

WEEK 5: DANIEL

DAY 1: DANIEL PRAYED FOR WISDOM AND WAS GIVEN HIGHER WORK

1. Today we will begin to study the last book of the Big Prophets. We have learned about Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. You remember that Jeremiah wrote two books. He wrote Jeremiah and Lamentations. Now we will go on to the book of Daniel. Ezekiel and Daniel lived during the same time.

In Ezekiel's vision what came from under the door of the new temple?

What did this give to the land? _____

Who can flow through our lives now and make us bear fruit? _____

2. In Ezekiel's vision, water came from under the door of the new temple. It gave new life to all the land. Today we can have the Holy Spirit flowing in our lives. He will cause us to bear fruit.

We have learned that Isaiah and Jeremiah prophesied before Israel was bound in Babylon. But Ezekiel was taken prisoner and carried to Babylon even before God called him to be a prophet. Daniel also was taken to Babylon. He was one of the first ones taken there.

What are the books of the big prophets?

(1) _____ (4) _____

(2) _____ (5) _____

(3) _____

Which prophets wrote during the time Israel was bound in Babylon?

(1) _____ (2) _____

3. The books of the Big Prophets are Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, and Daniel. Ezekiel and Daniel wrote while Israel was bound in Babylon. Daniel was part of the family of the kings of Israel. He and some of his friends were taken to work for the king of Babylon. They were young and clever and good looking.

Daniel, Shadrack, Meshach and Abednego were chosen for special learning. They would learn in a school in the king's house. They would be taught all that the wise men of Babylon could teach them. Then they would serve the king of Babylon. Today we will learn two things which happened.

- (1) Daniel prayed for special wisdom to serve God in Babylon.
- (2) As Daniel was faithful he was given higher work to do.

Do you think it was easy for Daniel and his friends to live for God in a strange land?

4. The people of Babylon worshipped idols. It was not easy for young men of Israel to live for God there. From the ruins of the city today we know that there were idols everywhere. The king's house was full of them. Some of the king's food was offered to idols before it was eaten.

Part of Daniel's learning was to eat the king's food. The king thought this would make him a wise person. But Daniel did not get his wisdom from food or idols. In the book of Daniel we read that Daniel prayed much to God. His three friends prayed too. Then God helped them to know how to live for him in Babylon.

As Daniel and his friends prayed, what did they receive which helped them to live for God?

5. They received wisdom. They understood how to live for God in a strange land. God gave Daniel wisdom to know that the king's food was not good for him. So he asked for simple food for himself and his friends. They were in the king's school for three years. At the end of this time, Nebuchadnezzar talked to them. He found that they were the wisest men in the kingdom.

Who needed special wisdom to live for God in Babylon? _____

6. Daniel and his friends needed this special wisdom. One night the king had a dream. He wanted to know what the dream meant. But he would not tell the wise men his dream. Instead he said they must tell him the dream. Then he would believe the meaning which they said it had.

The wise men of Babylon could not tell the king his dream. So the king said that they must all be killed. The soldiers found Daniel and were ready to kill him. But Daniel had not heard about the king's dream. He asked for time to find it out. Then he called his three friends and asked them to pray.

Who could give special wisdom for interpreting dreams? _____

7. God could do this. Daniel knew that God could give him special wisdom. He could know the dream and what it meant. Sometimes God does speak through dreams. But he does not do it so often now. This is because we have God's written word in the Bible. Daniel did not have the Bible. He needed special wisdom to explain the king's dream.

How did Daniel and his friends get the special wisdom which they needed?

8. They got this by praying. When Daniel and his three friends were going to be killed, they prayed to God. God is happy when we bring our problems to him. God showed Daniel the dream and he showed him the meaning.

What did Daniel pray for in order to interpret the dream? _____

9. Daniel needed wisdom. God gave it to him. He showed him the dream and the meaning. That night Daniel had a vision of the dream. He saw an image of a man made of different things. A stone came and broke the image.

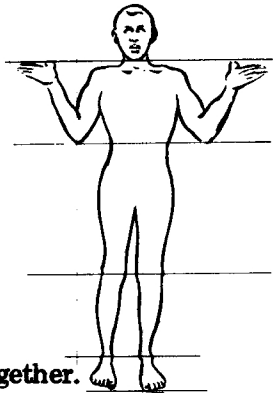
The head was gold.

