

CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS
SEPTEMBER 07 2024

deliverance

Scripture Story: Daniel 6.
Commentary: *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty and Ruin*), chapter 44.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

Darius the Mede became king of Babylon sometime after the Babylonians were overthrown by the Medo-Persians. Darius immediately divided the kingdom into provinces—each governed by a prince. There were 120 princes in all, and three governors were set over them. Daniel was the first of the three governors selected. And Daniel had a more "excellent spirit" (Daniel 6:3, KJV) than all the others. For this reason, King Darius thought to put Daniel in charge of the whole kingdom.

We get a glimpse of Daniel's excellent spirit in the very beginning of his exile from Jerusalem. As a very young man, Daniel showed his loyalty to God over man by choosing, along with his three companions, not to eat from King Nebuchadnezzar's table, which was lavish with impure and unhealthful food and drink. Instead, Daniel asked for the natural food that God had intended for mankind to eat and water to drink. As a result Daniel and his friends were stronger and in better health than those who ate from the king's table, and the Lord blessed them with "knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom" (Daniel 1:17, KJV).

Daniel continued to show integrity throughout his life and remained faithful to God. Later, when he heard of the decree that no one in the kingdom was to pray to anyone except King Darius for 30 days, Daniel's trust in God was not shaken. Even in the face of death, he continued to remain faithful in prayer to his God—the God of heaven. The Lord honored Daniel's faithfulness, and delivered him from the hand of his enemies.

The teacher should discuss the importance of maintaining a consistent prayer life, which includes talking to the Lord, as well as listening to His Spirit speak to the heart. It is this unceasing two-way communication with the Father that will allow us to develop an "excellent spirit"—one that is obedient to the Lord in the face of all difficulties and trying experiences.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Understand the importance of being loyal to God. *(Know)*
- Trust that the Lord will keep His promises to help us in difficult circumstances. *(Feel)*
- Choose to show their love for God by obeying His Word. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

The Law of God, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, No. 19

"The great principles of God's law are embodied in the Ten Commandments and exemplified in the life of Christ. They express God's love, will, and purposes concerning human conduct and relationships and are binding upon all people in every age. These precepts are the basis of God's covenant with His people and the standard in God's judgment. Through the agency of the Holy Spirit they point out sin and awaken a sense of need for a Saviour.

Salvation is all of grace and not of works, and its fruit is obedience to the Commandments. This obedience develops Christian character and results in a sense of well-being. It is evidence of our love for the Lord and our concern for our fellow human beings. The obedience of faith demonstrates the power of Christ to transform lives, and therefore strengthens Christian witness. (Exod. 20:1-17; Deut. 28:1-14; Ps. 19:7-14; 40:7, 8; Matt. 5:17-20; 22:36-40; John 14:15; 15:7-10; Rom. 8:3, 4; Eph. 2:8-10; Heb. 8:8-10; 1 John 2:3; 5:3; Rev. 12:17; 14:12.)"

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? *section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.*

Have the students divide into small groups of two or three. Each group will discuss the scenarios given in the *What Do You Think?* section, and write down the group's responses. After a few minutes let each group take a turn sharing their responses with the class. If the class is not large enough to divide into groups, give class members a few minutes to reflect on the *What Do You Think?* section and write down their individual answers. Then ask two or three people to share their responses with the class.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

The story is told of a girl who lost her library book. She searched everywhere but could not find it. "Did you pray about it?" her mother asked. "No," she replied, but thought to herself, *I don't think God cares about lost library books.* She began to clean her room, hoping the book would show up. She remembered the discussion in her Sabbath School class about the universe and how powerful God is. The teacher talked about the speed of light, and said that it would take 20 billion years for man to travel across the whole universe. Sarah thought, *Since God is in control of the universe and its laws, maybe He can help me find my book.*

Sarah searched the rest of the house but still could not find the library book. "Have you asked God to help you?" her mother asked again, with a serious look on her face. "The Lord cares, even about little things," she told Sarah. "The Bible tells us that He knows how many hairs are on our heads. He loves you 10 million billion times more than you can imagine. Ask for His help, and maybe the book will show up where you least expect it." Sarah went to her room and prayed, "Lord, if You are not too busy, please help me find my book."

