

Daniel

by Joelee Chamberlain

Today I thought it would be fun to talk about Daniel. Would you like that? You've heard stories about Daniel before, haven't you? There is a book of the Bible called "Daniel," and it has lots of exciting stories in it. So why don't I tell you those now, all right?

Well, first of all do you remember where Daniel was as we read about him in the book of Daniel? He was in Babylon, wasn't he? But how did he get to Babylon, do you remember? Well, let's quickly go over that, okay?

Let's see now. Daniel was a Jew, and at first he lived in the kingdom of Judah. The king of Judah and many of the people of Judah were worshipping idols and doing all sorts of wicked things. The Lord kept sending them prophets to warn them to stop being so wicked. The Lord said He would have to punish them if they didn't. But they didn't pay any attention to the prophets of the Lord. So finally the Lord let Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, come to the land of Judah. And the Lord had a prophet named Jeremiah tell the Jewish people that Nebuchadnezzar was going to conquer them and make them be his servants and that they would be gone from their land for 70 years. That's a long time, isn't it? 70 years!

So Nebuchadnezzar's big army came, and the army captured the kingdom of Judah, and they captured the big, important city of Jerusalem, the city where the beautiful temple to the Lord God was, the temple that King Solomon had built many years before. And what do you think Nebuchadnezzar did to Jerusalem? Do you remember? Why, he knocked it all down! He even knocked down the walls and burned the big gates to the city. And he knocked down the beautiful temple. And he took all of the gold things and the silver things out of the Lord's temple and took them back to Babylon!

And also, remember, Nebuchadnezzar captured the people of Jerusalem and the kingdom of Judah and took them back to Babylon. And Nebuchadnezzar took some of the young Jewish men, the very best young men, ones that were smart and wise and handsome, and some of them were even related to the king of Judah. And Nebuchadnezzar sort of sent these young men to college in Babylon for 3 years. He had them taught the language of the Babylonians and had them taught many things. And these young men were given food and were taken good care of and taught things for 3 years. They were being trained to do things for the kingdom of Babylon. And that's how Daniel got to Babylon, because four of these young men were named Daniel -- Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. You've heard of all of them, haven't you?! And that's where the book of Daniel starts, with Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego having been brought to Babylon.

Well, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego all loved the Lord God. They wanted to follow what the Lord said. And the Lord in His laws to them had told the Jews not to eat certain kinds of food. But some of the food that Daniel and his friends were being given by the Babylonians was food that they didn't think they should eat. Well, God had made it so that the men who took care of them liked Daniel very much. So one day Daniel said to the leader of those men, "Please, sir, we don't

want to eat the king's food. Please let us try just for 10 days that we only eat vegetables and only drink water. Then after that look at us and see if we look as healthy as the ones who are eating the food the king gives them. Then you decide what to do."

So the leader over them let Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego just eat the vegetables and drink water for 10 days, and then he looked at them, and Daniel and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego looked more healthy than the ones who were eating all of the fine food that the king gave them. So after that Daniel and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego didn't have to eat the king's food. They were obeying the Lord with the food they ate.

And God let Daniel and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego learn a lot and be very wise, and God gave Daniel the power to understand special dreams and visions. And after they had finished the 3 years of schooling, all of the young Jewish men there were brought before King Nebuchadnezzar, and the king talked with them. And the Nebuchadnezzar found out that Daniel and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were the wisest of all of the other young men and much wiser than even the king's own wise men.

Well, one night King Nebuchadnezzar was asleep, and he had a bad dream. Then he couldn't get back to sleep, so he called all of his wise men. Nebuchadnezzar wanted to know what the dream meant. He said, "I've dreamed a dream, and it really bothers me."

His wise men said, "O king, tell us your dream, and we'll tell you what it means."

King Nebuchadnezzar said, "You tell me! But if you don't tell me what the dream was and what it means, I'll kill all of you! But if you do tell me the dream and what it means, I'll give you great rewards."

