

Bible Stories for Adults

Daniel's Friends in a Furnace

Daniel 1 - 3

Opening

Gathering: Name people who stood up for their faith under great threat to their lives or livelihood.

Today's Focus: Daniel and his friends remained faithful to God despite great risk to their positions and lives by opposing the king of Babylon. God protected and blessed them in response.

Key Verses: *We will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.* Daniel 3:18

God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. ...it will itself endure forever. Daniel 2:44

Opening Prayer

Lesson

Babylon (*Genesis 11*)

How old was the city of Babylon?

Genesis 10:8-10 (1, 6)

What famous building was supposedly built in Babylon?

Genesis 11:2, 4-5, 8-9

Located on Euphrates River, 50 miles south of Baghdad, Iraq

Surrounded by 60 miles of walls up to 300 feet tall & 87 feet wide

Old Babylonian dynasty - Amorites in 2000-1600 BC (time of the patriarchs)

Then ruled by Hittites, Kassites, Assyrians

Neo-Babylonian Empire founded in 625 BC by Nabopolassar, a Chaldean (from northeast Arabia)

Allied with Medes (with Cyaxares) to conquer Assyria; Sent son, Nebuchadnezzar, to lead battles

Nebuchadnezzar took throne when his father died in Sept 605 BC

Built empire into top world power; Very successful conqueror, builder, administrator

Where did Nebuchadnezzar get his power and what was his reputation?

Habakkuk 1:6-7

Nebuchadnezzar was succeeded by son, Evil-Merodach in 562 BC who reigned 2 years

Neriglissar reigned 4 years; Labashi-Marduk reigned 1 year; Nabonidus took over in a coup in 555

Nabonidus retired to Teima in Arabia, left his son Belshazzar in charge

Cyrus the Mede (Persian) conquered Belshazzar & Babylon in 539 BC

Although powerful, expansive & famous, Babylonian Empire only lasted 86 yrs

The First Deportation (*2 Kings 24*)

When did Judah first become subject to Babylon?

2 Kings 24:1

How did Nebuchadnezzar respond when Jehoiakim revolted?

Daniel 1:1-2

What did Nebuchadnezzar take back to Babylon with the first exile?

2 Kings 24:13-16

What prophet was taken into exile with Jehoiachin?

Ezekiel 1:2-3

Israelites began speaking Aramaic in Babylon, Hebrew before exile

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Nebuchadnezzar's Advisors (*Daniel 1:1-7*)

What did Nebuchadnezzar do with the well-educated and capable men he captured?

Daniel 1:3-5

Who were some of these men in the group of Judah captives?

Daniel 1:6-7

What did their names mean?

Daniel

Belteshazzar

Hananiah

Shadrach

Mishael

Meshach

Azariah

Abednego

Picky Eaters (*Daniel 1:8*)

What problem did the four from Judah have with their special treatment?

Daniel 1:8

Why was this a problem?

Exodus 34:15

Ezekiel 4:13

Do we need to be careful about eating potentially defiled food?

Romans 14:14-15 (1 Corinthians 10:25-28)

Food Test (*Daniel 1:9-21*)

Did the official just tell Daniel to eat what was put in front of him?

Daniel 1:9-10

How did Daniel convince the official to let him eat what he wanted?

Daniel 1:11-16

How did the four from Judah test out after the 3 year training?

Daniel 1:17-20

How long did Daniel remain in Babylon?

Daniel 1:21

A Dream for the Wise Men (*Daniel 2:1-12*)

What troubled Nebuchadnezzar during his second year?

Daniel 2:1-3

Why did the wise men have trouble explaining the dream?

Daniel 2:4-6, 10-11

How did Nebuchadnezzar respond when the wise men said they couldn't do it?

Daniel 2:7-9, 12

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Daniel's Opportunity (*Daniel 2:13-28*)

Who was included in the group to be put to death?

Daniel 2:13-15

How did Daniel stop the mass execution?

