



Daniel Obeys God 1

Key Theme

- God rewards faith and obedience.

Key Passages

- Daniel 1:7–9, 1:12–19

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

page 5

Students will put the Memory Verse Cards in order and recite the verses together and/or to each other.



Activity 1: Daniel Obeys God Class Notes

page 5

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



Studying God's Word

page 5

The king of Babylon was hoping to brainwash Daniel and his three 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: Name Game Match

page 10

Students will play a game to match up Name Game Strips that have the Hebrew and Babylonian names of Daniel–Belteshazzar; Hananiah–Shadrach; Mishael–Meshach; and Azariah–Abed-Nego. Then they will practice pronouncing the names by reading the strips out loud.

Lesson Preparation

WHAT YOU WILL DO

WHAT YOU WILL NEED



COME ON IN

- Print and cut the Memory Verse Cards from the Resource DVD-ROM for every 2–3 students.
- If you want to do this as an individual activity, make one set per student.
- Put complete sets into envelopes or plastic bags.

- Memory Verse Poster
- Memory Verse Cards in envelopes or plastic bags



STUDYING GOD'S WORD

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

- Student Take Home Sheets



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



NAME GAME MATCH

- Print and cut out one Name Game Match Strip for every two students. Each student should have one half of a strip.
- Bring in a container to put the strips into.

- Name Game Match Strips cut in half (enough for each student to have one half)
- Containers to put the strips into



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.

► Because of the age and ability of 1st and 2nd graders to read and comprehend, we encourage you to read the Scriptures to the students. However, if you have strong readers, by all means have them participate by reading God's Word.



COME ON IN

As students arrive . . .

- They will put the Memory Verse Cards in order and recite the verses together and/or to each other. They may work individually or in teams.

This time at the beginning of class should be used to review the memory verse. We have provided this activity 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 the 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. I'll let you know when to fill something in.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

As we complete the class notes today, we will see how God rewarded the faithfulness of four men for their obedience. Their names were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.



Studying God's Word

READ THE WORD

Refer to Quarter 3, Lesson 10 Lesson Theme Poster. 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. Refer to Quarter 3, Lesson 11 Lesson Theme Poster. So God punished them when He sent the wicked Babylonians to capture Judah and take many of the people out of the land. Daniel was one of the young men in Judah taken away from home

- 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.

to Babylon during this attack. He was taken with three of his friends, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. These are tough names to pronounce. Let's practice saying them a few times. Repeat the names after me. *Say the names and have the students repeat them after you. Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.*

When they got to Babylon, these young men were taken to King Nebuchadnezzar's palace—he was the king of Babylon. The king wanted all the good-looking, smart men to be brought to his palace. He wanted them to forget the one true God, whom they obeyed and worshipped. The king wanted these young men to forget their homes in Judah and to serve him only! 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 turn away from Him to follow the king of Babylon.

After Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were taken to the king's 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 the plan to brainwash the Hebrew men. Their Hebrew names—the names they had been called all their lives—would not be used anymore. The king wanted them to forget who they were and where they came from.

Daniel 1:7

Listen to what the Bible says. I'm going to read Daniel 1:7. Turn there in your Bibles. We'll see what new Babylonian names the king gave to these friends. *Help the students find the verse. Read Daniel 1:7.*

The king changed their names! Take a look at your class notes. See numbers 1 through 4? Let's complete those. All you have to do is put the first letter of the new name of each man on the blank. *Re-read the verse so the students can get the answers. They will fill in the blanks with the correct letters.*

- ? Who can answer #1? *Daniel became Belteshazzar.*
- ? And how about #2? *Hananiah became Shadrach.*
- ? And #3? *Mishael became Meshach.*
- ? The last one, #4? *Azariah became Abed-Nego.*

The four young Hebrew men had new names, a new place to live, and new ways of doing everyday things. The king wanted them to do everything he told them to do. He told the young men they must eat the food and drink what he wanted them to eat and drink. But there was a problem with that. Let's see what that problem was. The Bible calls the king's food *delicacies*.

