Daniel's God—the only true God.

What did Daniel do about this king's request? Turn to Daniel 6:10. Let's read that. *Choose a student to read the verse.*

Daniel 6:10

## EXAMINE THE WORD

### Observe the Text

- ? Where was Daniel? *Daniel 6:10. In his upper room.*
- ? What did Daniel do? *Opened his windows and knelt down and prayed.*

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. Let's go to Daniel 6:16–17 to see what the king would do with Daniel. *Choose students to read Daniel 6:16–17.*

Daniel 6:16–17

- ? After the king found out that Daniel had disobeyed him, where did he command that Daniel be brought? *Daniel 6:16. Into a den of lions.*
- ? Yes, Daniel would be put into a den of lions because he refused to pray to the king! Look at #7 on your class notes. Will someone read that? What is the answer? *Assign a reader. Lions' den.*

So Daniel was put 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 who was placed in their den. Did that happen to Daniel? The king returned to the den the next day and called out to Daniel. Let's see what the king found! We will read Daniel 6:22–23. *Choose students to read Daniel 6:22–23.*

Daniel 6:22–23

- ? What happened to Daniel while in the Lions' den? *Daniel 6:22. God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths.*
- ? Someone read #8 on your class notes. How will you complete that? *Angel, shut.*
- ? Back to our Bibles! What did the king command when he heard that Daniel was not harmed? In Daniel 6:23. *Daniel 6:23. That Daniel be brought out of the lions' den.*
- ? When Daniel came out, there was NO injury on him. According to Daniel 6:23, why was no injury found on him? *Daniel 6:23. He believed in his God.*
- ? Great! Now will someone read #9 on your class notes? How will you answer that? *Assign a reader. Believed.*

### Discover the Truth

How amazing! This is another example of God protecting a man who trusted and believed in Him. God gave Daniel the courage to stand up to the king. Daniel would not disobey God. And he trusted God. And God protected him by sending an angel to close the mouths of the lions. Daniel came out of the lions' den without injury.





## In Jeopardy

### MATERIALS

- In Jeopardy Teacher Guide
- In Jeopardy Category Titles
- In Jeopardy Point Cards
- In Jeopardy Questions
- Poster putty or tape

### INSTRUCTIONS

We are going to divide into teams to play a game. This game will be a fun review of what we've talked about today. *Divide the class*

*into teams according to the size of the class. Play the game according to the In Jeopardy Teacher Guide.*

### CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

We worship a very powerful God. He is worthy of our worship and obedience. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego all trusted God and would not turn away from Him in spite of horrible circumstances and the threat of death.



## Applying God's Word

### WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego broke Nebuchadnezzar's command to bow and worship the gold image. They chose to obey God rather than man. Before they were thrown into a fiery hot furnace, they expressed their faith and trust in God. He could deliver them if He wanted to, but even if He didn't, they would obey Him rather than bow to a false god. And God did deliver them! They came out of that furnace without a single burn! God had protected them.

Daniel wasn't thrown into the fiery furnace. But God did have a trial and a test for him, too! It wasn't until Daniel was older—almost 80 years old. King Darius commanded that no one pray to the true God. Daniel remained obedient to God and continued to pray each day. When he was found out, the king had him thrown into a lions' den as punishment. God chose to protect Daniel from the lions! He sent an angel to close the lions' mouths. God is all-powerful to save when He wants to. And He showed His power by saving Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego from the fiery furnace and by bringing Daniel safely out of the lions' den!

## GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

Daniel and his friends had faith and trusted God. But they still went through some very difficult times. They trusted and obeyed God. But they knew that the decision to save them was up to God alone!

The Bible tells us that everyone who wants to live a godly life and follow Jesus Christ will suffer! That includes you and me if we trust Jesus. Many people don't believe that. They think that God will keep us from suffering. But this isn't always true! In fact, God's people have suffered much because they believe in Jesus. The Bible is a history book that tells of many Christ-followers who suffered. And we know that all around the world people have and are still suffering because of their love for Jesus.

God's Word tells us that we will face trials. One verse that talks about trials in this world is found in James 1:2–3. Look at your class notes. It is at the bottom there. Let's read that together. *Read James 1:2–3 together.*

? Notice that verse 2 doesn't say IF you face trials of many kinds. What does it say? *WHENEVER you face trials.*

Yes. We will have trials. But when we do, God has promised that He will give us courage, strength, and His grace to get through them. Just knowing that God is in control of what happens, helps. And if you are a child of God, He will give you His grace and His strength when you need it, and you will have the power to stand for Him no matter where you are or what you are facing.



James 1:2–3

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



### MEMORY VERSE

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



### GROUP PRAYER TIME

- Praise God that He is in control and that His ways are best because He is omnipotent and sovereign.
- Thank God for His faithfulness to protect His children.
- Ask God to help us remain faithful to Him and trust Him when we face trials.