Daniel 2:16-19 (16-25)

How did Daniel reply when Nebuchadnezzar asked him to reveal the dream?

Daniel 2:26-28 (26-30)

Four Kingdoms (*Daniel 2:31-43*)

What was the dream?

Daniel 2:31-35

What did the dream mean?

Daniel 2:36-40, 42 (36-43)

Head of Gold

Value of Gold

Gold is Weak

Lion in vision of Daniel 7:4

Chest & Arms of Silver

Value of Silver

Silver Stronger than Gold

Bear in vision of Daniel 7:5

Belly & Thighs of Bronze

Value of Bronze

Bronze Stronger than Silver

Leopard in vision of Daniel 7:6

Legs of Iron and Feet of Iron/Clay

Value of Iron/Clay

Iron Stronger than Bronze

Iron/Clay Mixture

Toes of clay / iron

Terrifying Beast in vision of Daniel 7:7

The Rock (*Daniel 2:44-45*)

What was the rock?

Daniel 2:44 (44-45)

What kingdom was this referring to?

2 Peter 1:11

Nebuchadnezzar's Response (*Daniel 2:46-49*)

How did Nebuchadnezzar respond to Daniel's explanation?

Daniel 2:46-49

What kind of reputation did Daniel get among the Judah exiles?

Ezekiel 14:13-14 (20)

Ezekiel 28:3

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Nebuchadnezzar's Statue (*Daniel 3:1-23*)

What did Nebuchadnezzar do to make a point that he was now in charge?

Daniel 3:1-2

Sam Houston statue in Huntsville is only 67-ft tall (largest American hero statue in world)

Statue likely of Nabu – the god he was named after

How did he use the statue to test his subjects?

Daniel 3:4-6 (3-7)

How did this help the wise men who were jealous of the four from Judah?

Daniel 3:8-9, 12

Did Nebuchadnezzar accept the accusation?

Daniel 3:13-15

Did the three save themselves by bowing to the statue?

Daniel 3:16-18

Why did they make such a big deal about bowing to a statue?

Exodus 20:3-6

How did Peter later repeat the reply of Shadrach, Meshach & Abednego?

Acts 5:29

Did Nebuchadnezzar change his mind about his egotistical law?

Daniel 3:19-23

Hananiah, Mishael & Azariah in the Fiery Furnace (*Daniel 3:24-30*)

Furnace was probably a lime kiln

Walkway to opening in top for adding raw materials; Opening at bottom for extracting fused lime

What happened to the three men in the blazing furnace?

Daniel 3:24-27

How did Nebuchadnezzar interpret what he saw?

Daniel 3:28

Did Nebuchadnezzar give up his other gods and turn to God?

Daniel 3:29

How did he deal with Shadrach, Meshach & Abednego?

Daniel 3:30

Closing Prayer

Response - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. When have I taken a stand for my faith when others around me found it easy to go with the flow? (*Daniel 1:8-16; Luke 16:1-5; Acts 5:29; 1 Thessalonians 2:3-6; 1 Timothy 5:22*)
2. How do I feel about working for ungodly people? (*Daniel 1:3-4, 19-20; Genesis 41:41-46; Esther 4:14; Matthew 22:15-21; Romans 13:1-7; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; 1 Peter 2:13-19*)
3. When have I stood up for my faith at my job and refused to do what others saw as part of the job? (*Daniel 3:16-18; Psalm 1; Luke 3:12-14; 5:27-32; 19:1-10; Galatians 5:16-26; 1 Peter 2:11-12*)
4. Do I take credit when I use God's special gifts or do I use them as opportunities to glorify God? (*Daniel 2:27-28, 47; 3:28-29; Genesis 41:16, 28; Matthew 5:13-16; 1 Corinthians 10:31; 12*)
5. What statues have I built in order to receive honor from others? (*Daniel 3:1-7; Matthew 6:1-18; 23:5-7; Acts 5:1-11; 8:18-24; 2 Corinthians 10:12-18; 12:7-10*)