

Punished Timeline Unit

Outline of Lessons

<i>WEEK #1–Daniel and His Friends are Faithful</i>	
Sunday	Daniel and His Friends in Babylon
Wednesday	Nebuchadnezzar's Dream of the Statue (A Prophecy of Times to Come)
<i>WEEK #2–Nebuchadnezzar's Dreams and Visions</i>	
Sunday	Nebuchadnezzar's Image and the Fiery Furnace–Daniels' Friends Remain Faithful to God
Wednesday	Nebuchadnezzar's Vision, Madness and Proclamation
<i>WEEK #3–End of Babylon; Persian Rule</i>	
Sunday	The Handwriting on the Wall
Wednesday	Daniel and the Lion's Den The Prophet Ezekiel–A Message of Hope for God's People

"PUNISHED" Essential Knowledge and Skills



Essential Knowledge. Students will know that...

Lesson 1a	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is of utmost importance to be faithful and loyal to God and His word, no matter what the circumstances. 2. God was with His people, even in captivity.
Lesson 1b	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We must recognize the sovereignty of God in our lives. 2. God is in complete control of the affairs of men.
Lesson 2a	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. God is in control of kings and kingdoms. 2. It is important to be faithful to God, no matter what the consequences. 3. We must show integrity in everything we do.
Lesson 2b	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A humble and contrite heart is very valuable to God. 2. God hates pride in a man, but rewards those who are humble before Him.
Lesson 3a	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. God is in control of kings and kingdoms. 2. God was faithful to His promise to destroy the Babylonian kingdom. 3. God used Daniel to bring a message to Belshazzar.
Lesson 3b	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Daniel was faithful to God in prayer and God rewarded him. 2. Because of Daniel's faithfulness to God, he prospered in the time of the Persian kings. 3. The prophet Ezekiel brought a message of hope to God's people who were still in captivity.

SKILL OBJECTIVES IN "PUNISHED." Students Can...

1. Name the four Jewish captives taken to Babylon to be educated in the ways of the Babylonians:	<i>Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego</i>
2. Explain the interpretation Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the "statue":	<i>Head of Gold = Babylon Chest and arms of Silver = Persia Belly and thighs of Bronze = Greece Legs of Iron and clay = Rome Stone cut without hands that destroyed the statue = God's kingdom</i>
3. Define these words:	<i>Captivity, Punishment, Repentance, Visions, Messiah</i>



PUNISHED LESSON 1A—Daniel and His Friends in Babylon

OBJECTIVES:

1. *It is important to be faithful to God, no matter what the circumstances*
2. *God was with His people, even in captivity.*

ESSENTIAL SKILLS:

1. *SW name the four Jewish boys taken captive to Babylon: Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego*

STORIES TO BE HIGHLIGHTED:

Daniel and His Friends are Faithful to God Even in Captivity

INTRODUCTION:

1. Review what has just happened to God's people:
 - The **Babylonians** had come to Jerusalem and destroyed it, along with the Temple, and the walls of the city.
 - Many people were slaughtered, some were sent away to Egypt, and a few others were taken to Babylon.
 - **Why? Why did God take His people away from their promised land? Why did He allow the Temple to be destroyed? Because of continued disobedience to His laws, because of idol worship, because of wicked kings.**
2. Can you remember the names of some of the wicked kings of God's people? Let's review the last kings of Judah:
 - **Josiah**—good king! Restored God's people to His laws.
 - **Jehoahaz**, son of Josiah—reigned only 3 months; taken to Egypt by Pharaoh.
 - **Jehoiakim**, son of Josiah—reigned 11 years in Judah; wicked. Would not listen to God and His prophets (Jeremiah and others)
 - **Jehoiachin**, son of Jehoiakim—evil; reigned 3 months; taken captive to Babylon where he lived out the rest of his days.
 - **Zedekiah**, son of Josiah—evil and weak; reigned 11 years; rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar and was killed along with his sons.
3. **Time Frame of PUNISHED - Daniel 1:1** - During the 3rd year of the reign of **Jehoiakim**, King of Judah, **Nebuchadnezzar** set a siege around Jerusalem (605 BC). The Lord gave Jehoiakim into his hand. Along with the king, some of the *young men* were taken to Babylon, as well as some of the *treasures* from the house of God.

QUESTIONS TO KEEP IN MIND AS WE STUDY PUNISHED:

- ▶ *Has God left His people completely? Will any of them survive?*
- ▶ *Will He still see after their well-being and does He still care for them?*
- ▶ *Do any of the captives still believe in God and want to please Him?*
- ▶ *What will happen to Jerusalem during this time of captivity? Will someone rebuild it?*

LESSON: PART 1–Daniel and His Friends are Faithful to God in a Foreign Land.

1. **Read Daniel 1:2 - 5.** The king ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his officials to take some of the young men from Israel, those who were smart and good-looking, and teach them the language and literature of the Chaldeans (Babylonians) for three years. Then, they would enter the king's service. At this point we meet the characters in our story:
 - Four of the young men from Judah are named for us. They were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. They were given new names: **Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego**, respectively.
2. **Read Daniel 1:8.** They were given food and wine from the king's table to eat during their schooling.
 - *Daniel, however, "made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food or wine." He asked permission from Ashpenaz to be given only vegetables and water.*
 - *What foods might they have given to eat that were considered "unclean" according to the laws of Moses?*
 - *A question answered: Some of the captives want to be obedient to God!*
3. **Read Daniel 1:9-10.** God granted Daniel **favor** and **compassion** in the sight of the commander of the officials. Ashpenaz was afraid that Daniel and his friends would not look as good as the other young men and not be as healthy.
 - *Another question has just been answered–God is still looking after the well-being of His people who are faithful to Him!*
4. **Read 1:11-13.** Daniel asked for a test for 10 days. This test would determine if he and his friends were as healthy as the others who continued to eat the king's food.
 - *At the end of the 10 days, the four men seemed to look better than the others!*
 - *So they continued to give the four young men vegetables and water.*