The chest and arms were silver.

The stomach and thighs were brass.

The legs were iron.

The feet were iron and clay mixed together.



We will study this dream next week.

What did Daniel do to get special wisdom? _____

10. Daniel prayed to get wisdom. God showed him the dream. And he showed him the meaning of the dream. Daniel told the dream to the king. This was the dream which the king had, so he knew Daniel was telling the truth. He listened carefully to the dream and its meaning.

Daniel 2:47-48:

The king said to Daniel, "Truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery." Then the king gave Daniel high honors and many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon.

Did the king praise God after God helped Daniel? _____

11. The king praised God. He said that he was above all gods. The king also honoured Daniel. Sometimes this is what happens as we obey God. Sometimes we have trouble, but many times we receive higher work. People see that we serve God. They see that we can be trusted, so they give us more work. God gives higher work to those who obey him. He gives wisdom to those who ask for it.

Daniel 2:48:

Then the king gave Daniel high honors and many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon.

From this verse, what did Daniel receive besides honour and gifts? _____

12. He was given higher work. Nebuchadnezzar made Daniel a high ruler in Babylon. He was the wisest man in all the land. Do you remember what Daniel did when he heard that the wise men would be killed? He prayed. He was already praying to God for wisdom for many different things. So when a problem came, he knew where to go for help. Daniel received wisdom. He received honour and higher work as well.

1 Samuel 2:30:

. . . those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed (or not well thought of).

The king gave Daniel higher work, but who was it who really gave this honour to him?

13. It was God who did this. He honours those who honour him. He gives them higher work. Perhaps you remember what Jesus told about the servants and their master. The master praised the faithful servant.

Matthew 25:21:

His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much.

Like this servant, what happened in Daniel's life as he was faithful?

14. He was given higher work. We should not be discouraged if our work is small. We should not be discouraged if there are hard things. We should be faithful. We should be wise. God will honour us some day.

What did Daniel do to get special wisdom? _____

15. Daniel prayed. He was faithful to God in small things. He was faithful to God when things were hard.

What happened in Daniel's life as he was faithful? _____

16. Daniel was given higher work. It was not easy for Daniel to be faithful in a strange land. It would have been easy to worship idols. It would have been easy to be like all the rest of the people. But Daniel obeyed God. He served God with all the wisdom God gave him.

Perhaps as a church leader, you are tempted to be unfaithful. Perhaps you are tempted to take bribes. Perhaps you are tempted to eat or drink that which is not good for Christians. Perhaps you are tempted to spend time getting money instead of working for God. Perhaps it is some other temptation.

If you are tempted, it may help you to talk about it with your friends in class. Then you can help each other. If you feel you should, write your temptation here.

17. We will talk about this in class.

What did Daniel do to get special wisdom? _____

What happened in Daniel's life as he was faithful? _____

WEEK 5: DANIEL

DAY 2: WE CAN PLEASE GOD IN LIFE OR DEATH

1. Yesterday we saw Daniel and his three friends learning in Babylon.

What did Daniel do to get special wisdom? _____

What happened in Daniel's life as he was faithful? _____

2. Daniel had many hard things in Babylon. He prayed to get special wisdom from God. As he was faithful, he was given higher work. Perhaps you have sometimes been praised by others. Perhaps you were tempted to become proud of this.

God made Nebuchadnezzar the great king of a great kingdom. Through a dream, Nebuchadnezzar learned that he was the greatest king in the world. He became very proud. He did not believe it was God who made him great. He thought he was as great as God himself. He made an image which everyone should worship. This is what we will learn from today's lesson.

- (1) Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego showed faith in God when they refused to worship the image.
- (2) We may be asked to please God by our life or by our death.

Did Nebuchadnezzar give glory to God for the power God had given him?

3. Nebuchadnezzar did not give glory to God. He was only proud of himself. He made a very large image. It was made of gold. The king put it in a big field where many people could gather. Then he sent for all the leaders to come to worship the image. The king's image was an idol because it was to be worshipped.

Take your Bible now and read Daniel 3:8 to 12. Who showed faith in God by not worshipping the image?

4. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego showed faith. They were wise men in Babylon like Daniel. They also had been given important work to do for the king. They were leaders and they were called to worship the image.

But Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were men of Israel. They had been taught never to worship idols. They had been carried to Babylon from Israel. They knew that Israel was being punished for worshipping idols. They knew that they should not worship the image.

In whom did these men show faith when they refused to worship the image?

5. They showed faith in God. Nebuchadnezzar said they must worship the image. They usually did what the king said. But they feared God and obeyed him first. He had said they must not worship any other god. They must not worship any man, or anything that man had made. This was a hard time for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They must choose between God and the king.

How did the three men show faith in God? _____

6. They refused to worship the image. They knew what God wanted them to do. They had always been faithful to the king. But now he was telling them to do something which God told them not to do. And the king said they would be thrown into the fire if they did not obey him. What could they do? They feared God more than they feared the king or his fire. So they did not fall down before the king's image.

When they refused to worship the image, what did this show? _____

7. It showed faith in God. It was not easy to do this. They did not know what God would do for them. When they did not bow, someone told the king. The king called them to see if this was true. He decided to give them another chance to worship the image. This is what he said.

Daniel 3:15:

“... but if you do not worship, you shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace; and who is the god that will deliver you out of my hands?”

Did the king know the true God? _____

What did he want Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to do? _____

8. The king did not know the true God. He did not know that God is able to do whatever he wants. The king wanted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to worship his image. But they were faithful men of God. They had faith in God. Trouble could not cause them to be unfaithful. Let us read carefully how they answered the king.

Daniel 3:16-18:

If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up.

Think carefully about these words. Did the men know for sure that God would save them from burning in the king's fire?

9. They did not know this. If you said “Yes” then you did not read carefully enough. The men said that God was able to deliver them. But they did not know if God wanted to do this. God would take them from the king's hands. If they died in the fire, then they would be in God's hands. If God saved them from the fire, they would still be in God's hands. God would be faithful to them. And whatever God did, they would not worship the image. From this we see that we can please God in two ways:

- (1) By our life.
- (2) By our death.

When Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to worship the image, what did they show?

10. They showed faith in God. They knew they were in God's hands. By their words they showed the king that they were faithful to God. The king became very angry. He called some of his soldiers to tie the men and throw them into the fire. The fire was so hot that it killed the soldiers. And Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego fell into the fire.

Did God keep the men from being thrown into the fire? _____

11. He did not keep them from being thrown into the fire. But God was with them in the fire. He kept them alive. Sometimes God asks us to go through very hard things. He wants to test our faithfulness. If you have studied the book of Job, you remember what happened to him. He had many hard things. These things were to test him. But Job kept his faith in God. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego also kept their faith.

Since God kept them alive, did he want them to please him by life or by death at this time?

12. He wanted them to please him by their lives. He wanted them to go on serving him. But God does not always save people's lives. Sometimes he wants people to please him by their death. Perhaps you remember Stephen in the New Testament. The enemies of God hated Stephen because he preached about Christ. They wanted to stone him to death.

Acts 7:59:

And as they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." And he knelt down and cried with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." And when he had said this he fell asleep (or died).

Did Stephen please God by life or by death at this time? _____

13. Stephen pleased God by his death. But God saved the lives of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. God never wants us to fail. He wants us to become stronger in our faith. He helps us in life and in death. He helped the men in the fire. When the king looked into the fire he saw something strange.

Daniel 3:25:

I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods.

God was with the men in the fire, even though the king did not know him.

Instead of death, how did God want these men to please him? _____

Instead of life, how does God want some people to please him? _____

14. God wanted these three men to please him with their lives. He wants others to please him in death. So we see that we can please God in both ways.

Nebuchadnezzar called the men to come out of the fire. Their hair was not burned. Their clothes did not even smell like smoke. Then the king made a law that no one should speak a word against the God of Israel.

When Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to worship the king's image, what did they show?

15. They showed faith in God. They did not worship the king's image. They were thrown into the fire. God saved their lives in the fire. He used this to speak to the people of Babylon. Sometimes God allows people to die for him. He uses this also to speak to people. What God wants is that we have faith in him.

In what two ways may we be asked to please God?