Can you imagine that? How could anyone else possibly know what the king's dream had been?!

So the wise men said, "Just tell us the dream, and we'll tell you what it means."

Nebuchadnezzar said, "Oh, you're just trying to gain time, because you see that's what I've said."

The king said, "You're just getting ready to tell me lies about what it means in hopes things will change. But if you can tell me what the dream itself was, then I'll know that you can really tell me what it means."

The wise men said, "Why, no one on earth can tell you what your dream was. And no king has ever asked such a thing before. No one can tell you what your dream was except the gods." (You see, the Babylonians worshipped lots of false gods. They didn't worship the one real Lord God.)

Well, King Nebuchadnezzar got very angry then. And he commanded that all of the wise men in Babylon should all be killed!! And the order went out, and they began gathering all of the wise men

together to kill them. But who were 4 of those wise men? Yes, they were Daniel, and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego!! Do you think they are going to get killed? Well, let's go on and see!

Daniel talked to the captain of the king's guard who was coming to get him and his friends to kill them. Daniel said, "Why is the king suddenly going to kill all of us?"

The captain told him all that had happened about the king's dream. Then Daniel asked that the king would give him some time, and that then he, Daniel, would tell the king what his dream had been and what it meant. Then Daniel went to his house and told Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego about it and asked them to pray to God about the matter so that they wouldn't die.

And that night God let Daniel know what the king's dream had been and what it meant. Now, our dreams are just dreams, but this dream that Nebuchadnezzar had was sent by God and was very special.

Well, then Daniel praised God for letting him know all of this. Daniel said, "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever. God is wise and full of power, and God puts kings up and takes kings down and can show secret things to people. Thank you, O God, for giving me wisdom and for letting me know what the king wants to know."

Then Daniel went to the king's captain and said, "Don't kill the wise men of Babylon! Take me to the king, and I'll tell him what he wants to know."

So the captain took Daniel to King Nebuchadnezzar and said, "I have found a man from among the captives of the Jews, and he will tell you about your dream and what it means."

Nebuchadnezzar said to Daniel, "Can you tell me what my dream was and what it means?"

Daniel said, "No man can know this secret. But there is a God in heaven Who can tell secrets, and He has told you in your dreams what is going to happen to the world. You were wondering about what was going to happen in the future."

Then Daniel said, "This was your dream. You saw a great statue."

Then Daniel went on and described the statue. It was big and shaped like a man and made of different metals. And then Daniel said, "Then you saw a stone that came and hit the statue on its feet, and the statue broke all into pieces, and the wind blew it away. Then the stone grew big and filled the whole earth."

Then Daniel said, "That was your dream, and this is what the dream means." And Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar that the different metal parts of the statue meant different kingdoms that would come up one after the other, and they would rule the world. But then someday that these kingdoms would all be destroyed, and God would set up a kingdom that would never be destroyed. (Of course, we know now that with that part of the dream Daniel was talking about someday when Jesus comes back to

earth and is the king of everything!)

Now what do you think Nebuchadnezzar did when Daniel got through talking? Why, Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face before Daniel and said, "Truly your God is a God above any other gods! Your God knows secrets!" And Nebuchadnezzar made Daniel to be a very great man and to be very important in the kingdom of Babylon! Why Daniel was made to be the ruler of lots of the kingdom! And Daniel asked the king to made Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to be important too, and he did. God had used this dream of the king to put 4 young Jewish men in very important places in the kingdom of Babylon! Also the dream was a prophecy that people can still read. We can see that those other kingdoms in the dream did come, and then we can know that Jesus will someday come back to earth and be King of everything.

Well, you'd think that now Nebuchadnezzar would only worship the one real Lord God, wouldn't you? But he didn't. And some time later, perhaps some years later, Nebuchadnezzar did a very foolish and wicked thing. Nebuchadnezzar made a big tall idol out of gold and had it set up. Then the king sent out an order that all of the leaders of the whole kingdom of Babylon were to gather together and come when he had a big ceremony about setting this idol up. So the leaders gathered together. And Nebuchadnezzar had a man shout out to them, "This is the king's order. When you hear the sound of great music from lots of musical instruments, you're all to fall down and worship this golden statue that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up!"