▶ *Daniel and his friends were devoted to obeying God's laws concerning food. This seemed like such an insignificant thing–food, after all! Yet Daniel refused to disobey God—even these seemingly minor laws! Now we will see that God will bless these young men because of their faithfulness to His law!*



LESSON: PART 2–The Reputation of Daniel and His Friends

1. **Read Dan. 1:17.** *"God gave them knowledge and intelligence in every branch of literature and wisdom; Daniel even understood all kinds of visions and dreams."*
2. **Read 1:18 - 21.** After 3 years of preparation, they were presented to the king. No one compared to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, so they entered the king's service in Babylon!
 - *They were found to be 10 times better than all the magicians and conjurers who were in his kingdom.*
 - *It is very evident that God is helping His people! He was seeing after their needs and also, placing them in very important positions in the government of Babylon!*
 - *We will find out in PUNISHED that Daniel continued in the king's service until the third year of Cyrus, the king (Dan. 10:1; about 70 years).*



Lessons for Us Today:

1. Even if we are **young**, and even if it seems **dangerous**, we should still **obey** and be **faithful** to God.
2. Even if a **law** or **principal of God's word** seems **insignificant** to us (like the food they were allowed to eat), it is important that we obey God anyway. We can ask for **wisdom** to understand why these things are important to God.
3. God will reward us if we obey Him in all that we do.
4. Even during a time of punishment or trial or testing, God is still with us. He still loves us.



PUNISHED LESSON 1B—Nebuchadnezzar's Dream of the Statue

OBJECTIVES:

1. We must recognize the sovereignty of God in our lives.
2. God is in complete control in the affairs of men.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS:

1. Name the four Jewish captives taken to Babylon to be educated in the ways of the Babylonians.
2. Explain the interpretation Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the "statue" and its relationship to the church.

STORIES TO BE HIGHLIGHTED:

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream of the Statue

INTRODUCTION:

1. Daniel and his friends are captives from Judah in the city of Babylon.
2. Nebuchadnezzar is the king of Babylon
3. The boys refuse the king's food because of their obedience to God's laws.
4. God blesses them with health, knowledge and skill in literature and wisdom, and He gave Daniel understanding in all visions and dreams.
 - We will see in today's lesson how Daniel will be able to use this ability to the glory of God.

LESSON: PART 1—NEBUCHADNEZZAR HAS A DREAM. Daniel 2:1 - 13

1. **Read 2:1 - 2.** Nebuchadnezzar had a dream that troubled him greatly and he couldn't sleep very well. He sent for his magicians, astrologers and sorcerers to help him understand his dreams.
2. **Read 2:3 - 6.** The king requests an interesting thing—"tell me what I have dreamed! Then tell me the interpretation of it." Was this an unusual request?
3. **Read 2:7 - 9.** The men plead with the king to tell them what exactly he had dreamed, but he wouldn't. He was testing them. He suspected them of telling lies to him and making things up. He felt that if they were really wise men, they would be able to tell him the dream and then give the interpretation!
4. **Read 2:10 - 13.** They protest that "no man on earth" would be able to tell the king what his dream was—only the "gods." Nebuchadnezzar gave a command to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. Of course, Daniel and his friends were among this group! Their lives were now in danger.
 - *We know of course, that God will take care of Daniel and his friends and that He will use this opportunity to bring glory to His name.*

LESSON: PART 2—DANIEL ASKS FOR TIME AND WISDOM. Daniel 2:14 - 23.

1. **Read 2:14 - 16.** Daniel was told of the king's decision concerning his wise men. Daniel goes to the king and asked for more time. It is granted.

2. **Read 2:17 - 19.** Daniel went to his friends, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and they asked for mercies and wisdom from God so that they might have the dream revealed to them. The secret of the dream was revealed to Daniel in a night vision.
 - *We need to remember that Daniel and his friends went first thing to God to ask for help in this matter. They needed knowledge of the king's dream and they also needed wisdom in knowing how to interpret it.*
 - *How often do we go to God in prayer asking for wisdom? James 1:5 tells us that "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be give to him."*
 - *God gave Daniel the answer he was seeking! God gives wisdom to those who ask in faith.*

LESSON: PART 3–DANIEL IS BROUGHT BEFORE NEBUCHADNEZZAR. Daniel 2:24 - 30.

1. **Read 2:24 - 26.** Daniel is brought before Nebuchadnezzar and the king is anxious to know whether or not Daniel has the ability to tell him the dream and its interpretation.
2. **Read 2:27 - 30.** Daniel tells the king of the God in heaven that can make known to the king his visions and dreams. Daniel says that it is not because he has any more wisdom than the other wise men of Babylon, but that God is ready to make known to the king the meaning of it all.

LESSON: PART 4–THE DREAM. Daniel 2:31 - 35.

1. **Read 2:31 - 35.** Have the students tell you by reading to themselves what the dream was about. If you feel comfortable doing so, draw the image on the board. In the student packet is a drawing of this statue. You may refer to that if you wish.
 - *HEAD–Gold*
 - *CHEST AND ARMS–Silver*
 - *BELLY AND THIGHS–Bronze*
 - *LEGS–Iron*
 - *FEET–partly of Iron and partly of Clay*
 - *A stone was cut without hands and struck the image on its feet of iron and clay and broke them into pieces; they were crushed together and blown away by the wind.*
 - *The stone became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.*
 - ▶ *Wow! Do you think you can guess what this dream was about? Daniel is now ready to help Nebuchadnezzar understand the meaning of it.*

LESSON: PART 5–THE INTERPRETATION. Daniel 2:36 - 45.

