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CHILDREN'S
CHURCH

MESSENGERS OF GOD'S GRACE: DANIEL (pt 1)

REVIEW

REVIEW: PROPHETS

We've been learning about God's special messengers, prophets.

Often times, the Israelites would disobey God's laws and worship false gods. Because God loved His people, He sent His prophets to call the people of Israel back to Him.

We started off learning about the prophet ELIJAH.

Then, we learned about how ELIJAH passed the baton to the prophet ELISHA.

We also learned about a prophet who did not want to go where God sent him because he felt the people were just too evil. What's his name? That's right. Prophet JONAH.

There was also a prophet who, when God called him to be His messenger, he didn't run away like Jonah. Instead, he replied: *"Here I am. Send me!"* Who knows his name? Prophet ISAIAH!

Today, we are going to learn about a teenager who was taken from his home to a faraway land, where he would be God's prophet to both foreign kings and God's people. He was the **Prophet DANIEL**.



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MESSENGERS OF GOD'S GRACE: DANIEL (pt 1)

STORY (Daniel 1)

BACKGROUND

King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came to Jerusalem and surrounded it with his army. Because God's people continued to reject God and worshipped idols, God allowed Nebuchadnezzar to capture Jehoiakim king of Judah. Nebuchadnezzar also took some of the things from the Temple of God and put them in the temple of his gods.

King Nebuchadnezzar also chose some of men from Judah to serve in his palace. They had to be:

- healthy, young, Israelite men
- from important families, i.e. from the family of the king of Judah
- nothing wrong with their bodies
- handsome and well educated: able to learn and understand things (including the language and writings of the Babylonians)
- trained for three years

One of these young men was a teenager called Daniel. He was given a Babylonian name, Belteshazzar.

DANIEL'S CHOICE

The king gave the young men a certain amount of food and wine every day, the same kind of food that the king ate.

Daniel decided not to eat the king's fancy food and wine because those were food that God had forbidden Jews to eat. (God had given strict rules to the Israelites about what they could or could not eat.) These food had also been involved in worship ceremonies to idols, and anyone who ate them was honouring the idol. So even though Daniel and his friends were far away from home, they still wanted to follow God's rules. Daniel knew that God's reign was above all earthly kingdoms. He is the King, and their bodies belonged to Him.

So Daniel asked Ashpenaz for permission not to eat the king's food.

God made Ashpenaz want to be kind and merciful to Daniel. But Ashpenaz said to Daniel, *"The king ordered me to give you this food and drink. If you don't eat this food, you will begin to look worse than other young men your age. The king will see this. And he will cut off my head because of you."*

Daniel said to the guard, *"Please give us this test for 10 days: Don't give us anything but vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then after 10 days compare us with the other young men who eat the king's food. See for yourself who looks healthier."*

So the guard agreed to test them 10 ten days. After 10 days, Daniel and his friends looked very healthy. They looked better than all of the young men who ate the king's food. So the guard took away the king's special food and wine and gave Daniel and his friends vegetables instead.



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GOD'S GRACE ON DANIEL

The people of Judah were taken into captivity in Babylon because they repeatedly disobeyed God and worshipped idols.

But God chose Daniel to be His messenger even in Babylon. He helped Daniel and his friends become the best of the students, giving them special wisdom and the ability to learn. They learned many kinds of things people had written and studied.

At the end of the three years of training, the king gave the final examination and found that Daniel and his friends were not only the best of the students, showing much wisdom and understanding, but also 10 times better than all the fortune-tellers and magicians in his kingdom.

To Daniel, God also gave a special ability to understand the messages that He sometimes gave in dreams and visions (we'll learn more about this next week).

Daniel stayed in Babylon for the rest of his life. He grew to be an old man in Babylon.

VIDEO

God's Story: Daniel <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GY0pARvYcyw>



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MESSENGERS OF GOD'S GRACE: DANIEL (pt 1)

ACTIVITY SUGGESTION

LESSON-RELATED CRAFT/ACTIVITY

MEMORY VERSE

1 Corinthians 10:31 *So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.*

HUDDLE TIME

Share praise and prayer points.



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MESSENGERS OF GOD'S GRACE: DANIEL (pt 2)

HOOK & REVIEW

HOOK

Show some silhouettes or shapes of different items (animals, objects, characters etc). Have the kids guess what each picture is.

In today's story, the king's special advisers had to guess what dream the king had ... but unlike you, they didn't even get a clue or shadow to make their guess. They just had to know. Or someone who knew had to tell them. Let's learn more about this later.

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MESSENGERS OF GOD'S GRACE: DANIEL (pt 2)

STORY (Daniel 2)

BACKGROUND

King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came to Jerusalem and surrounded it with his army. Because God's people continued to reject God and worshipped idols, God allowed Nebuchadnezzar to capture Jehoiakim king of Judah. Nebuchadnezzar also took some of the things from the Temple of God and put them in the temple of his gods.