Later that evening, Sarah went to her little sister's room to read her a bedtime story. After the story, Sarah tucked her sister in, and there under the covers was Sarah's library book.—Adapted from Jerry D. Thomas, "Ten Million Billion," *Great Stories for Kids*, book 4, (Pacific Press® Publishing Association), p. 30

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

God does care about little things. He cares enough to help us with small problems as well as bigger problems. The Lord also cares about the choices we make. Throughout our lives we are faced with choices—choices that shape our characters, choices that determine what our futures will be. Daniel's choices led him to a position of recognition and authority. Even more than that, Daniel's choices led him into a trusting relationship with God. Not only did Daniel trust in the Lord, but the Lord could count on Daniel. Daniel was obedient even in the face of death, and the Lord delivered him from death.

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story *section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.*

- What was it about Daniel that impressed King Darius? Name some specific characteristics that might cause the king to trust Daniel to rule the whole kingdom?
- How do you think Daniel responded to the king's recognition?
- Even though Daniel was a Hebrew captive in a foreign land, he was given a high position in the kingdom. What does this teach us about being faithful to God?

- What was the motivation of the other princes and governors who wanted to bring an accusation against Daniel?
- Think of some life choices we must make that will determine our loyalty to God or to man. Share with the class.

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today's story: Joshua 24:15; Psalm 50:15; Daniel 6:16; Matthew 22:37; John 15:14.

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

1. Daniel was an exile from Jerusalem. As we read the first chapter of Daniel we learn that he was one of those who had been taken captive when Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, invaded Jerusalem. It was somewhere around 70 years later that he was faced with the decision to obey God or to be thrown into the den of lions. Review and discuss the history of the Babylonian captivity of the Hebrews and subsequent events in the life of Daniel that led up to the lions' den. *(Note: use the following texts to help the class understand the 70-year prophecy of Jeremiah. Around the time that Daniel was thrown into the lions' den, the Hebrews were at the end of the 70 years: 2 Chronicles 36:20, 21; Jeremiah 25:11, 12; 29:10; Daniel 5:30, 31; 6:1-5; 9:1, 2.)*
2. Have the class compare and discuss Daniel's story with the story of Joseph. What are the similarities? *(See Genesis 37:18-20, 28; 39:1-23.)*
3. We are in spiritual bondage. Everyone in the human race is taken captive at birth. And we are faced with choices—to eat at the king's table or eat the food God has given, to worship the gods of this world or honor the God of heaven, to give in to temptation or obey the Word of God. Discuss with the class the similarities between Daniel's experience and our experience as Christians living in a sinful world that is not our home.
4. Each of the kings of Babylon had great respect for Daniel and trusted him. They knew of his loyalty to his God, and witnessed

Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

Role-Playing

Role-playing is an effective teaching tool. Divide the class into two groups. Give each group a few minutes to discuss the story of Daniel in the lions' den. Then have each group role-play the story using their school as the setting, and using disciplinary actions for someone who may have broken an "unfair" school rule in an effort to "do the right thing."

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Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Key Text**
  Invite the students to share the key text with the class if they have committed it to memory.
- **Flashlight**
  Read the Flashlight *statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week's story found in the book* Prophets and Kings. *Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from* Out of the Story.
- **Punch Lines**
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week's story. Have them share the verse that speaks most directly to them and allow them to explain why they chose it.
- **Further Insight**
  Ask them how the quotes in Further Insight *convey the point of the story in this lesson.*

the power of God in his life. *(See Daniel 4:18; 5:11-14; 6:3.)* King Darius saw an "excellent spirit" in Daniel. Darius not only trusted Daniel, because he was upright and honest, but he admired Daniel as well. Show how loyalty to God can also gain the respect of those who do not know God. Discuss with the class.

5. Even though Daniel had done nothing wrong, the princes of the kingdom set out to find fault in him. When they could find nothing to accuse him of, they made something up. We are sometimes faced with situations where we are treated unfairly or accused wrongly. And in many cases there is nothing we can humanly do to defend ourselves, as in the case of Daniel and Joseph and others in the Bible. What does this teach us about how unreliable it is to trust in man? How should we relate to those who treat us wrongly? Go over the *Out of the Story* section in the student's lesson with the class.
6. Daniel knew the importance of prayer. Each day he looked toward Jerusalem and prayed to the God of heaven (Daniel 6:10). By having a consistent prayer life, he developed a close friendship with God. He knew he could trust the Lord in every situation. First Thessalonians 5:17 tells us to "pray without ceasing" (KJV). In your own words describe what this means.

