

Building Your Life for God

Studies in Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Daniel, Ezekiel, Haggai, & Malachi

[Shaping Hearts for God Curriculum]

Lesson 4 – Daniel and Ezekiel Obey - Doing God’s Work Even When It’s Hard

Memory Verse - Daniel 3:17-18

“If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”

Daily Bible Readings

Thursday – Daniel 6:4-14 - **Friday** – Daniel 6:16-26 - **Saturday** – Daniel 9:4-5, 15-19

Monday – Ezekiel 3:4-7, 12-15 - **Tuesday** – Ezekiel 3:16-19, 27

Questions

- 1) What practice did Daniel continue that was against the king’s command?
- 2) What did the king think God would do for Daniel?
- 3) True or False? Daniel escaped the lions, but he received a few cuts and bruises.
- 4) Did people honor God more or less because of what happened to Daniel?
- 5) In his prayer, what did Daniel confess to God that his people did?
- 6) In one of his prayers, what does Daniel ask God to do?
- 7) Why would Ezekiel’s job of speaking to Israel be so hard?
- 8) Where did the Spirit of God take Ezekiel?
- 9) If the watchmen warns a man and he doesn’t listen, whose fault is it if he gets hurt?
- 10) When obeying is hard, do we pray for help?
 - a. What is a hard command for me to follow?
 - b. What is my plan to help me follow this command?

Bible Project Videos:

Daniel - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9cSC9uobtPM>

Ezekiel: Part 1 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-CIPu1nko8>

Ezekiel: Part 2 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SDeCWW_Bnyw

Teacher Notes:

Belshazzar, King of Babylon, had been the King who had witnessed God's hand thru Daniel. Daniel had interpreted his and his father's dreams, even predicting their demise. He witnessed Daniel surviving the fiery furnace without a single hair singed. He had promoted Daniel to a very high position in Babylon and even honored Daniel's God at various times. Now he has died, and Darius the Mede becomes king in his place.

The Medes and Persians, the second kingdom that Daniel prophesied, the kingdom of silver had conquered Babylon, the kingdom of gold or the head of the statue in Daniel's dream. King Darius was impressed with Daniel and planned to make him ruler over the entire kingdom. Other government officials were jealous of Daniel (they even had political factions in that time) and schemed to have Daniel removed from power. They had Darius pass a law that people could only pray to the king. That meant that Daniel could not pray to his God.

However, Daniel did not obey this law. He went to his room, opened his window toward Jerusalem and prayed to God 3 times a day. This had been his practice before the law and he continued it after the law was passed. He would not defy his God because of a government regulation. King Darius realizes that he had been duped by his officials and is sad that he must now punish Daniel because of the law. Daniel is thrown in the lion's den and left there all night. Darius hoped that Daniel's God would save him, and he anxiously went to see him in the morning. He found Daniel unharmed and without a scratch on him. Daniel's God had saved him, and Darius threw his wicked officials in the lion's den where they were quickly devoured.

About the same time that Daniel was living in Babylon, Ezekiel was a prophet of God in Jerusalem. He spoke to the people to warn them of their sin and turn them back to God. Several years later, Ezekiel's message would go to those in captivity and would be a message of comfort and hope for restoration.

God called Ezekiel to be stubborn in delivering his message to the people. His job was not easy! God told him to speak to the people whether they listened or not (Ezekiel 3:11). He was to serve as "watchman" for Israel. A watchman stood at his post on the wall of the city watching for enemies who might attack. If the watchman was distracted or fell asleep, the enemy could attack without warning. The people in the city would not be prepared and this would be the watchman's fault. If the watchman did his job and warned the people, but the people didn't listen, it was their own fault. God wanted Ezekiel to warn the people about judgment. If he didn't do it, he would be held responsible for their punishment.

God's prophets, Daniel and Ezekiel, worked hard for God. They were far from home in foreign land. God gave them the difficult task of helping the people follow God when many did not want to. Both of these men had great faith and courage to do God's will even when it was hard. They are truly heroes of faith.

These stories are a lesson in:

- 1) Personal accountability and taking responsibility for our actions
 - a) Daniel knew what was right and he did it even though there would be consequences, even possible death
 - b) Daniel prioritized God above all others, even the King
 - c) Daniel trusted that God would take care of him if he did the right thing
 - d) Ezekiel fulfilled his duty as a watchman. It was up to the individual as to whether they would obey or face punishment
- 2) Service to others above self
 - a) Both Daniel and Ezekiel probably had better things to do, things that would be easier for them and their families
 - b) They chose to serve God even in difficult situations
 - c) They served Israel and tried to save them at their own expense

We find ourselves in a difficult time as a nation. In many ways it feels like we are in a foreign land subject to rules that we never thought possible in our free country. How will we choose to handle the situation? Will we quiver in fear and withdraw ourselves from opportunities to serve others? Will we blame God for our circumstances and turn away from him? Let's be like Daniel and Ezekiel - let's serve in this tough time and be a light for others! We may never face a difficulty or an opportunity like this ever again in our lifetime!