(1) _____ (2) _____

16. We may be asked to please God by life or by death. We do not know what lies ahead for our countries and ourselves. Some day we may be asked to choose between life and keeping our faith in God. Now God wants us to please him with our lives. But the time may come when we must please him with our death.

As God helps you, are you willing to please him in whatever way he asks?

17. We will talk about this in class.

What did Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego show when they refused to worship the image?

From this happening, in what two ways may we be asked to please God?

(1) _____ (2) _____

WEEK 5: DANIEL

DAY 3: GOD PUNISHED NEBUCHADNEZZAR FOR HIS PRIDE

1. Yesterday we saw how God spoke to the people of Babylon through the people of Israel.

What did Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego show when they refused to worship the image?

From this happening, in what two ways may we be asked to please God?

- (1) _____ (2) _____
-
-

2. These men showed faith in God. From them we learn that we may please God by our lives and by our death. God spoke very much to King Nebuchadnezzar through the people of Israel. He also spoke to him through dreams. We have read about one of the dreams of the king. In the dream, the king saw a great image. God gave Daniel wisdom to explain the dream. He said that the gold head of the image was King Nebuchadnezzar. He was the first king of the first world kingdom. But Nebuchadnezzar became proud of this. This is what we will learn from the king's pride.

- (1) God made Nebuchadnezzar lose his mind because of his pride.
- (2) We need to be careful about pride in our own lives and warn our people about it.

Take your Bible now and read Daniel 4:10 to 15.

3. In these verses we see that the king had another dream. In this dream the king saw a very big tree. The tree was tall and strong. It reached to the sky. It had nice leaves and good fruit. All the world could see it.

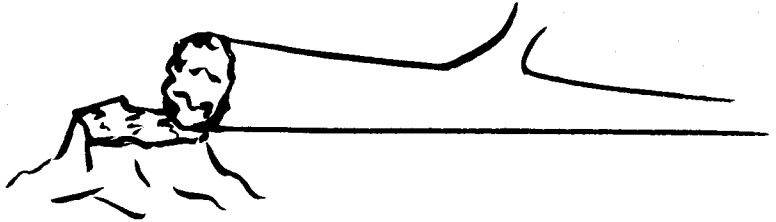
The tree was King Nebuchadnezzar himself. He was a strong king. But he became proud. In his dream, the tree had to be cut down. This meant that the king had to be punished for his pride.

Who sent the dream because he must punish Nebuchadnezzar for his pride?

4. God sent the dream. And it was God who would punish him. In the dream, the tree was very big. All the world could see it. The animals rested in the shade of it. The birds built nests in its branches. This showed how the other nations looked to Babylon for help. But in the dream, a messenger came from heaven. He said that the tree must be cut down.

Who had to be punished for his pride like a tree being cut down?

5. This was Nebuchadnezzar. He had become very strong. He was the first king to rule over the whole world. He was like a very big tree. He saw the big tree in his dream. While the king was looking at the tree, the messenger came from heaven. He said that the tree should be cut down. He said that the branches should be cut off. The leaves and fruit should be scattered. But a stump of the tree should be left. A short piece of the tree and its roots should be left in the ground.



Why was Nebuchadnezzar to be punished like a tree that is cut down?

6. Nebuchadnezzar had to be punished because of his pride. He had become very great, but he did not give God the honour for his greatness. He only wanted honour for himself. He thought he had become great by his own power. So God had to punish him for his pride.

God showed him he would be like a tree that is cut down. But the tree would not be destroyed. The root and stump would be left.

Daniel 4:15:

... Let him be wet with the dew of heaven; let his lot be with the beasts in the grass of the earth; let his mind be changed from a man's, and let a beast's mind be given to him.

From this verse, the person cut down like a tree would become like what?

7. He would become like an animal. The great tree was really a man who would be punished. The man would become like an animal. He would lose his mind. He would live in the fields. He would eat grass.

It was a strange dream. The king was troubled by it. He called Daniel to help him. He told Daniel the dream and asked him to explain it. Daniel too was troubled by the dream. He did not want to tell the king what it meant. After a time, Daniel told the king that the dream was about him. The tree was the king himself. His great kingdom was seen in all the world. But the time would come when God would take his kingdom. He would lose his mind. Men would drive him away to live with the animals. He would be punished.

Why would God punish Nebuchadnezzar and make him lose his mind?