Then the man shouted, "Anyone who won't fall down and worship the statue will right away be thrown into a burning fiery furnace!"

So what did the people all do? Why, when the music started playing, the people all fell down to worship the idol -- except Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego!!! (We aren't told about Daniel, but he probably wasn't there, because I'm sure he wouldn't have fallen down to worship that idol either, aren't you?)

But some people went to King Nebuchadnezzar and said, "O king, you said that everyone had to fall down and worship the statue when they heard the music, and if anyone didn't, he'd be thrown into a burning fiery furnace."

They said, "But there are certain of the Jews that you made to be leaders here in Babylon who didn't do that. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego don't serve your gods nor worship the golden image you set up. They don't pay any attention to you."

Well, that made Nebuchadnezzar angry, and he commanded that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego should be brought to him, so they were. And Nebuchadnezzar said to them, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, don't you serve my gods nor worship the golden image I set up?"

And Nebuchadnezzar said to them, "Now, you be ready, and when you hear the music, if you fall down and worship the image I made, then everything will be all right. But if you don't, then right away you'll be thrown into the middle of a burning fiery furnace. And what God could help you then?!"

But Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we don't need to answer you on this. If our God wants to, He can save us from the burning fiery furnace, but even if He doesn't, you must know this, O king, that we will not serve your gods nor worship the golden image that you have set up."

Usually people should obey the king, shouldn't they? But in this case the king was telling them to worship something that wasn't God, and we must never, ever do that, right? Obeying God is much more important than obeying a king. But Nebuchadnezzar wasn't thinking that way, and he got very, very angry. Nebuchadnezzar ordered his most powerful soldiers to grab Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and throw them into the burning fiery furnace. So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, still all dressed up in their clothes, were all tied up. The soldiers took them and threw them into the hot, hot furnace. The fire in the furnace was so very hot that the heat from it killed the soldiers who threw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into the furnace! And Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego fell down, all tied up, there into the middle of the burning fiery furnace. And the king was watching.

Well, now what?! Why, suddenly King Nebuchadnezzar was really astonished. He quickly got up and said to the men around him, "Didn't we throw 3 men all tied up into the middle of the fire?"

The men around the king said, "Yes, O King."

Nebuchadnezzar said, "But, look, I see four men who are not tied up, and they're walking around in the middle of the fire, and they aren't hurt. And one of them looks like a son of God!"

Then Nebuchadnezzar went up near the opening of the fiery furnace, and he said, "Shadrach! Meshach! Abednego! You servants of the most high God! Come out!"

And what do you think happened then? Why, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out from the middle of the fire! And the soldiers and leaders and the king's men all gathered around them and saw that the fire hadn't hurt them at all! Their clothes weren't burned at all, and they didn't even smell smoky!! Now how had that happened? Why, the Lord God had protected them, hadn't He?!

And Nebuchadnezzar realized that, too. And the king said, "Blessed by the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He sent His angel and delivered them when they trusted in Him so that they can serve and worship no other god except their own God." Of course, their own God is the only real God, isn't He?

Then Nebuchadnezzar gave out an order that anyone anywhere who said anything bad about the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego would be killed. Nebuchadnezzar said, "No other god would protect anyone that way." And then the king made Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to be even more important than they had been.

Well, time went by, and Nebuchadnezzar was a very great king. And one day he had another dream. This time Nebuchadnezzar called all of his wise men together and told them what the dream

had been and then asked them what the dream meant. But they didn't tell him what the dream meant. Finally, though, Daniel came to the king.

Nebuchadnezzar said, "I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you, and you don't have any trouble understanding secrets. Tell me what my dream means. This is what I saw."

