



4

God Protects

Key Theme

- God is omnipotent.

Key Passages

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

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 put the Memory Verse Cards into order and then practice saying the verses together and/or with a partner.



Activity 1: God Protects Class Notes

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Students will fill out the God Protects Class Notes throughout the lesson.



Studying God's Word

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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 refused to disobey and dishonor the Lord God.



Activity 2: Four in a Row Review Game

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Students will answer review questions about the lesson and try to be the first to get four in a row.

Lesson Preparation

WHAT YOU WILL DO

WHAT YOU WILL NEED



COME ON IN

- If you haven't done this, print and cut out one set of 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



GOD PROTECTS CLASS NOTES

- Print the 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 Class Notes Answer Key
- Pencils



STUDYING GOD'S WORD

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

- Student Take Home Sheets



FOUR IN A ROW REVIEW GAME

- Print one Four in a Row Review Sheet from the Resource DVD-ROM.
- Draw a large 16 square grid pattern on the board.

- Four in a Row Review Sheet



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.

► 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 continuity as you teach through the lessons.



God Protects Class Notes

MATERIALS

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

INSTRUCTIONS

Pass out the class notes at the beginning of class. Have the students circle true or false as you study the lesson. If a statement is false, encourage the students to tell you why or how to make it true.

We will complete these class notes as we study today. Don't work ahead. We'll do it together.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

As we complete these class notes, we will see how God protected Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. God used His mighty power to save their lives!



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 to Judah as captives. The king wanted them to turn away from their God, the one true God. But these young men stood up to the king and obeyed God. They would not eat the king's food—which was not allowed by God's Law. Their courage to stand firm came from God. And the Lord blessed them in many ways.

- 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.

Daniel 3:1

However, we will see that things were about to change for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. You see, the king issued another command. I don't think Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego wanted to obey this new command. Let's read and find out what it was the king wanted the people to do. Listen carefully. First we will hear about something the king made.

Read Daniel 3:1. Read this enthusiastically, emphasizing the answers to the questions below.

EXAMINE THE WORD

Were you listening? Let's see if you can answer a few questions.

Observe the Text

? What did King Nebuchadnezzar make? *An image of gold.*

? And where did he set it up? *In Babylon.*

Yes. The king made a large, golden image. He set it up in Babylon. What was the king doing? Let's find out more as I read Daniel 3:4–6. *Read Daniel 3:4–6.*

Oh! This sounds like trouble. It sounds like the king was serious!

? First, what was King Nebuchadnezzar commanding the people to do? *Daniel 3:5. Fall down and worship the gold image he had set up.*

? And how would they know when to bow to the gold image? *Daniel 3:5. When they heard the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltry with music.*

? And what would happen to the people who refused to fall down and worship the idol? *Daniel 3:5. They would be cast into a burning fiery furnace.*

Wow this could be bad news for anyone who did not want to worship the idol!

? Let's go to the class notes. Can someone read #1? Is it true or false? *Allow someone to read #1 on the class notes. True. Have the students circle true for #1.*

? And, what about #2? Who can read that? Is it true or false? *Allow someone to read #2 on the class notes. False. Have the students circle false for #2.*

Those who did not obey were to be thrown into a fiery furnace! This was horrible news for anyone who loved God and wanted to obey Him. Remember, God commands that we worship Him alone. And the king was demanding that the people worship this false god—a golden image! Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego loved God. They wanted to obey Him. So they would not bow down to the false god like the king said.

Well, the king found out that they weren't obeying him. The Bible tells us exactly what happened. Listen as I read Daniel 3:12–15. *Read Daniel 3:12–15 emphasizing the answers to the questions below.*

Daniel 3:12–15

► Re-read the appropriate verses as you ask the questions so your students will hear the answers directly from the Bible.

? **People came to the king. What did these people tell the king?** *Daniel 3:12. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego have not obeyed. They are not worshipping the gold image the king had set up.*

That's right. People came to the king and told on them!

? **Who can read #3 on your class notes? Is that statement true or false?** *Assign a reader. True. Have the students circle true for #3.*

? **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! The Bible says he was in a rage! That is really angry.

? **Find #4 on your class notes. Will someone read that for us? Is it true or false?** *Assign a reader. True. Have the students circle true for #4.*

? **What did the king tell them would happen if they did not fall down and worship the image when they heard the music?** *Daniel 3:15. You shall be cast immediately into a burning fiery furnace.*

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego had to make a decision. And they did. They heard the command. They knew if anyone didn't listen to the king, he would be thrown into the fiery furnace. And they knew 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 do you think happened?

You will see that God gave these men amazing courage. They stood strong. What did they say to the powerful king? Let's keep reading! *Read Daniel 3:16–18.*

Daniel 3:16–18

? **Who did they trust in?** *Daniel 3:17. Their God.*

Yes. They believed in God! They knew that God could deliver them from the burning fiery furnace.

? **What was their final decision? What did they tell the king? Listen as I read Daniel 3:18 again.** *Re-read Daniel 3:18. We do not serve your gods. We will not worship the gold image you have set up.*

? **The young men knew, loved, and honored the God who is all-powerful to save. Which attribute of God describes Him as all-powerful?** *Omnipotent.*

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.

OMNIPOTENT
(Refer to Attributes Poster)

? **OK. Look at #5 on your class notes. Will someone read that? Is it true or false?** *Assign a reader. True. Have the students circle true for #5.*

Daniel 3:21–23

These men told King Nebuchadnezzar that they had no doubt about their decision. They would not obey the king because they trusted in God. They believed God could save them if He wanted to. And even if God didn't save them, and they died in the fiery furnace, they would not disobey God.