1. **Read 2:36 - 45** in sections to gain the meaning of the dream. The statue and its parts represents the nations who will rule the world up until the time when Jesus will be born:
 - *HEAD OF GOLD–Nebuchadnezzar and his Babylonian kingdom.*
 - *CHEST AND ARMS OF SILVER–The next kingdom is inferior to Babylon (the difference between gold and silver) and represents the Persian and Median kingdoms*

- **BELLY AND THIGHS OF BRONZE**—A kingdom of even lesser importance (as bronze is to silver)—the kingdom of Greece.
- **LEGS OF IRON and FEET OF IRON AND CLAY MIXED TOGETHER**—a strong kingdom (Rome) that would eventually be crushed because of its weak feet.
- **STONE THAT CRUSED THE STATUE**—Messiah and His church will set up a kingdom that is superior to all the others and will fill the earth. (See verses 44 - 55)

LESSON: PART 6—DANIEL IS PROMOTED. Daniel 2:46 - 49.

1. **Read 2:46 - 47.** The king is very relieved to know the dream's interpretation. He falls down on his face before Daniel and presents an offering and incense to him! He acknowledges that God is the God of all gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets.
2. **Read 2:48 - 49.** Daniel was given many gifts by the king and made ruler of the whole province of Babylon and chief administrator over all the wise men of Babylon. Daniel asked that Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be set over the affairs of the province of Babylon. Daniel then sat in the gate of the king.
 - *Here again, we see God using His own people for His glory by putting them in high places. Daniel and his friends now have the opportunity to influence the king for good.*
 - *Even though God's people are being punished during this time period by being in exile in a foreign land, God is protecting them for good through His guidance, intervention and power in the affairs of men.*



Lessons for Us Today:

1. *God's people are never left alone without protection. He is the God who always there.*
2. *In any circumstance, we can ask God for wisdom to help us in our decision making and for how to live our lives.*
3. *Daniel was quick to make the king understand that his ability to understand the king's dream was a gift from God. How often do we give God the credit for our blessings and talents that come from His hand? This reminds me so much of Joseph!*
4. *Even though political situations sometimes look very grim in our world today, we can have confidence that God is still in control. He is the one who guides the times and the seasons and gives power to whomever He chooses.*
5. *The church is the one kingdom that will last forever. May we do everything we can to be a part of this great kingdom!*



PICTURES OF CHRIST—

Christ is the **great stone** who will crush the kingdoms of this world. His kingdom will endure forever. It is interesting that God revealed the coming kingdoms to Daniel, and as we know from History, was exactly right!



PUNISHED 20 QUESTIONS

1. Daniel and his friends were carried to what country? *Babylon (Dan. 1 1-6)*
2. Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with what?
Food from the king's table (Dan. 1:8)
3. What name was given to Daniel in the new country? *Belteshazzar (1:7)*
4. What names were given to Daniel's 3 friends in the new country?
Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Dan. 1:7)
5. What did Daniel and his friends ask to be given to eat and drink?
Vegetables and water (Dan. 1:12)
6. How long were Daniel and his friends in training before they were taken before the king? *3 years (Dan. 1:5)*
7. When Daniel and his friends were presented to the king, how did they compare to others? *They were 10 times better (Dan. 1:20)*
8. Why did King Nebuchadnezzar get so upset with his magicians, conjurers, and sorcerers? *They could tell him his dream and interpret it (2:5)*
9. What did Daniel do when he heard about the king's displeasure with all his wise men and magicians? *Ask for time, told his friends and they prayed to God (2:16,18)*
10. What special ability did God give to Daniel? *Reveal and interpret dreams*
11. Daniel told the king about a statue. What happened to the statue?
Even though it was made of metals, it was crushed by a stone (2:35, 44, 45)
12. Daniel told the king that something would fill the whole earth. What was it?
The stone that struck the statue, a stone cut out of the mountain without hands (2:35,45)
13. What thing did Daniel tell the king would endure forever?
Kingdom set up by God (Dan. 2:44)
14. What did Nebuchadnezzar have built on the plain of Dura? *Image of gold (3:1)*

15. What special thing was to happen when the people heard the sound of musical instruments? *Fell down and worship the golden image (3:5)*
16. What was the punishment for failure to follow the king's command concerning the music? *Being thrown into the fiery furnace (3:15)*
17. Who was punished for failure to obey the king's command when the musical instruments were played? *Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (3:19)*
18. What strange thing happened to King Nebuchadnezzar because of his pride? *He lived with the animals, ate grass, his hair grew like eagle's feathers and his nails grew like bird's claws (Dan. 4:33)*
19. How long did it take King Nebuchadnezzar to recognize the sovereignty of the God in Heaven? *7 years or 7 periods of time (Dan. 4:32)*
20. How was King Nebuchadnezzar warned about his pride and the failure to acknowledge the Most High God? *In a vision interpreted by Daniel (Dan. 4)*





PUNISHED LESSON 2A—Nebuchadnezzar’s Image; Fiery Furnace

OBJECTIVES:

1. *God is in control of kings and kingdoms.*
2. *It is important to be faithful to God, no matter what the consequences.*
3. *We must show integrity in everything we do.*

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS:

1. *Name the four Jewish captives taken to Babylon to be educated in the ways of the Babylonians.*
2. *Explain the interpretation Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of the “statue” and its relationship to the church.*

STORIES TO BE HIGHLIGHTED:

The Golden Statue and the Fiery Furnace

INTRODUCTION:

1. Who can tell me about Nebuchadnezzar’s dream?
2. What did each of the parts of the statue represent?
3. What did “the stone” represent?
4. Remember, that Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged to Daniel that his God was the “God of gods” in our last lesson. Today, we will see that Nebuchadnezzar still thinks he himself is in charge of all things.
5. We will also see how Daniel’s friends are true to the one true God and put their lives in danger by doing so.