Daniel 1:8–9

I'm going to read Daniel 1:8–9. Listen carefully so you can answer the questions I ask when I'm finished. *Read the verses emphasizing the answers to the questions.*

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

? OK. What did Daniel purpose in his heart? *Daniel 1:8. Not to defile himself.*

? What do you think defile means? *Allow discussion.*

Defile is another word for dishonor or spoil. If Daniel ate the king's food, he would dishonor or bring shame on himself because he knew God did not want him to eat that type of food. Daniel worshipped the one true God. He wanted to obey God and eat what God said he could eat.

? What was it that Daniel didn't want to eat? *Re-read Daniel 1:8. The king's delicacies and wine.*

? Will someone read #5 on your class notes? Which word goes in the blank? Look at the picture key on the class notes. Match the picture with the word. How will you complete that? Someone read that for me. *Assign a reader. King's.*

They did not want to eat the king's delicacies. This was a big problem! But God had already worked out this problem. Listen as I read Daniel 1:9 again. God brought something to Daniel. Listen carefully. *Read Daniel 1:9 emphasizing "brought Daniel into the favor and goodwill."*

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

? What does that mean? *Allow discussion.*

The chief of the eunuchs was a man the king put in charge of all the prisoners. This man was in charge of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. Daniel 1:9 says that God brought Daniel into favor and goodwill of the man in charge. In other words, the man listened to and liked Daniel.

But, this man was supposed to give the young men what the king wanted them to eat, not what they asked for! He was afraid to go against the king. If he was caught disobeying, the king would kill him! But, God was in control of this situation. God had moved the man's heart, and he liked Daniel. So, when Daniel told the man he had a plan, the man listened! Daniel wanted to be tested. But what was the test?

Listen as I read Daniel 1:12–14 and tell me what Daniel wanted to do. *Read the passage.*

? This was Daniel's test. First of all, how long was the test to be? *Daniel 1:12. Ten days.*

? What did Daniel want to eat and drink during the ten-day test? *Daniel 1:12. Vegetables to eat and water to drink.*

Defile:

Dishonor, spoil, violate

➤ Re-read the verses or portions of the verses as necessary to help the students hear the answers directly from the biblical text.

Daniel 1:12–14

- ? That was some test! Look at #6 on the class notes. What is the answer? Who can read it for us? *Assign a reader. Ten.*
- ? And will someone read #7 on the class notes? How will you complete that? *Assign a reader. Water.*
- ? Now, what would happen after the ten days were up? *Re-read Daniel 1:13 if necessary. They would be examined.*

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

- ? Did the man in charge agree to Daniel's plan? *Re-read Daniel 1:14 if necessary. Yes.*

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

Daniel 1:15–16

Let's find out what happened. Listen as I read Daniel 1:15–16. *Read Daniel 1:15–16.*

- ? So how did Daniel—Belteshazzar—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego look after the ten days? *Daniel 1:15. They looked better and were fatter than the others!*

Yes! They looked better and healthier than the other men who were eating the king's food.

- ? OK. What is the answer to #8 on your class notes? Will you read that for us? *Assign a reader. Looked.*

- ? So how did this work out for Daniel and his friends? What were they allowed to eat? *Re-read Daniel 1:16 if necessary. They were allowed to eat vegetables.*

Right! They were able to eat the foods they knew God would allow them to eat. And they were able to obey God's Law.

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 from the king. If they ate the food of the king, they knew they would be disobeying God. God had commanded they eat only certain foods—and the “delicacies” of the king were NOT what God had commanded. God honored their obedience. They were allowed to eat just vegetables and drink just water AND they looked better and were stronger than the other men who were eating the king's food and drinking his wine.



READ THE WORD

God was blessing these men. And He still had blessings to give them. We are going to read about those blessings now. Let's read Daniel 1:17–20.

Read Daniel 1:17–20 emphasizing the answers to the questions below so the students will hear and be able to answer.