III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Ask class members to stand and each person to move to another seat. Then ask two people to switch seats. Ask two different people to switch seats. Now ask everyone to stand and face the opposite direction. Next, have everyone face the front again. Ask someone in the class to describe what they did in this activity. Talk about changes. Everything in life changes, but the Lord remains the same. His Word stands forever and His promises are sure. The Lord also wants to depend on us to remain the same, to remain loyal to Him, even when we are faced with changes or difficult circumstances.

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

The Bible says to "love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind" (Matthew 22:37, NKJV). Love is an action word. In 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 we find a list of some of the actions of love. Our love for God can be seen in what we say and do. When we love others, when we treat others with kindness, we are also showing our love for God. But the greatest test of our love for the Lord is our obedience. Remember the words of Jesus: "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15, NKJV). Determine with all your heart to show your love for the Lord by obeying God rather than man.



Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty and Ruin*), chapter 44.

*A special adaptation of *Prophets and Kings* has been created by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press® Publishing Association. Get more info about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net.

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STUDENT LESSON

Scripture Story: Daniel 6.
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Photo by Jennifer and Company

keytext

"Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?"

(Daniel 6:20, NKJV)

flashlight

"God did not prevent Daniel's enemies from casting him into the lions' den; He permitted evil angels and wicked men thus far to accomplish their purpose; but it was that He might make the deliverance of His servant more marked, and the defeat of the enemies of truth and righteousness more complete. 'Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee' (Psalm 76:10), the psalmist has testified. Through the courage of this one man who chose to follow right rather than policy, Satan was to be defeated, and the name of God was to be exalted and honored" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 543).

what do you think?

What would you do in the following situations?

1. Someone in your class cheats on a test using the answers from your paper, without you knowing it. Later the teacher accuses you of cheating and gives you a zero for the test. The other student does not admit to cheating and gets a passing grade. What would you do?

   _____

   _____

2. Someone tells your best friend something about you that is not true, and your friend stops talking to you. The person who was dishonest becomes good friends with your best friend. What would you do?

   _____

   _____

INTO THE STORY

"It pleased Darius to appoint 120 satraps to rule throughout the kingdom, with three administrators over them, one of whom was Daniel. . . . Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent. Finally these men said, 'We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God.'

"So these administrators and satraps went as a group to the king and said: 'May King Darius live forever! The royal administrators, prefects, satraps, advisers and governors have all agreed that the king should issue an edict and enforce the decree that anyone who prays to any god or human being during the next thirty days, except to you, Your Majesty, shall be thrown into the lions' den. Now, Your Majesty, issue the decree and put it in writing so that it cannot be altered—in accordance with the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed.' So King Darius put the decree in writing.

"Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. . . . Then these men went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help. So they went to the king and spoke to him about his royal decree. . . .

"Then they said to the king, 'Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, Your Majesty, or to the decree you put in writing. He still prays three times a day.' When the king heard this, he was greatly distressed; he was determined to rescue Daniel and made every effort until sundown to save him. . . .

"So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions' den. The king said to Daniel, 'May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!' . . .

". . . Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating and without any entertainment being brought to him. And he could not sleep.

"At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lions' den. When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, 'Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?'

"Daniel answered, 'May the king live forever!

did you know?

The lion is often thought of as a symbol of power, nobility, and courage. Lions have a social system based on teamwork, and live in groups called *prides.* The teamwork of the pride is evident in their hunting methods. The female lions of the group work together to track and overpower their prey. The lions in the den of Daniel 6 worked as a team to overpower Daniel's adversaries and broke them into pieces before they even hit the bottom of the den. (See Daniel 6:24.)

God
sent his angel,
and he shut the mouths
of the lions. They have
not hurt me, because I was found
innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever
done any wrong before you, Your Majesty.'

"The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.

"At the king's command, the men who had falsely accused Daniel were brought in and thrown into the lions' den, along with their wives and children. And before they reached the floor of the den, the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones."

(Daniel 6:1-24, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

After reading the story in Daniel 6, answer the following questions.

Have you ever been wrongfully accused? How did you handle it? What would you do next time?

_____
_____

The princes and governors had a plan in Daniel 6, but God had a different plan. What was God's plan?