LESSON: PART 1—NEBUCHADNEZZAR’S IMAGE IS ERECTED. Daniel 3:1 - 7.

1. **Read Daniel 3:1 - 3.** Nebuchadnezzar had an image made of gold. This image was 60 cubits high and 6 cubits wide (90 feet and 9 feet), and was set up on the plain of Dura. He called all the officials of his kingdom to assemble for the dedication of the statue.
2. **Read 3:4 - 7.** When everyone assembled, the herald proclaimed that everyone was to fall down and worship the golden image when they heard the sound of music. If they did not fall down and worship, they would be immediately cast into the furnace of blazing fire!

LESSON: PART 2—ACCUSATIONS: Daniel 3:8 - 12.

1. **Read 3:8 - 12.** After the people bowed down to worship the image, some of the Chaldeans went to the king and reported that there were some Jews who had disregarded the king’s command.
 - *These Jews had been appointed over the administration of the province of Babylon, and their names were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.*
 - *The accusation: they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up! These people sound like tattle-tailers!*
 - *Satan is always ready to accuse God’s people when they are doing right. Here is another example of that.*

LESSON: PART 3–DANIEL’S FRIENDS TRUST IN GOD. Daniel 3:13 - 18.

1. **Read 3:13 - 15.** In rage and anger, Nebuchadnezzar gave orders for the three men to be brought before him. He told them to fall down and worship the image at the moment they heard the sound of the music, or they would be cast into the furnace (it sounds as if he is hoping they will change their minds!). Then he added “**and what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?**”

- *Nebuchadnezzar seems to have forgotten one very important thing: God is in control of all kings and nations!*

2. **Read 3:16 - 18.** Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego told the king that the God whom they served is able to deliver them from the furnace, and that He would deliver them from the hand of the king. **But, even, if God does not deliver them, they still are not going to worship the king’s gods or the golden image!** The king was furious.

- *Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego show us a wonderful example of strong faith in God. They do not believe God because He promises to deliver; they believe Him regardless of the short-term outcome. He can do what He wishes with them.*

- *How many of us can say that we have this kind of faith today? The kind of faith that says, no matter what happens to me, I will still be faithful to God and do His commandments.*

LESSON: PART 4–PROTECTION IN THE FURNACE. Daniel 3:19 - 28.

1. **Read 3:19.** Nebuchadnezzar ordered that the furnace be heated 7 times more than it was usually heated, and that Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be bound and thrown in!

- *The king sure seems to be angry about this! He is very angry that these respected men would not bow down to this image!*

- *The command that the furnace be heated up seven times higher than usual just shows us how angry he was that someone wouldn’t obey him.*

2. **Read 3:20 - 23.** They were tied up, but the fire was so hot that the heat killed the men carrying them to the furnace! The three fell into the fire, still tied.

3. **Read 3:24 - 25.** Nebuchadnezzar was watching. He jumped up and asked his official, “Was it not three men we cast bound into the midst of the fire?” Then he said, “Look! I see four men loosed and walking about in the midst of the fire without harm, and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods!”

- *Who do you think the “extra” person in the furnace is? Could it be an angel sent to help Daniel’s friends?*

4. **Read 3:26.** Nebuchadnezzar came close to the door and told them to come out, “servants of the Most High God.”

- *Everyone saw that these men had no effect of the fire on their bodies!*

- *Their hair was not singed, their clothes were not damaged and they did not have the smell of fire on them!*

5. **Read 3: 27 - 29.** Listen to what Nebuchadnezzar said:

"Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent His angel and delivered His servants who put their trust in Him, violating the king's command, and yielded up their bodies so as not to serve or worship any god except their own God. Therefore, I make a decree that any people, nation, or tongue that speaks anything offensive against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb and their houses reduced to a rubbish heap, inasmuch as there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way."

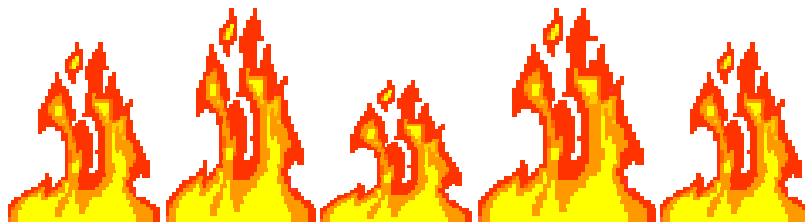
■ *The king is slowly getting the picture that the one true God is powerful and working in the lives of men.*

6. **Read 3:30.** Then the king caused them to prosper and promoted them in the province of Babylon.



LESSONS FOR US TODAY:

1. *Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were committed to following God's laws and being faithful servants to Him, even in the face of death. Our faith must grow continually so that we will be able to face very difficult situations if we have to in this life.*
2. *These young men decided to follow God even if He did not deliver them from their trouble. There might be a time in our lives when deliverance from God will not come. We must be faithful and strong even if we are not rescued by Him. There is a reward greater than we know waiting for us in eternity.*
3. *No matter how powerful or great an earthly ruler may seem, God is still in control and will prevail in the end.*





PUNISHED LESSON 2B—Nebuchadnezzar's Vision and Madness

OBJECTIVES:

1. God wants us to have a humble and contrite heart before Him.
2. God hates pride in a man, but rewards those who are humble before Him.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS:

Explain the interpretation Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the "statue."