Daniel 1:17–19

EXAMINE THE WORD

God rewarded Daniel and his friends because they were obedient. I'm going to ask 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? *Re-read Daniel 1:17 if necessary. Knowledge.*
- ? And another? *Skill.*
- ? And the third? *Wisdom.*
- ? God honored or rewarded their obedience. God blessed Daniel and his friends. Someone read #9 on your class notes. How will you complete that? *Assign a reader. Daniel.*
- ? And God gave Daniel a special gift. What was that? Listen again to Daniel 1:17. *Re-read Daniel 1:17. Understanding of visions and dreams.*
- ? Back to our class notes. Who will read #10? How will you complete that? *Assign a reader. Gift.*
- ? So King Nebuchadnezzar interviewed or asked the men lots of questions. Were there any other men like Daniel and his friends? *Daniel 1:19. No, none of the other men were like them!*

God blessed these men in special ways. None of the other men in the king's palace compared to these men. God gave them knowledge and skill and wisdom.

- ? And where did they end up? Listen as I read Daniel 1:19 again. *Re-read Daniel 1:19. They served the king.*

Discover the Truth

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





Name Game Match

MATERIALS

- Name Game Match Strips cut in half
- Paper bag or small container to put the strips in

INSTRUCTIONS

Cut enough strips for each student to have one half. (If you have ten students cut five different strips.) Put the cut strips in a paper bag or another container. Pass the bag around the class and have each student take one piece of paper. If you have an odd number of students, take one for yourself. When you say "go" have the students go around the classroom and try to find the half strip that matches theirs. Once all the students have found their match they can practice pronouncing the names by reading their strips out loud. Play again if time allows.

Today we learned that Daniel and his friends were given new Babylonian names. In our game, you'll pull a strip from this bag. Each strip has either a Hebrew name or a

new Babylonian name. Your job is to find a name strip that matches your strip. Each strip has a different cut down the middle. The strips will fit together. Once you find your match, stay with your partner. After everyone is matched up, we'll go around the room and read the strips and practice saying the names.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

These four Hebrew men were blessed by God when they obeyed His Laws, even though they were commanded not to! God blessed Belteshazzar (Daniel), Shadrach (Hananiah), Meshach (Mishael), and Abed-Nego (Azariah) with special abilities. God rewarded these men for their faithfulness and obedience.



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 gave them new names and made them learn a new language. The king wanted them to turn away from the God they loved, obeyed, and worshipped. He wanted them to change their hearts and minds and follow the false Babylonian gods and lifestyle. When they were served rich food from the king's court, Daniel and his friends decided they would not eat it because God's Law said they could NOT eat these rich foods. Instead of eating the rich food, they asked for vegetables and water.

The Lord blessed them for their obedience. He gave them favor with the man in charge and after a ten-day test, the young men looked better and healthier than the others who ate the king's 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. He became famous because he was able to interpret visions and dreams.

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

Beltshazzar (Daniel), Shadrach (Hananiah), Meshach (Mishael), and Abed-Nego (Azariah) sure had trials! Things were not easy for them. They were taken from their homes as young men and moved to a country far away. They were taken to the king's palace where their names were changed and they were told to live differently than they were used to. But they remained faithful to God. They stood up to the king and said they couldn't eat the food 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, no matter what. 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, cry out to Him, pray to Him, and look to Him for comfort.

The Bible says a lot about hard times or trials and tribulations. Tribulation and hard times can come in different ways. It might mean pain, suffering, being upset, trouble, or difficulty. And we can have these troubles or tribulations at any age. What are some tribulations or hard things kids your age go through? *Allow discussion. Moving, illness, parents' divorce, death, etc.*

Jesus tells us that in this world we will have tribulation. Even Jesus had tribulation. The people rejected Him and killed Him on the Cross. But Jesus also said that He had overcome the world. He did that by rising from the dead! His Resurrection gives hope to all who will believe in Him, turn away from their sins, and trust His Word! God's promise is that all those who repent and receive Jesus as the Lord of their life will one day spend eternity with Him. And there will be no more hard times, trials, or tribulations with Jesus in heaven.



➤ Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind the children 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 wherever He wishes.



GROUP PRAYER TIME

- Praise God that He is wise and faithful.
- Thank God for Daniel and Jesus who have shown us to trust God and obey God through our trials.
- Ask God to help us to obey Him.