King Nebuchadnezzar also chose some men from Judah to serve in his palace. One of these young men was a teenager called Daniel. He was given a Babylonian name, Belteshazzar.

KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM

During the second year that Nebuchadnezzar was king, he woke up from a dream. The dream worried him so much that he couldn't go back to sleep.

King Nebuchadnezzar immediately summoned all the magicians, astrologers and sorcerers etc. He told them: "I had a dream that bothers me. I want to know what the dream means."

The wisemen said: *"Sure, king. Just tell us the dream, and we will tell you what it means."*

But King Nebuchadnezzar said to them, *"No! You must tell me the dream. And then you must tell me what it means. If you don't do these things, I will have you torn apart. And I will turn your houses into piles of stones. But if you tell me my dream and its meaning, I will reward you. I will give you gifts and great honor. So tell me the dream, and tell me what it means."*

The wise men answered the king: *"No one on earth can do what the king asks! The king is asking something that is too hard. Only the gods could tell the king this. But the gods do not live among people."*

When the king heard that, he became very angry. He gave an order for all the wise men of Babylon to be killed. Men were sent to look for Daniel and his friends to kill them.

Daniel asked, "Why did the king order such a terrible punishment?" When Daniel heard the story, he went to King Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel asked him to give him some more time. Then he would tell the king what he had dreamed and what it meant.

So Daniel went to his house. He explained the whole story to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. Daniel asked his friends to pray to the God of heaven to show them mercy and help them understand this secret.

During the night God explained the secret to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven.

The next day, Daniel asked to see the king. The king asked Daniel: *"Are you able to tell me what I dreamed and what it means?"*



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Daniel answered, *"No person can explain to the king the secret he has asked about. No wise man, magician or fortune-teller can do this. But there is a God in heaven who explains secret things. God has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen at a later time."*

"My king, in your dream you saw a large statue in front of you. It was huge, shiny and frightening. The head of the statue was made of pure gold. Its chest and arms were made of silver. Its middle and the upper part of its legs were made of bronze. The lower part of the legs were made of iron. Its feet were made partly of iron and partly of baked clay. While you were looking at the statue, you saw a rock cut free. But no human being touched the rock. It hit the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them. Then the iron, clay, bronze, silver and gold broke to pieces at the same time. The wind blew them away, and there was nothing left. Then the rock that hit the statue became a very large mountain. It filled the whole earth."

GREAT KINGDOMS

Then God, through Daniel, revealed that this dream meant that three great world-ruling empires would follow after the Babylonian Empire.

The head of gold represents King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.

Daniel said: *"My king, you are the greatest king. God of heaven has given you a kingdom. He has given you power, strength and glory. God has given you power over people, wild animals and birds. Wherever they live, God has made you ruler over them all."*

The chest and arms of silver represent the kingdom of Persia, which would be inferior to the Babylonian kingdom.

The belly and thighs of the statue were made of bronze, representing the kingdom of Greece.

The legs of iron represent the Roman Empire, which will crush all the other kingdoms.

The feet and the toes were made of potter's clay and some iron. This meant that the kingdom will be part strong and part fragile. This kingdom is the Divided Roman Empire or other modern powers.

Then Daniel continued: *"During the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up another kingdom. It will never be destroyed. And it will not be given to another group of people. This kingdom will crush all the other kingdoms. It will bring them to an end. But that kingdom itself will continue forever."*

Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell facedown on the ground in front of Daniel. *"Truly I know your God is the greatest of all gods. And he is the Lord of all the kings. He tells people about things they cannot know. I know this is true. You were able to tell these secret things to me."*

The king put Daniel in charge of all the wise men of Babylon and gave many gifts to Daniel. Daniel asked the king to make his three friends over the area of Babylon, and the king did as Daniel asked.



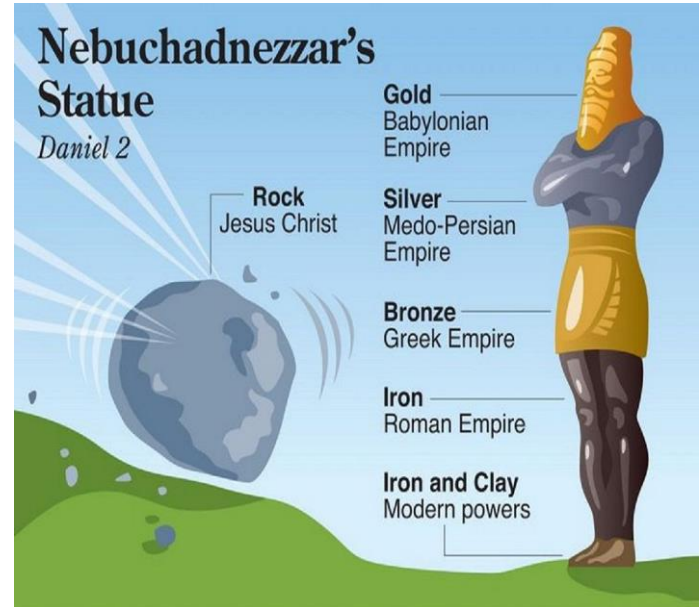
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THE ETERNAL KINGDOM