Define these words: **Captivity, Punishment, Repentance, Visions, Messiah**

STORIES TO BE HIGHLIGHTED:

King Nebuchadnezzar's Vision and His Madness

INTRODUCTION:

1. Twice now in our stories in **PUNISHED** the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar has acknowledged the greatness of the God of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Can you remember the occasions?
 - *When Daniel told the king about his dream and then interpreted it*
 - *When Daniel's friends were saved in the fiery furnace*
2. In **chapter 4** we have another incident in the life of Nebuchadnezzar. It almost seems that Nebuchadnezzar takes the pen of Daniel and writes this account himself. Let's look at his introduction in the first 3 verses:

LESSON: PART 1—NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S VISION. Daniel 4

1. Nebuchadnezzar was at ease in his house and flourishing in his palace - things were going great! Then he had a dream that frightened him. He called all the magicians and diviners and related his dream, but they could not tell him the meaning.
2. But, look at **Dan. 4:8—The Vision--**
 - *The 1st part of the **vision**: a tree grew large and became strong; it reached to the sky and was visible to the end of the whole earth. Its foliage was beautiful and fruit was abundant. It was food for all. It gave shade to the beasts of the field and the birds dwelt in its branches. All living creatures were fed from it.*
3. **Read 4:13 - 17.**
 - *The 2nd part of the **vision**: An angelic watcher, a holy one, descended from heaven and shouted out to chop down the tree and cut off its branches. Strip its foliage and scatter its fruit. The stump was left with its roots in the ground, and there was a band of iron and bronze around it in a field of new grass.*
 - *It was drenched with the dew of heaven. His mind was changed from that of a man to that of a beast until seven times had passed.*
 - *This was decided of holy ones in order that the living may know "that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind, and bestows it on whom He wishes, and sets over it the lowliest of men."*



VOCABULARY:

"Vision"—as used in the Bible, a revelation from God that was sometimes given to a person in a dream. There are many visions related to us in the book of Daniel. Some of these visions were given to Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel interpreted them through the power of God, and some were given to Daniel by God about Israel's future. These revelations always referred to things that would come about in the future.

4. **Read 4:18.** Nebuchadnezzar finishes his retelling of the dream and asks that Daniel ("Belteshazzar"—his Babylonian name) declare its interpretation since "the Spirit of the Holy God" was in him.
5. **Read 4:19.** Daniel was alarmed when he heard this **vision!** He said to the king, *"My lord, if only the dream applied to those who hate you, and its interpretation to your adversaries!"*

LESSON: PART 2—THE INTERPRETATION OF THE DREAM. Daniel 4:20 - 27.

Read 4:20 - 26:

- *Nebuchadnezzar was the tree! It was strong and lovely and could be seen by all the earth.*
- *The angelic watcher, a holy one, descending from heaven was a **decree** of the Most High on the king.*
- *Nebuchadnezzar was going to be driven away from mankind and live with the beasts of the field and eat the grass of the field for a period of seven times (seven years), until he **"recognized that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind, and bestows it on whomever He wishes."***
- *The stump was left, so he had the assurance that after he recognized that Heaven rules, his kingdom would be restored to him by God.*

LESSON: PART 3—DANIEL'S ADVICE.

1. **Read Dan 4:27.** Daniel's advice: *"break away now from your sins by doing righteousness and from your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor, in case there may be prolonging of your prosperity."* (Dan. 4:27)
 - *Daniel counseled the king to show fruit of repentance in his life so that these terrible things will not happen to him!*
2. **Read 4:28 - 30.** Reality: Twelve months later, Nebuchadnezzar was walking on the roof and started thinking about how great he was and what he had built. Guess what?...
 - *Verses 31 - 32. While the word was still in his mouth, a voice came from heaven and told him that his sovereignty had been removed; he was to be driven from mankind and live with the beasts of the field.*
 - *It happened immediately! Look at 4:33 - until his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws!*

- *Just think of the great Nebuchadnezzar acting like an animal and living outside like a beast!*
- 3. At the end of that period of time, Nebuchadnezzar says, *"I raised my eyes toward heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever; ... (vs. 34-35).*
- 4. Nebuchadnezzar was restored to his kingdom and surpassing greatness was added to him. **The result: Verse 37--** *"Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise, exalt, and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and His is able to humble those who walk in pride."*
 - *Nebuchadnezzar was finally able to give God the glory for all his accomplishments and to recognize His great power and might.*



THINGS TO ASK ABOUT THIS STORY:

1. *Was King Nebuchadnezzar an Israelite, one of God's chosen people? (No, he was a Chaldean)*
2. *Was God responsible for him being on the throne in Babylon? (Yes)*
3. *Had Nebuchadnezzar had the opportunity to hear about God and learn about the God of Heaven? (Yes, from Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and the events surrounding the fiery furnace; Daniel had even warned him when he interpreted the king's dream)*
4. *Was God able to get his attention? (Yes)*
5. *How long did it take? (7 years, or 7 periods of time)*
6. *What does this story teach us? (God is in control of everything; God wants us to honor him, and know that He is the One Who blesses)*



LESSONS FOR US TODAY:

1. *We must cultivate (work on obtaining) a humble (lowly, meek or modest) and contrite spirit before God.*
2. *1 Peter 5:5 - 6 tells us that "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time."*
3. *Even though the king was a very great and powerful man, God was able to prevail over him and change his life's circumstances completely. God is also in control of our lives. We must live righteously and show mercy to others who are in need so that He will bless us.*
4. *Daniel asked Nebuchadnezzar to make a change in his life and attitude (**repentance**) so that God might not bring this madness upon him. We know from other stories in the Bible that sometimes God relents from bringing punishment when a person shows repentance (a change of heart and life).*