So, what happened to them? Did the king punish the men? Did God save them? I'm going to keep reading so we can find out! *Read Daniel 3:21–23.*

- ? Where did the king throw the three young men? *Daniel 3:21. Into the burning fiery furnace.*
- ? What happened to the men who put Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego into the furnace? *Daniel 3:22. They were killed by the heat from the furnace.*
- ? And where did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego end up? *Daniel 3:22. In the furnace.*

OK. This is a REALLY hot fire! The men who dragged Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego to the furnace were burned up just standing near the furnace. They died from the heat. And now the three men who wanted to obey God were IN the furnace.

Daniel 3:24–27

Well this isn't over yet! Listen as I read this next part! *Read Daniel 3:24–27.*

- ? How many men had King Nebuchadnezzar thrown into the fiery furnace? *Daniel 3:24. Three men.*
- ? And how many men did the king see in the furnace after the three young men were put in? *Daniel 3:25. Four men.*
- ? And what was so amazing about the men the king saw in the furnace? *Daniel 3:25. They were loose and walking in the fire. They were not hurt!*
- ? And who was the fourth man in the furnace? What did he look like? *Daniel 3:25. He was a form like the Son of God.*

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!

- ? Someone read #6. How will you answer that one? *Assign a reader. False. Have the students circle false for #6.*
- ? What did the king say to the men when he went over to the furnace? *Daniel 3:26. Come out and come here.*
- ? And what did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego do? *Daniel 3:26. They came from the midst of the fire.*

Wow! These three men were thrown into a hot fiery furnace, and the Bible tells us they just walked out of the furnace. They didn't have burned hair or clothes and they didn't even smell like smoke! God completely protected them from the fire.

- ? Now, look at #7 on your sheet. Who can read it for us? Is it true or false? *Allow someone to read #7 on the class notes. True. Have the students circle true for #7.*

➤ After completing the class notes, have the students re-read the statement(s) together or call on individual students to read it.

Discover the Truth

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

God had protected them. 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 for him, too! It 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 one true God.

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. 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.

Would Daniel obey the king or God? We're going to find out. And find out what happened to him. I'll read Daniel 6:10. *Read Daniel 6:10.*

Daniel 6:10

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

- ? What did Daniel do when he went home? *Daniel 6:10. Opened his windows, and knelt down and prayed.*

This was what Daniel did every day. He gave thanks to God and prayed. But now it was against the law. And while Daniel was praying, officials in the king's court spied on him and told King Darius what he was doing. Daniel was praying to his God and not the king! This was no small matter.

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

Daniel 6:21-23

- ? Yes, Daniel would be put into a den of lions because he would not pray to the king! How about #8? Someone read that. Is that statement true or false? *Assign a reader. True. Have the students circle true for #8.*

So, Daniel was put into a den of hungry lions. A large stone was put at the opening of the den after Daniel was put in. Normally, the lions would eat anyone who was in their den. Did that happen to Daniel?

The king went back to the den the next day and called out for Daniel. What did Daniel answer? Was Daniel still there? Listen as I read Daniel 6:21-23. *Read 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.*
- ? Look at #9 on your class notes. Who can read it? How will you answer it? *Assign a reader. True. Have the students circle true for #9.*
- ? What did the king command when he heard that Daniel was not harmed? *Daniel 6:23. That Daniel be brought out of the lions' den.*
- ? Was Daniel injured in any way? *Daniel 6:23. No!*
- ? Why was no injury found on him? *Daniel 6:23. He believed in his God.*
- ? So, someone read #10 on your class notes. Is that true or false? *Assign a reader. False. Have the students circle false for #10.*
- ? And how about #11? Will someone read that? Is it true or false? *Assign a reader. True. Have the students circle true for #11.*

Discover the Truth

How amazing! This is another example where God protected 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 any injury!





Four in a Row Review Game

MATERIALS

- Four in a Row Review Sheet
- Board and Chalk

INSTRUCTIONS

This game is similar to Connect Four. Using chalk, put a large – 16 square (4 by 4) grid pattern on the board. Divide the class into two teams. Assign the teams names to distinguish them on the answer board. Ask the first student on Team 1 a review question. If he answers correctly, that team can mark a square on the grid. If not, Team 2 can answer. Continue to play until a team gets four in a row. Play the game again, adding your own questions if you wish, as time or interest allows.

Today we'll be playing a four in a row review game. You'll be answering questions. For

each correct answer you can mark a square for your team. I hope you were paying attention during today's lesson so you'll know all of the answers!

We'll switch back and forth between teams until one team gets four in a row! Everyone ready? Let's play! *Play the game.*

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 obeyed Him even when they could have died.



Applying God's Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego would not listen to King Nebuchadnezzar and worship the gold image. They chose to obey God rather than man. Before they were thrown into a fiery hot furnace, they told the king about their faith and trust in God. God 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. But Daniel remained obedient to God and continued to pray to God each day. When he was caught praying, the king had him thrown into a lions' den as punishment. But God protected Daniel from the lions! He sent an angel to close the lions' mouths. God is all-powerful to save. 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 hard 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 have hard times! That includes you, me, and anyone who trusts Jesus as their Savior. Many people don't believe that. They think that God will keep suffering away from those He loves. But this isn't always true! In fact, God's people have suffered a lot 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.

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

Yes, we will have trials. But when we do, just knowing that God is in control of what happens, helps. And if you are a child of God, He will give you courage with 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.



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 in control.
- Thank God for protecting His children.
- Ask God to help us trust Him when we face trials.