Daniel's prophecies about the different kingdoms and empires that would come after Babylon came to past — Persia, Greece and Rome empires and other modern powers.

But just as King Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged that: *"I know for sure your God is the God over all gods and the Lord over all kings,"* the greatest kingdom is the the final empire in Nebuchadnezzar's dream — the big rock that grows into a large mountain! Nebuchadnezzar's dream indicates that when Jesus returns to earth, His kingdom will conquer all the human governments and remain forever. And we are all part of it!





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MESSENGERS OF GOD'S GRACE: DANIEL (pt 2)

ACTIVITY SUGGESTION

HUDDLE TIME

Share praise and prayer points.



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MESSENGERS OF GOD'S GRACE: DANIEL (pt 3)

HOOK & REVIEW

HOOK

Prepare a picture of a cloud; behind it, write the words: *"Look, He is coming with the clouds."*

(Revelations 1:7)

Put the cloud in an envelope. Hide the envelope around the class, and get the kids to look for the envelope. When the envelope is found, open it to show the cloud.

Teach the memory verse with actions:

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| "Look" | (put hand above eyes) |
| "He is coming" | (point to sky) |
| "with the clouds." | (make a cloud shape in rounded motion with hands) |

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MESSENGERS OF GOD'S GRACE: DANIEL (pt 3)

STORY (Daniel 7)

DANIEL'S DREAM

Even though Daniel was far away from home, God revealed many prophetic (future) events to Daniel. God also gave Daniel the ability to interpret many dreams and visions. Last week we learned about how Daniel could tell the King of Babylon what his dream was and what it meant!

Today we learn that Daniel also had a dream. It was a dream with lots of weird-looking creatures. Not the usual ones you will see in the zoo or safari.

Let's watch this video to show us what Daniel dreamt.

VIDEO

Daniel's Dream (Daniel 7) - Gospel Project <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jKyO2HhIvME>
(Found this video to be very self-explanatory and easy to understand for kids)

Daniel was frightened by his dream but God gave Daniel the ability to understand what the dreams meant — the four creatures were four kings who ruled on earth (like the 4 kingdoms in Nebuchadnezzar's dream) — but their rule and their kingdoms would not last forever.

These creatures could refer to the empires that followed in Daniel's time (those kingdoms had come and gone just as God said they would). But the creatures could also refer to what will happen at the end of our time — when God's enemy will attack God's people. Sometimes it may seem like the enemy is winning, but Daniel's prophecy tells us that God has already won the victory!



JESUS' FOREVER KINGDOM

Daniel foretold how God would give his people a forever kingdom. Daniel wrote: *"In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was **one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven**. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed."* (Daniel 7:13-14)

God gave this vision to Daniel 500 years before Jesus the Messiah was born in Bethlehem. Today, we know that Jesus has already won the battle over sin and death. He died for our sins on the cross and was raised victoriously on the third day. When Jesus returns, He will set up His perfect kingdom, and everyone who trusts in Jesus will be welcomed into His kingdom, which will last forever!



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SUMMARY RHYME

<i>Daniel had a dream one night,</i>	(close eyes)
<i>As he lay in his bed.</i>	(rest cheek on folded hands as if sleeping)
<i>Daniel wrote down what he saw.</i>	(pretend to write on palm)
<i>This is what he said:</i>	(present palm as if showing note)
<i>“Jesus was coming with the clouds.</i>	(point to heaven)
<i>I saw this in my dream.</i>	(point to eyes)
<i>He was led to God the Father,</i>	(point to heaven)
<i>Who made Him King of everything.</i>	(use hands to make crown shape on head)
<i>“All people from every land,</i>	(point in many directions)
<i>Came and worshipped Him.</i>	(raise hands to praise Jesus)
<i>He was in charge of everything.</i>	(point in many directions)
<i>His kingdom will never end.”</i>	(shake head no)

Jesus is coming back. What will we see with Jesus when He is coming back? (The clouds.)

Let's say our memory verse together (with actions):

“Look, He is coming with the clouds.” **(Revelations 1:7)**



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ACTIVITY SUGGESTION

HUDDLE TIME

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