8. God would punish him for his pride. Daniel said God would make him like an animal until he knew that God rules the kingdoms of men. He must know that God gives power to the ones he chooses.

But Daniel did not only tell the king that he would be like an animal. He begged the king to stop living a sinful life. He asked him to become humble and do right. This tells us two things we should do in our work as church leaders.

- (1) We must be careful of pride in our own lives.
- (2) We must warn our people about the danger of pride.

Can we become like Nebuchadnezzar and be proud of what we are doing?

9. If we are not careful, we can become like Nebuchadnezzar. This king thought he had become great by himself. But God punished the king. He would live like an animal for seven years.

God gives us work to do in the church. He makes us to be leaders. He gives us power in the church. We can be tempted to think we are great, or that we can lead by our own power.

Why did God punish Nebuchadnezzar and make him lose his mind for seven years?

Whom should we be concerned about first when we think of pride in our churches?

10. God punished Nebuchadnezzar for his pride. We should think of ourselves as church leaders. We must remember that God alone is great and powerful.

Nebuchadnezzar did not give God the glory for making him king. Sometimes it takes a long time for people to see their sin. It would take Nebuchadnezzar seven years. Then he would not be proud any more. God used the stump in the dream to show that the king would come back to a good life again. He would be well in his mind. His kingdom would be returned to him. But it would take seven years of punishment.

What does this teach us to be careful about in our own lives as church leaders?

11. It teaches us to be careful about pride.

(1) We must be careful of pride in our own lives.

(2) We must warn our people about the danger of pride.

God sent Daniel to beg Nebuchadnezzar to repent. But it seems that the king did not listen. A year later he walked around his house and looked at the city of Babylon. He began to speak proudly.

Daniel 4:30:

“Is not this great Babylon, which I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence (or king’s house) and for the glory of my majesty (or power)?”

What is it from the book of Daniel which warns us not to be proud in our lives as leaders?

12. It is what happened to Nebuchadnezzar. This story also tells us to warn our people about pride. Nebuchadnezzar saw himself as a great man. He forgot God, and Daniel had to warn him. Sometimes we warn our people but they do not listen. We remember the words in Proverbs about pride. They show that pride is always punished.

Proverbs 16:18:

Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.

Warning our people is the second thing Nebuchadnezzar teaches us to do. What is the first thing?

13. We must first be careful of pride in our own lives. Then we must help our people. They are not always happy when we do this. Most people do not like to be told that they are proud. It is not easy to preach about sin, but as pastors we must warn our people. We can use the example of Nebuchadnezzar to show that God punishes sin. When we have trouble, it does not always mean that we have done wrong. But we know that sin will always be punished.

How can we help our people stay away from the sin of pride? _____

14. We can warn them about it. We can show them that God does not change. Sometimes God waits a long time before he punishes. But we know the sin of pride will be punished if the person does not repent. As Nebuchadnezzar stood praising himself, the punishment came to him. This makes me think very carefully. It makes me pray that God will keep me from sin.

Daniel 4:33:

Immediately the word was fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar. He was driven from among men, and ate grass like an ox.

Why did God punish Nebuchadnezzar and make him lose his mind for seven years?

Besides warning our people about pride, what should this story make us do as church leaders?

15. God punished Nebuchadnezzar for his pride. This should make us careful about pride in our own lives.

What else does this story tell us to do in our work as church leaders?

16. It tells us to warn our people of pride. Perhaps there is someone in your church who is becoming rich and having more power. Perhaps he is turning away from God because of pride. It is your work to warn him of God's punishment. But you must also tell him of God's love as he turns from pride.

Prepare a sermon to preach from today's lesson. Write on another paper the things you will say. Bring the paper to class.

17. Why did God punish Nebuchadnezzar and make him lose his mind for seven years?

What does this tell us to do as pastors?

(1) _____

(2) _____

WEEK 5: DANIEL

DAY 4: BELSHAZZAR WAS PUNISHED FOR SIN AND BABYLON FELL

1. We are learning how Daniel was faithful in serving God in Babylon. Daniel obeyed God himself. And he was faithful in warning the kings.

Why did God punish Nebuchadnezzar and make him lose his mind for seven years?

What does this tell us to do in our work as pastors?