Then Nebuchadnezzar told Daniel the dream. The dream was about a great big tree that was very important, but it was cut down, but the stump of the tree was left.

The King Nebuchadnezzar said, "And someone in my dream said `Let his heart be changed from a man's heart to an animal's heart and let 7 years go by until he knows that the most High rules everywhere and lets men be kings or not.'"

The king said, "Now tell me what this means. No one else can, but you can, because the spirit of the holy gods is in you."

Now, do you think that Daniel will know what this dream means and be able to tell king Nebuchadnezzar what his dream meant?

Yes, Daniel understood what it all meant, and he just sat there all upset for an hour. Finally King Nebuchadnezzar said, "Don't let the dream or what it means bother you."

Then Daniel said, "Oh, I wish this dream and what it means would happen to people who hate you, to your enemies! It means that you are like this big tree and have become big. You're very important in the world and very strong and great. But where the tree was cut down and what was said means that you are going to become like an animal. You will be driven away from people, and you'll live out in the field with the animals and will eat grass like oxen (cows) do. This will go on for 7 years until you know that the most High (that's the Lord God) is the one who rules and lets people be kings or not."

Daniel said, "When your dream had about the stump of the tree, that it was left, that means that no one will take away your kingdom during that 7 years."

Then Daniel said, "O king, please listen to what I have to say. Stop being wicked, be merciful to people so that things will go better with you."

Now just what is going on here? Well, when people get very important, sometimes they forget that they themselves really aren't important, that only God is important, and God is the one who makes people to be kings or makes someone to be the boss. Nebuchadnezzar was forgetting that it was God Who had made him to be a king, and Nebuchadnezzar was getting to be very proud. And being proud is wicked.

Nebuchadnezzar was the emperor of a great kingdom and had a beautiful palace. The Bible doesn't tell us this, but we know from history that he had also built a big, beautiful hanging garden that

became one of the great wonders of the world. Nebuchadnezzar was the most important man in the whole world at that time.

Well, one day about a year after he had this dream, Nebuchadnezzar was walking in his palace. And he started talking. Nebuchadnezzar said, "Look at this great Babylon that I have built into a kingdom. I've done it by my own power and for my glory." (That was really being proud, wasn't it?!)

Well, as Nebuchadnezzar was talking, a voice came from heaven, and the voice said, "O king Nebuchadnezzar; it's going to happen. Your kingdom is going to be taken away from you, and you'll be driven away from people, and you'll live in the fields with the animals and eat grass like oxen do, and 7 years will go by until you know that the most High is the one who rules everything and lets men be kings."

And right away this happened. Now Nebuchadnezzar didn't actually become an animal, but he went crazy and sort of acted like an animal. And they chased him away, and he ate grass like oxen do and he lived in the fields, and his hair grew long and his fingernails grew long like birds' claws. Think how that would be for a man who had been a great king!

Finally after 7 years, though, Nebuchadnezzar looked up to heaven and became not crazy, and what do you think he did? He praised the Lord God and knew that God, the most High, lives forever and ever and is king of everything forever, and God does what He wants to do both in heaven and on earth, and no one can stop God from doing what He wants, and no one can ask God, "Why are You doing that."

And then Nebuchadnezzar's men came looking for him and put him back on his throne, and Nebuchadnezzar became the king again. But Nebuchadnezzar wrote a letter telling about all of this, and he had the letter sent all over his kingdom so everyone would know. And Nebuchadnezzar also said in his letter that he praised the King of heaven Who spoke the truth and could judge men, and Who could make proud men not be proud. (The King of heaven is God, isn't He?)

And those stories about Nebuchadnezzar and also the letter he wrote, are all in the book of Daniel, and we can read them there. Weren't they interesting? But that's all we hear about Nebuchadnezzar in the Bible. The next story is about the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar. This grandson's name is Bel-shazzar. Would you like to hear the story about Belshazzar? All right.