_____
_____

Circle the words that show the things that make up an excellent spirit. Cross out the words that are left.

faithfulness	prayer	jealousy
loyalty	greed	deception
honesty	pride	kindness
patience		

What does the story teach us about being faithful to God?

_____
_____
_____

punch lines

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go" **(Joshua 1:9, NKJV).**

" 'Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you,' declares the LORD" **(Jeremiah 1:8, NIV).**

"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand" **(Isaiah 41:10, NKJV).**

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" **(Psalm 46:1, NKJV).**

"Pull me out of the net which they have secretly laid for me, for You are my strength" **(Psalm 31:4, NKJV).**

"The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe" **(Proverbs 29:25, NKJV).**

further insight

"Unceasing prayer is the unbroken union of the soul with God, so that life from God flows into our life; and from our life, purity and holiness flow back to God."—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 97

"Through sincere prayer we are brought into connection with the mind of the Infinite. We may have no remarkable evidence at the time that the face of our Redeemer is bending over us in compassion and love, but this is even so. We may not feel His visible touch, but His hand is upon us in love and pitying tenderness."

—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 96

Sabbath

Read Daniel 6:10.

In the *What Do You Think?* section of this week's study you were asked to describe what you would do in certain situations. Think about your responses. Why did you choose to handle each situation the way you did? When Daniel heard about the decree that his enemies had devised for King Darius to sign, he went straight to the Lord in prayer. Daniel prayed three times that day, just as always. When you go to the Lord for help, do you think things will turn out the way that you expect them to? Why would the Lord choose to help us in a way that is different than we expect or want?

Sunday

Read Psalm 31:4.

Review the *Into the Story* section. What do you think motivated the princes and governors to bring an accusation against Daniel? List three of their character traits below.

_____
_____
_____

What character traits did Daniel display?

_____
_____
_____

Review your responses to the *Out of the Story* questions. How does a Christian handle unfair treatment differently than a non-Christian?

_____
_____
_____

Monday

Read Daniel 6:20.

Daniel trusted in his God. He knew that God had the power to deliver him from the lions. Trusting God the way that Daniel did comes from having a personal connection with Him. It comes from daily prayer and studying God's Word, and the determination to obey His will.

Read the *Key Text* of the lesson again. Then reflect on your own experiences. Do you believe that God is able to deliver you from problems or difficult situations? Talk to someone about areas of your life where you wish to experience God's deliverance. Pray together, asking God for deliverance.

Tuesday

Read Genesis 37:28; 1 Samuel 19:1.

In the *Flashlight* section we read that "God did not prevent Daniel's enemies from casting him into the lions' den." Instead of removing the danger, the Lord used it to show His power to deliver His servant. Just as in Daniel's case, God does not always prevent bad things from happening to us. In many cases, the Lord uses our experiences for our own good, or to bring about some future blessing. We may not understand why things happen the way they do, but like Daniel, we must trust that the Lord has our best interest in mind. Can you think of other Bible characters who were treated wrongly or unfairly but in the end were blessed by God?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Wednesday

Review the verses listed in the *Punch Lines* section. Some of the key words in these verses are listed on the left below. Draw a line to connect the words on the left to the synonyms that match on the right.

courage	shelter
strength	set free
deliver	brave
refuge	faith
trust	power

How many of the Punch Line verses are promises?

_____

In what verse can you see a prayer?

_____

Thursday

Read Mark 9:24.

When we are faced with danger or with a difficult situation it is natural to become fearful—especially if we cannot see a solution to the problem. List some specific things you can do to overcome fear:

_____
_____
_____

Fearfulness comes as a result of doubting God. What can we do when faced with doubt? Reread Mark 9:24.

_____
_____
_____

Friday

Read Psalm 106:3.

Standing for what is right can be a hard choice to make. Many things prevent a person from doing the right thing—wanting to be like everyone else, wanting to be accepted by others. Sometimes doing what is right means missing out on something. The choice to keep the Sabbath holy might mean missing out on certain school activities. The choice to live healthfully might mean missing out on some favorite foods. The choice to accept and treat everyone the same might mean not being popular with certain people. What are you willing to miss out on, for the sake of doing the right thing and choosing to obey God's Word?

this week's reading*

Prophets and Kings (or *Royalty and Ruin*), chapter 44.

**Royalty and Ruin* is a special adaptation of *Prophets and Kings*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press®. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.