(1) _____

(2) _____

2. Nebuchadnezzar was punished because he became proud. This tells us to be careful about pride in our own lives. It also tells us to warn our people about pride. God punished Nebuchadnezzar for seven years. At the end of that time, he repented. Then God returned his kingdom to him.

Later there was another king of Babylon. His name was Belshazzar and he was very sinful. We will learn two things from him.

(1) God took the kingdom from Belshazzar and had him killed because he was so sinful.

(2) God will always punish sin which is not confessed.

Take your Bible now and read Daniel 5:1-9.

3. Nebuchadnezzar learned his lesson about pride. The new king was his grandson. He knew all that had happened to his grandfather, but he did not obey God. The new king was very sinful. He made a big dinner and invited all the important people of Babylon. Even the women were there. He served much wine until people were drunk.

Daniel 5:2:

Belshazzar, when he tasted the wine, commanded that the vessels of gold and of silver which Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken out of the temple in Jerusalem be brought, that the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them.

Who was the new king who was so sinful? _____

4. This king was Belshazzar. He did not rule well like his grandfather. Instead he was very sinful. On the night of the feast he became drunk. He called for the cups and dishes which Nebuchadnezzar had brought from Jerusalem. He filled them with wine. The people praised their idols. They did not think of the one who gave them life and breath. They acted as though he had no power over them.

Daniel 5:4:

They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone.

Whom did Belshazzar worship? _____

Whom did he not worship? _____

5. Belshazzar worshipped idols. He did not worship God. He used the cups and dishes from God's house to become drunk and worship idols. God saw what he was doing and God always punishes sin. Sometimes he punishes right away. Sometimes he waits awhile.

God knew that Belshazzar would not repent. While Belshazzar was having his feast, God sent a hand to write on the wall. Everyone could see the hand and the writing. It was written in a strange language. The people could not understand it, but it said that God had brought Belshazzar's kingdom to an end. He had given it to the Medes and Persians.

What was God taking from Belshazzar in order to punish him? _____

6. God was taking away his kingdom. He was also taking his life. But Belshazzar did not know this yet. He looked at the writing. He could not read it. He became afraid and his body shook. He sent for the wise men of Babylon. The wise men could not read the writing either. The queen-mother heard the noise. She came and told Belshazzar to call for Daniel. It was Daniel who told the king his kingdom would be taken and he would be killed.

Why was the kingdom being taken from Belshazzar? _____

7. It was because he was so sinful. Perhaps you said it was because he used the dishes from God's house, or because he worshipped idols, or because he did not honour God. All of these were things which made the king very sinful. The queen-mother knew that Daniel had wisdom from God. Daniel was an old man now. He had lived in Babylon for more than 60 years.

Daniel was faithful to God, but the king was not. Who was the king from whom God took his kingdom and his life because he was so sinful?

8. This king was Belshazzar. He called for the old man, Daniel, to explain the writing on the wall. Daniel began to talk to the king about his grandfather. He reminded him that all the world feared Nebuchadnezzar because of his power. But he became proud and God took away his mind for awhile.

Daniel 5:23:

but you have lifted up yourself against the Lord of heaven; and the vessels of his house have been brought in before you, and you and your lords, your wives, and your concubines have drunk wine from them; and you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see or hear or know, but the God in whose hand is your breath, and whose are all your ways, you have not honored.

Why did God take Belshazzar's kingdom and his life? _____

9. It was because he was so sinful. He would not honour God. Perhaps you remember that Daniel did not like to tell Nebuchadnezzar his punishment. But it was different with Belshazzar. As soon as he saw the writing, Daniel told the king his wickedness. He explained the writing on the wall.

Daniel 5:26-28:

This is the interpretation of the matter: MENE, God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end; TEKEL, you have been weighed in the balances and found wanting; PERES, your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.

Who always punishes sin? _____

10. God always does this. Daniel spoke plainly to Belshazzar because he was so sinful. He also spoke quickly because the armies of the enemy were entering Babylon that very night. God's words of punishment were fulfilled before morning. Belshazzar lost his kingdom and his life.

What does God always punish? _____

11. It is sin. The Bible says that God cannot look on sin. He could not look on the sins of Belshazzar. He knew that Belshazzar would not repent. God gave a prophecy about Belshazzar and fulfilled it on the same night. This was because Belshazzar was so wicked. Sometimes God sends the wages of sin very quickly. And sometimes he waits a long time.