Well, some time after Nebuchadnezzar died, Belshazzar became king of Babylon. By this time Daniel was an old man. Well, one day Belshazzar had a great feast made, a big party. He had 1000 of his leaders with him, and they were drinking wine. While they were drinking the wine, Belshazzar gave a very bad order. Do you remember that I told you that Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed the Lord's temple in Jerusalem and that he had taken all of the silver and gold things out of the temple and taken them to Babylon? Well, Belshazzar said that the silver and gold cups and goblets from the Lord's temple were to be brought out to his feast so that he and his leaders and his wives could all drink out of them! Can you imagine that?! Using the Lord's things that way!

But that was what king Belshazzar wanted, so that was what they did. The gold and silver things from the Lord God's temple were brought out, and the people were all drinking wine out of them. And as if that weren't bad enough, while they were drinking out of the Lord God's thing, they were all praising their idols, their false gods, the statues they'd made and worshipped! Do you think God liked that?! Of course not!

And right then, suddenly they could see just the fingers of a man's hand! And the fingers wrote something on the wall of the palace next to the candles where they could see it clearly. And king Belshazzar saw the part of the hand that was writing! Well, that scared the king!! And his knees started shaking together!! And Belshazzar shouted for them to bring his wise men to him.

The king said to the wise men, "Whoever can read this writing and tell me what it means, why I'll give him a scarlet robe and a golden necklace, and he'll be one of the most important rulers in the kingdom!" (Scarlet is a very pretty shade of red and cost a lot and was worn by rich people.)

So the wise men looked at the writing on the wall, but they couldn't read it, and they didn't know what it meant. Then king Belshazzar was very upset, and his face got pale, and the important leaders with him were upset, too.

About that time the queen heard what was going on. And she went to where the king and the other men had been feasting and drinking, and she said, "O king, don't be all worried. There is a man here in your kingdom who has the spirit of the holy gods and is very wise; and your grandfather Nebuchadnezzar had made him the head of the wise men."

Who was the queen talking about? Yes, she was talking about Daniel, who was an old man by now. The queen said, "He can tell what dreams mean and he understands hard things. So let Daniel be called, and he will tell you what this means."

So Daniel was brought before King Belshazzar. The king said, "Are you that Daniel who was one of the Jews who was captured and brought by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon? Why, I've heard of you, that you are very wise and understand things."

The king said, "Now, my wise men have been brought to me, and they couldn't read this writing nor tell me what it means. I've heard you can do things like that. If you do, I'll give you scarlet clothes and a gold necklace and make you very important in the kingdom."

Then Daniel said, "You keep your gifts for yourself and give them to others. But I will read the writing to you and tell you what it means."

Then Daniel reminded king Belshazzar how his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar had been very great and how he had gotten proud so that God had made him crazy and he'd lived out in the fields until he knew that the most high God ruled everything. Remember, we just got through talking about that, didn't we?

Then Daniel said, "But you, O Belshazzar, you knew all of this, but you have been proud, too. You've been against the Lord of heaven, and you've even brought out the things from the Lord's temple and have been drinking wine out of them, and you've been praising the idols that you've made. These idols can't see anything or hear anything or know anything, but the real God who made you, you haven't praised Him. God sent the part of the hand that you saw and the writing."

Then Daniel read the message that was written on the wall and told King Belshazzar what it meant. Daniel said, "It means that your kingdom is finished, and that God has found you as not good, and that your kingdom is going to be given to the Medes and Persians."

Then even though what Daniel said wasn't good news to Belshazzar, the king still kept his promise and gave the rewards to Daniel. But what do you think happened that very night? Why that night a man named Darius who was the king of the Medes came and captured the city of Babylon, and Belshazzar was killed!

So now Darius the Mede was king in the kingdom of Babylon. The Medes and the Persians sort of worked together at this time, but later the Persians took over and ran things. But right now Darius the Mede was king there. And Darius had Daniel made to be the head of the kingdom! Daniel was in charge of the other leaders. Darius knew a good man when he saw one, didn't he?!