PUNISHED LESSON 3A—The Handwriting on the Wall

OBJECTIVES:

1. God is in control of kings and kingdoms.
2. God was faithful to His promise to destroy the Babylonian kingdom.
3. God used Daniel to bring a message to Belshazzar.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS:

Define these words: **Captivity, Punishment, Repentance, Visions, Messiah**

STORIES TO BE HIGHLIGHTED:

The Handwriting on the Wall

INTRODUCTION:

1. In chapter 5, we find that a new king is on the throne in Babylon. His name is **Belshazzar**. He was the grandson of **Nebuchadnezzar**. His father did not like the lifestyle of the city of Babylon and left his son, Belshazzar to rule in the city instead.
2. One little item to remember from earlier stories is that when Nebuchadnezzar's army came in to Jerusalem and destroyed it, they carried away the beautiful things from the temple. Some of these gold and silver vessels that were taken from the temple are going to find their way into our story tonight!

LESSON: PART 1—BELSHAZZAR AND THE GREAT FEAST. Daniel 5:1 - 4.

1. **Read 5:1 - 2.** Belshazzar had a feast for 1,000 nobles. During the feast he gave orders for the *gold and silver vessels*, which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple in Jerusalem, to be brought so they could drink wine from them.
 - *This gives us a little glimpse into Belshazzar's character. He is using the goblets to drink out of so that he can show off the power of the great Babylonian kingdom. He is boasting about something that he himself did not accomplish, so that he can receive glory from it! It sounds like he is full of pride as his grandfather once was.*
2. **Read 5:3 - 4.** The Bible tells us that the king, and his nobles, his wives and his concubines drank from them, and they praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone!
 - *This shows us that he had not learned the lessons about the one true God that his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar had learned! He is a pagan who believes in gods of gold and silver.*

LESSON: PART 2–THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL. Daniel 5:5 - 9.

1. **Read 5:5.** As they were doing this, suddenly the fingers of a man's hand emerged and began writing opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace. The king saw the back of the hand that did the writing!
2. **Read 5:6.** The king became pale, his thoughts alarmed, his hip joints went slack and his knees began knocking together!
3. **Read 5:7.** He called for his conjurers and diviners and offered a reward of purple clothes, gold necklace and authority as the third ruler of the land if they could read the inscription and explain it. Do you think they could do it?
4. **5:8 - 9.** The wise men all came, but none could tell the interpretation! Are you surprised?! Everyone in the room is troubled and astonished!



LESSON: PART 3–GOOD ADVICE FROM THE QUEEN. Daniel 5:10 - 12.

1. **Read 5:10 - 12.** The **queen** (could be his wife or his mother; most likely his mother) came in to tell **Belshazzar** that there was a man in his kingdom, in whom was found the spirit of the holy gods, who should be called.
2. This man, **Daniel**, she told him, had been appointed chief of his father's magicians because of his knowledge and insight, his ability to interpret dreams and to solve difficult problems. So, Daniel is called!
 - *Belshazzar must be very young or not very wise. He doesn't seem to know anything about his grandfather's kingdom or administration!*



LESSON: PART 4–DANIEL GIVES A HISTORY LESSON. Daniel 5:13 - 23.

1. **Read 5:13 - 16.** Daniel is offered the same rewards offered earlier to the magicians, but Daniel tells the king to keep his gifts and give his rewards to someone else. Nevertheless, he will read the inscription and interpret it.
2. **Read 5:17 - 23.** Daniel recounts some of the things that had happened to Nebuchadnezzar because of his **pride**:
 - *He reminds him of all the majesty and glory given to Nebuchadnezzar by God Himself.*
 - *He tells of when the king's heart was "lifted up" in pride and God made him like a beast of the field.*
 - *He then tells the king that he knew of these things, but he had not humbled his heart before the Lord of heaven. Belshazzar had been praising the false gods, but had not glorified the one true God who controlled his life and ways!*

LESSON: PART 5–THE INTERPRETATION AND THE RESULT. Daniel 5:24 - 29.

1. **Read 5:25 - 28.** So the inscription *"Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin"* was interpreted for the king by Daniel.
2. Daniel told the king that it meant that God had *numbered his kingdom*, he had been *weighed in the balances* and *found deficient*, and his kingdom had been *divided* and given over to the Medes and Persians.
3. Daniel is rewarded just as the king had promised. But do you think it mattered?
 - *It did not matter, because that very night Belshazzar was killed by the invading army of Darius the Mede!*
 - *God took away the kingdom from the Babylonians and gave it to the Persians. Wait a minute! Isn't that what Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the statue foretold would happen?!*



LESSONS FOR US TODAY:

1. *No matter how powerful a king is or how rich a nation, God determines their destiny.*
2. *Babylon was one of the richest and most powerful nations in the history of the world.*
3. *However, God took away Belshazzar's kingdom and life in one night!*
4. *We must never trust in our riches, our accomplishments or our power; and we must never exalt ourselves above God. He is the giver of these great gifts and we must worship Him and Him only.*
5. *The prophet Isaiah prophesied many years earlier (In the DIVIDED Timeline period) that Babylon would take control of God's people and the Promised Land, but that God would bring them to nothing when the time came. God is now punishing Babylon for all the things it carried out against God's people! God fulfills all His promises!*



PUNISHED LESSON 3B—The Lion's Den; Ezekiel's Message of Hope

OBJECTIVES:

1. Daniel was faithful to God in prayer and God rewarded him.
2. Because of Daniel's faithfulness to God, he prospered in the time of the Persian kings.
3. The prophet Ezekiel brought a message of hope to God's people who were still in captivity.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS:

Define these words:

Captivity, Punishment, Repentance, Visions, Messiah

Stories to be Highlighted:

Daniel in the Lion's Den

Ezekiel's Message of Hope

INTRODUCTION:

1. Do you remember **Nebuchadnezzar's** dream about the statue that represented the four great kingdoms? At this point in time, the **Persian-Mede** Empire is now in control, having taken over **Belshazzar's** throne in our last story.
2. **Darius, the Mede** is now on the throne and Babylon is under the control of the Medes.
 - Daniel is still living in the city of Babylon, though he is older now.
 - God's people are still in captivity.

