

LESSON 12: FAR FROM HOME

From Daniel 1:1 to 22:42

The kings of Israel and Judah disobeyed God. Armies from other countries attacked and took many of the people far away from their homes.

Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, took the strong young men to work for him. The young men were taught the new language and given a good education.

The king gave the young men fancy food and fine wine. Four of the young men, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, said, "We will not eat the king's fancy food and drink his fine wine. We will eat only vegetables and drink only water." After ten days, they were stronger and looked better than the young men who ate the king's food. So, all the young men were given vegetables and water.

After three years, the king said that these four young men were the smartest and wisest men in his kingdom.

One night, the king had a dream but could not remember it. He asked all the smart people in his kingdom what he had dreamed and what the dream meant. Only Daniel, with God's help, could tell the king his dream and what it meant.

Many years later, the king built a tall statue of himself. He told all of the people to bow down and worship the statue. Whoever did not worship the statue would be put into a hot oven. Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah did not bow down to the statue because they loved and obeyed God. The king was angry. He made the three young men go into the hot oven. The flames of the oven did not hurt the young men. They walked around in the fire and sang songs to God. The king said, "Didn't we put three men in the fire? Look, there is a fourth man with them!" And the king made a law that everyone should worship God.

Later, when another king was in charge, some men became jealous of Daniel. Even though Daniel was far from home, he prayed to God three times a day. The jealous men told the king to make a new law that no one could pray to God, but only pray to the king. The punishment was that anyone who prayed to God would be fed to hungry lions. Even though the king made the new law, Daniel continued to pray three times every day. The jealous men told the king that Daniel continued to pray. The king put Daniel in with the lions, but the lions did not hurt him! The king was surprised. He made a law that everyone should worship God.

Circle all correct answers.

1. What did the armies do to the people?
 - A. They took them to the temple.
 - B. They took them to a place far away from their homes.
 - C. They made them build an ark.
 - D. They made them go back to Egypt.

2. How were the four young men different from the other young men?
 - A. They were stronger.
 - B. They looked better.
 - C. They were smarter.
 - D. They were wiser.

3. How did Daniel help the king?
 - A. He taught him to speak his language.
 - B. He took him to the temple to worship God.
 - C. He told him what his dream meant.
 - D. He gave him his recipe for vegetable stir fry.

4. When did Daniel stop praying to God?
 - A. When the armies took him away from home.
 - B. When the king gave him vegetables to eat.
 - C. When the king made a new law that no one could pray to God.
 - D. When he saw the lions.

Fill in the blanks.

5. Who was in the fire?

6. True or false: today's stories take place in the land that God had promised to give to His people.

EXTRA QUESTIONS (Lesson 12)

7. Daniel and his friends had lots of challenges in their lives. List some of them.

8. Give two examples of how God was with Daniel and his friends.

9. At the Divine Liturgy on Holy Saturday morning, we read the story of Daniel's friends in the hot oven. The Church fathers teach that it was Jesus who was the fourth man in the fire with the three young men. Can you make a connection between what happened to the three young men and what happened to Jesus when He died and came back to life again?

Here is the troparion (song) for Daniel and his friends:

Great are the accomplishments of faith,
For the Three Holy Youths rejoiced in the fountain of flames
As though in the waters of rest;
And the prophet Daniel appeared,
A shepherd to the lions as though they were sheep.
So by their prayers, O Christ God, save our souls!