Well, now Daniel was very, very important. But how do you think the other leaders liked that? They didn't! They were jealous of Daniel! So the other leaders decided to find something bad about Daniel in the way that Daniel was running things in the kingdom and then tell the king about it and get Daniel in trouble. But guess what?! They couldn't find anything bad that Daniel was doing! Daniel was very honest and worked very well.

Now, these other leaders didn't worship God; they worshipped idols. Finally they said, "We can't find anything bad that Daniel is doing. The only way we can do anything to him will be in some way about the law of his God." (Of course, Daniel's God was the Lord God, the only real God, wasn't He?) So these leaders came up with a plan. They went to king Darius. They were going to try to trick king Darius so that they could do something bad to Daniel.

The leaders said, "O king, we have all gotten together and decided that there should be a law that for 30 days no one can ask anyone, no god or no man, for anything, except to ask you, O king. If anyone does, he should be thrown into the den of lions."

They said, "So, O king, write up this law and sign it so that it can't be changed. Because the law of the Medes and Persians can not be changed."

Well, instead of telling them that this was a silly law, king Darius signed it! And now the other leaders had what they wanted!

Now, Daniel always prayed to the Lord God. He would go into his house and go to one of his windows and open it. He would kneel by this window and pray to God. And this window faced toward

Jerusalem, which was hundreds of miles away. But still, when Daniel prayed, he was looking in the direction of Jerusalem, the city where the Lord had put His name and where the temple had been. And Daniel always did this 3 times a day. He would pray to God and ask God to do things and praise God.

Well, Daniel heard about this silly (and wicked) law that had been made and that it would last for 30 days. But Daniel knew that he could only pray to God. He couldn't pray to the king, could he? So Daniel kept on doing as he'd always done, going into his house, opening the window that faced Jerusalem, getting down on his knees and praying to God. And the bad leaders were just waiting for this! They saw Daniel praying to God and asking God for things. Then the bad leaders went to the king.

The bad leaders said, "O king, didn't you sign a law that for 30 days anyone who asked anyone except you for something would be thrown into the den of lions?"

Darius said, "Yes. And the law of the Medes and Persians cannot be changed."

Then the bad leaders said, "Well, that Daniel, who had been taken captive from the land of Judah, Daniel doesn't pay any attention to you or to the law that you signed, O king. Instead he prays 3 times a day asking his God things."

Well! King Darius seems to have known that he had been tricked! At any rate, Darius was very upset with himself for having made such a law. Darius liked Daniel very much, and Darius thought and thought all day of how he could save Daniel.

Then the bad leaders met with the king again, and they said, "You know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians cannot be changed."

So king Darius ordered that Daniel be brought to the lions' den. But the king said to Daniel, "Your God, Whom you serve all the time, can save you."

Then Daniel, an old man, was thrown into the lions' den, and a stone was laid over the door of the lions' den, and the stone was sealed so that no one could take it off. And what do you think is going to happen to Daniel now? We'll see!

Well, that night king Darius couldn't sleep. He didn't eat anything, and he didn't have anyone play music for him. And very early in the morning the king got up and hurried to the den of lions.

When he got to the den, Darius cried out in a sad voice, "Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, was your God Whom you always serve, was your God able to save you from the lions?"

And Daniel himself answered the king! Daniel said, "O king, my God sent His angel, and He shut the mouths of the lions so that they didn't hurt me at all, because He knew I didn't do anything wrong. And I haven't done anything wrong toward you either, O king."

Oh, Darius was so glad!! He ordered that they take Daniel out of the den of lions. So Daniel was taken out, and he hadn't been hurt at all. Why not? Because he had believed in God, and God had protected him.

But what about those bad men who were jealous of Daniel and had wanted to get Daniel killed? Why, the king had those bad men brought, and they were thrown into the den of lions themselves! Do you think God protected them as He'd protected Daniel? No! In fact the lions right away killed all of them.