LESSON: PART 1—DANIEL THROWN TO THE LIONS

1. **Read Daniel 6:1 - 3.** Darius appointed 120 satraps over the kingdom, and put them in charge of affairs.
2. Over the satraps were **3 commissioners** whom Darius appointed to make the satraps accountable.
 - *Daniel was one of the 3 commissioners and he was distinguishing himself because he possessed an extraordinary spirit. The king was even planning to appoint him over the entire kingdom.*
 - *We see God at work again in the lives of His people by putting one of His own people in a high position.*
3. **Read 6:4 - 5.** And, as will often happen, when someone is doing really well and being recognized, others start trying to find something wrong with them or what they are doing.
 - *This is exactly what happened with Daniel. He was watched by the governors and satraps to see how he handled government affairs, but they could find nothing wrong because Daniel was faithful, with no negligence or corruption.*
 - *Finally they said they would be able to find nothing wrong, unless it had to do with the law of Daniel's God. So they cooked up a plan!*
4. **Read 6:6 - 9.** The commissioners, prefects, satraps, and high officials went to the king and asked him to establish a statute (law) and enforce it so that anyone who made a petition to any god or man besides the king for thirty days would be thrown into a *den of lions*.
 - *This sounded good to the king, so he made the decree according to the law of the Medes and Persians, so that it could not be changed or revoked.*

- *Whenever a Persian king made a law that was it! It could not be revoked. This one Persian law comes up several times in the next few weeks of study, so be paying attention!*

LESSON: PART 2–DANIEL CONTINUES TO PRAY.

1. **Read 6:10.** Daniel knew the document had been signed. Still, Daniel went into his house, apparently to the window of his roof chamber which faced Jerusalem, and continued kneeling on his knees 3 times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, just as he had been doing before the terrible decree.
2. **Read 6:11 - 13.** The men who were looking for something wrong with Daniel came and found him praying to God.
 - *You can imagine what they did next. They went to the king, and asked, didn't you make this decree?*
 - *When he answered yes, they told him that Daniel, one of the exiles from Judah, is paying no attention to you or your decree. They told the king that Daniel was still making his petition 3 times a day.*
3. **Read 6:14 - 15.** The king was greatly displeased with himself as soon as he heard this report, and set his mind on delivering Daniel. He continued trying to find a way to rescue Daniel until sunset.
 - *Sometimes, when kings or lawmakers make rules or laws or decrees, they don't think them through well enough. This is an example of that very thing.*
4. **Read 6:16 - 17.** Then the men came back to the king, just to make sure he honored his law. Of course, they are hoping to get rid of Daniel for good.
5. So, the king gave orders for Daniel to be cast into the lion's den. However, the king also said to Daniel, *"Your God whom you constantly serve will Himself deliver you."* It sounds as though Darius had faith in God also!
6. A stone was put over the entrance to the lion's den and it was sealed with the **signet ring** of the king and his nobles.

LESSON: PART 3–A NIGHT WITH THE LIONS.

1. **Read 6:18.** The king returned to his palace and spent the night fasting. Fasting is when a person goes without food so that they can pray or concentrate on God. He wanted no entertainment that evening and he could not sleep.
2. **Read 6:19 - 20.** At dawn, the king went in haste (in a big hurry!) to the lion's den. When he came near the den, he cried out to Daniel with a troubled voice. He said, *"Daniel, Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you constantly serve, been able to deliver you from the lions?"*
3. And guess what?! Daniel answered *"O king, live forever!"* Read Dan. 6:22.
4. **Read 6:23.** The king was pleased and gave orders for Daniel to be taken out. Daniel had no injury, because he had trusted in his God.
5. The king then gave orders for those who had maliciously accused Daniel to be brought, along with their wives and children. They were all thrown into the lion's den! Before they reached the bottom of the den, the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.
6. **Read 6:25 - 28.** King Darius wrote a decree to all the people, of every language in his kingdom. The decree said:

"Men are to fear and tremble before the God of Daniel; for He is the living God and enduring forever, And His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed, and His dominion will be forever. He delivers and rescues and performs signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, who has also delivered Daniel from the power of the lions." (Dan. 6:26-27)

- *When God's people obey Him and refuse to follow the practices of the world, God takes care of them and rescues them.*
- *Also, Satan makes sure there is always someone around to accuse God's people of doing wrong, even when they are not. But God is greater than Satan and his plans will come to nothing as long as we put our trust and hope in God.*



What can we learn from the character of Daniel?

1. Daniel is one of the few people in the Bible about which we have nothing negative written.
2. Daniel's **commitment** to follow God's laws, his **integrity** in service to 3 different kings, and his **trust** in God is an example we should follow.
3. God raised Daniel up to a very high position in a foreign kingdom because of his integrity, faith and humility. *Daniel always gave God the glory* for everything.
4. Who else do you remember that was raised to a high position in a foreign government? **Joseph**

LESSON: PART 4—EZEKIEL BRINGS A MESSAGE OF HOPE FOR GOD'S PEOPLE.