What does God always do to sin? _____

12. God always punishes sin. Whenever we see sin, we know that punishment is coming. There are many people around us who do not honour God. They do not keep away from sin. They do not repent of sin. We know that they will be punished.

Romans 6:23:

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Why did God take away Belshazzar's kingdom and his life? _____

13. God did this because Belshazzar was so sinful. He did not honour God. He did not even think about him. He thought everything was going well in Babylon. He thought his city was strong. He did not know that Isaiah had prophesied about Babylon. You remember that Isaiah prophesied that Babylon would be destroyed. She would be destroyed because she tried to destroy God's people. God used Babylon to punish Israel. Then he destroyed Babylon because she was so wicked.

What does God always do to sin? _____

14. God always punishes sin. Sometimes he does it quickly. Sometimes he does it slowly. Sometimes he waits a long time to do it.

Why did God take away Belshazzar's kingdom and his life? _____

15. God took these things away from Belshazzar because he was so sinful. God knew he would not repent. God allowed Babylon to be destroyed.

What does God always do to sin which is not confessed? _____

16. God always punishes sin. Let us never forget this. We may think that God does not see the people around us in sin. But we must remember that they will be punished. This does not mean that we should go and judge them. But it means that we should go and tell them God's way to free us from sin.

Take time now to think of the punishment which is waiting for those who are not Christians. Think of your neighbours and friends. Think of your relatives. God does not want to punish them. Pray that God will speak to them about their sin.

17. Why did God take away Belshazzar's kingdom and his life? _____

What does God always do to sin which is not confessed? _____

WEEK 5: DANIEL

DAY 5: DANIEL WAS FAITHFUL IN PRAYER

1. We have been learning this week from the first six chapters of Daniel. We have seen the things which were happening in Babylon at this time. Today we want to see the life of Daniel as a life of prayer.

Why did God take Belshazzar's kingdom and his life away from him? _____

What does God always do to sin which is not confessed? _____

2. God took away Belshazzar's kingdom and his life because he was so sinful. God always punishes sin which is not confessed. It was the Medes and the Persians whom God used to take away the kingdom from Belshazzar. They put a new king over Babylon. His name was Darius. Under Darius, Daniel was still a ruler, but he had some hard times. This is what we will learn today.

- (1) Near the end of his life, Daniel's faithfulness was tested in a lion's den.
- (2) Daniel spent time in prayer every day, and this must be a part of every church leader's life.

Take your Bible now and read Daniel 6:3-9. Where would a man be put if he prayed to someone besides Darius?

3. He would be put into a lions' den. This was a hard punishment. It was a plan to catch the man who prayed to God every day. Daniel was a man of prayer. He was a very wise man and he had served the kings of Babylon for 70 years. But Daniel was not a man of Babylon. And he was not a man of Persia. So the men who worked with him hated him. They were jealous of his power. They looked at everything he did so they could find him unfaithful in his work. Daniel was an old man now. He was near the end of his life. But the men could not find anything wrong with his work.

Was Daniel faithful or unfaithful near the end of his life? _____

4. He was faithful. He was faithful in all his work for the kings of Babylon. And he was faithful in prayer to God. Then men could not find anything wrong with him. But they found that he prayed to God three times a day. So they got the king to make a law about praying. The law said that no one could pray to anyone but King Darius for 30 days. If anyone broke the law, he would be put into the lions' den.

Whose faithfulness was tested near the end of his life? _____

5. Daniel's faithfulness was tested. I am sure he did not know people were watching him pray. He prayed because he needed to talk with God. But the men were watching to catch him. Daniel did not change his faithfulness because of the law.

Daniel 6:10:

When Daniel knew that the document (or law) had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem; and he got down upon his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously.

From this verse, what did Daniel do after the law was passed? _____

6. Daniel kept on praying. As the men watched, they saw him pray. They went to the king and told him. They said they had found someone praying to another god. The king was surprised when he heard it was Daniel. He loved Daniel and did not want him to be killed. He worked all day to try to change the law. But the men would not let him change it.

In what part of Daniel's life was his faithfulness tested by a lions' den?