Then king Darius wrote an order to everyone in his big kingdom. He said, "Everyone everywhere is to fear the God of Daniel, for He is a living God and is always the same. His kingdom will never be destroyed. This God can save people and do signs and wonders, and He saved Daniel from the lions." And then Daniel kept on being an important man in the kingdom.

Now, we can see from these true stories about Daniel that Daniel was a prophet of God, can't we? Well, one day when Daniel was an old man, Daniel was reading God's word, and he saw where the prophet Jeremiah had said that the Jews would be in Babylon for 70 years. (Remember, I told you that when we first started talking today, didn't I?) Well, Daniel realized that the 70 years were just about up, so Daniel prayed to the Lord and asked Him to remember them. And guess what? God sent the angel Gabriel to Daniel to explain things to Daniel! And what the angel Gabriel told him let Daniel know that the Jews would go back to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. And then Gabriel told Daniel that a certain number of years after the Jews were told that they could rebuild their temple, then Messiah would come. Then Gabriel told Daniel that the Messiah would die, but not because He'd done anything bad.

Now, what does that all mean? Well, the Messiah is Jesus, remember? And the Messiah Jesus did come that many years after the Jews were told they could rebuild their temple. And Jesus did die, just as Gabriel had told Daniel. Yes, Jesus the Messiah died on the cross to save us from our sins, didn't He? Wasn't that kind of God to send Gabriel to explain these things to Daniel? And now we can read the prophesy ourselves in the book of Daniel!

But we know what happened then after the Messiah died, don't we? Yes, then 3 days after Jesus died and was buried, Jesus was alive again, wasn't He? And some days later Jesus went back to heaven, and He's still alive in heaven, isn't He?

Well, another time God had told Daniel that then later the Messiah would come back again to be king on earth forever. And from many other prophecies in the Bible we also know that Jesus the Messiah is coming again someday, don't we?

Well, we've had several very exciting stories from the book of Daniel, haven't we? We talked about when Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon destroyed Jerusalem and the temple of God and took lots of young Jewish men away as captives and taught them and then had them help him in Babylon. And who were 4 of those young men? Yes, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. And we talked about how they just ate vegetables and drank water so that they wouldn't eat things that they thought

God wouldn't like. Then we talked about when Nebuchadnezzar had the dream and told the wise men to tell him both what the dream had been and what it meant, and only Daniel could do that because God told him what they were. And then we talked about when Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego wouldn't bow and worship Nebuchadnezzar's golden idol, so they were thrown into the burning fiery furnace, but the Lord saved them. After that we talked about when king Nebuchadnezzar got proud, and God made him crazy for 7 years and he had to live like an ox out in the fields until he knew that the Lord God was the only one with power. Then we talked about Nebuchadnezzar's grandson who became king, king Belshazzar, who had the big feast and used God's things to drink his wine out of and then God had the fingers come and write on the wall and only Daniel could tell the king what it meant. And we talked about when Darius the Mede became king, and the bad leaders were jealous of Daniel and got king Darius to sign a law that no one could ask God or anyone else except the king for anything for 30 days, and, of course, Daniel still prayed to God and was thrown in the lions' den, but the Lord saved him. And finally we talked about when God sent the angel Gabriel to Daniel to explain how the Messiah (that's Jesus) would come and die for our sins. And we know that Jesus then became alive again and went back to heaven. And God also told Daniel that the Messiah would come again someday and be king forever.

That was a lot of fun talking about all of those exciting true stories, wasn't it?

And just as God told Daniel, we know that someday the Lord Jesus will come back to earth. And then He will be king of everyone and everything, won't He? And if we just trust Jesus to take the punishment for our sins, He will, and then we can someday live with Him forever and ever.

And, of course, if we trust Jesus to save us, we will also want to do what Jesus tells us to do, won't we? Jesus is God, and He loves us so much!