1. Now I want to introduce you to another prophet of God's named **Ezekiel**. Ezekiel lived at the same time as Daniel. Here are some other facts about him:
 - *Time of Ezekiel - Daniel was already in Babylon and was known before Ezekiel arrived. Daniel had been carried away in the first group of exiles-605 BC.*
 - *Ezekiel was apparently taken in the second group of exiles when King Jehoiachin was taken to Babylon-597BC (Ezekiel 1:2; II Kings 24:8-16).*
 - *The last group of exiles was taken to Babylon in 586 BC. Remember, the exiles were living in the cities of Babylon in their own homes. Ezekiel was one of these exiles.*
2. We are going to look at only one small piece of Ezekiel's writing. His message to God's people was a message of hope that they would one day return to their homeland.



LESSON: PART 5—THE VISION OF THE DRY BONES.

1. **Turn to Ezekiel 37.** Ezekiel had a **vision** in which the Spirit of the Lord set him down in the middle of a valley full of very dry bones! (Bones that have been dead for a long time)
2. **Read 37:6.** The Lord asked him if these bones could live. His response was that only the Lord knew. The Lord told Ezekiel to prophesy over the bones and speak to them, *"O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Behold, I will cause breath to enter you that you may come to life. And I will put sinews on you, make flesh grow back on you, cover you with skin, and put breath in you that you may come alive; and you will now that I am the Lord."*

3. **Read 37:7 - 8.** Ezekiel did as the Lord commanded and when he did there was a noise and a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to its bone! Then sinews (muscles and tendons) were on them and flesh grew. Skin covered them, but there was no breath in them. That means they were not yet alive.
4. **Read 37:9 - 11.** Ezekiel was then told by the LORD to prophecy to the breath and then to breathe on the dry bones. When he prophesied as he was told, breath came into the bodies; they came to life, and stood on their feet! They were a great army!
5. Then the Lord told him that these bones are the whole house of Israel, and they say "*Our bones are dried up, and our hope has perished. We are completely cut off.*"
6. **Read 37:12 - 14.** The LORD said that these bones would come out of their graves and He would bring them into the land of Israel. Then they would know that He was the LORD and He would put His Spirit on them and bring them to life.

LESSON: PART 6–THE MEANING OF THE VISION.

Do you have an idea what Ezekiel's vision meant? This was a vision of *hope* for the Israelites who were living in Babylon:

- *They were like the dry bones; dead and with no hope. Even though they had no hope in a foreign land as captives, God had a plan!*
- *He was able to raise them up and restore them to their own land. Because this was part of God's bigger plan.*
- *God punished the nation of Judah, the only ones remaining of the chosen people of Israel, because of their sin. But God was not finished with them yet!*
- *Remember the prophecies of Isaiah, Micah, Joel, David, and others? Whom did they prophesy about? (The Messiah) Had the Messiah come at the time the people are in Babylon? (no, because God's purpose for Israel had not yet been completed)*
- *God's plan to send the Messiah is beginning to take shape.*



LESSONS FOR US TODAY FROM THE VISION OF THE DRY BONES:

1. *God always restores His people to their former glory when they truly repent.*
2. *God can take a terrible situation and make it come out for the best. Even better than before! Read Romans 8:28. "All things work together for good..."*
3. *Today, when we sin and suffer great consequences, God is able to restore us to His presence when we truly repent and turn back to Him, no matter how bad the sin!*



PUNISHED WEEK 3 - 20 QUESTIONS

1. Which king had a great feast for a thousand of his officials and used the vessels taken from the temple in Jerusalem?
Belshazzar (5:1)
2. What frightened the Babylonian king while he was entertaining his officials at the great feast?
Handwriting on the wall (5:5-6)
3. When the king's wise men could read the inscription, who told the king where he could find the answer?
The queen (5:10)
4. Who was able to read the unknown inscription?
Daniel (5:13)
5. How long did it take for the interpretation of the inscription to happen?
That very night (5:30)
6. What happened to fulfill the prophecy of the inscription?
The king was killed the Medes took the kingdom (5:30-31)
7. After the Babylonian kings, who was the next king over Babylon?
Darius, the Mede (5:31)
8. Who tried to find an accusation to make against Daniel?
The commissioners and the satraps in Babylon (6:4)
9. What did Daniel's accusers find out about him?
No negligence or corruption, but he kept the law of his God (6:4-5)
10. What did Daniel's accusers do to get around the problem of Daniel's goodness?
Consulted together to get the king to make a decree about making a petition to any god or man for 30 days (6:7)
11. After the king's law was made, what did Daniel continue to do, just as he had always done?
Praying and giving thanks to God 3 times a day (6:10)
12. What was the punishment for Daniel's habit that went against the king's decree?
To be thrown into the lion's den (6:12)
13. How did the king feel about the punishment he gave to Daniel?
He was deeply distressed and wanted to deliver Daniel (6:14)
14. Why did the king have to carry out the punishment?
It was according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which may not be revoked (6:12)
15. What protection was Daniel given and by whom?
God sent His angel and shut the lion's mouths (6:22)

16. Describe the king's night after passing sentence on Daniel.
He fasted, had no entertainment, and could not sleep (6:18)
17. When did the king go and check on Daniel?
At dawn, the break of day, in haste (6:19)
18. What did the king discover about Daniel when he went to the lion's den?
That the living God whom Daniel served had saved him from the lions (6:20, 23)
19. What happened to those who had accused Daniel?
They, along with their families, were thrown into the lion's den (6:24)
20. What kind of decree did the king make after the experience of Daniel?
That all people in the land should fear and tremble before the God of Daniel (6:25-27)