7. It was in the last part of his life or near the end of his life. He was an old man. The king wanted to save his life, but the law could not be changed. So Daniel was thrown in with the lions. The king could not sleep that night. In the morning, he went to the lions' den. He called Daniel. The lions had not touched him even though they were hungry! Then the king brought Daniel's enemies and put them into the lions' den. The lions killed them before they touched the ground.

How was Daniel's faithfulness tested near the end of his life? _____

8. He was thrown into a lions' den. Daniel was faithful in prayer to God. He prayed every day. He did not pray only when the laws were made about prayer. The Bible says he prayed this way before the law was made. God wants us to be faithful and he will reward our faithfulness.

Did God keep Daniel from being thrown into the lions' den? _____

How did God reward Daniel for his faithfulness to him? _____

9. God did not keep Daniel from being thrown to the lions. But he kept the lions from hurting Daniel. You remember that many years before, Daniel was almost killed with the wise men of Babylon. He asked for time. Then he went home to his friends and they prayed. God showed Daniel the king's dream that night. Daniel was a young man when this happened.

But how was Daniel's faithfulness tested near the end of his life? _____

10. He was thrown into a lions' den. He was put there for his faithfulness in praying. Daniel prayed every day, and this should be part of every church leader's life. Daniel also prayed when there was trouble. And when God answered his prayer he gave great praise to God.

Daniel 2:17:

Then Daniel went to his house and made the matter known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, and told them to seek mercy of the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

How did Daniel find the king's dream and its meaning? _____

11. He found it by praying. He and his friends prayed together. But he did not only pray when there was trouble. He prayed every day. He prayed three times a day on his knees. I believe he also prayed many times during the day when he was working. He knew he could not do his work well without praying.

Daniel 6:10:

... he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem; and he got down upon his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously.

Who prayed every day and showed what we as church leaders should do?

12: It was Daniel who did this. He was faithful all his life. When he was very old, he was tested by being thrown to the lions. God had answered Daniel's prayers. Daniel wanted to be faithful to him.

What did Daniel do every day which must be a part of every church leader's life?

13. Daniel prayed every day. When the law was made, he could have prayed in secret. But his enemies would have said that he stopped praying. Daniel did not want that to happen.

In Daniel chapter 9, we are told more about Daniel's life of prayer. Daniel was reading from the prophet Jeremiah. He saw that Judah would be in Babylon for 70 years. He knew that the time in Babylon was nearly finished.

Daniel 9:3-4:

Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and supplications with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. I prayed to the Lord my God and made confession.

What did Daniel do when he saw the prophecy about Judah? _____

14. Daniel prayed. He confessed the sins of the people of Israel. And he asked God to fulfil the prophecy. He did not sit down and say, "This is very good. Now our troubles will end." He read the word of God through Jeremiah. He studied until he understood it. He saw that the time had come for it to be fulfilled. Then he began to pray. He confessed the sins of his people. He asked God to act soon. Daniel wanted his people to be ready for this time.

As we read the Bible today, we see that the time is near for Christ to return. As church leaders we should be praying for our people to be ready.

Are you troubled about sin in the lives of your people, and do you talk to God with fasting and tears?

15. This is part of our work as preachers and church leaders. We must be concerned about our people. We must talk to God about them. We must feel the burden of their sin. We must ask God to make them ready for the return of Jesus.

After confessing the sins of Israel, Daniel praised God for his goodness and judgment. He said that Israel needed all the punishment which God gave her. He was sure that God would forgive Israel and take her back to Jerusalem.

How was Daniel's faithfulness tested near the end of his life? _____

What did Daniel do every day which must be a part of every church leader's life?

16. Daniel prayed. At the end of his life his faithfulness was tested as he was thrown to the lions. I hope you have seen that prayer was an important part of Daniel's life. I believe you want to live for God. You want to have his blessing and help. You want him to do his work through you. Then you must talk with God every day. When you are happy, talk with God. When you have problems, talk with God. Talk with God about your people, so they will be ready when Christ returns.

Take time now to examine your prayer life as a church leader. Think about these questions, but do not write any answers. Do you take time to pray every day? Do you talk with God as you work? Do you pray for your people with concern?

17. How was Daniel's faithfulness tested near the end of his life? _____

What did Daniel do every day which must be a part of every church leader's life?
