



Faith Conversations

FaithBuilder 4 | Lesson 5 | Lord

Lesson Overview

1. Read

Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego defended their faith and stood up to King Nebuchadnezzar

2. Discuss

What challenges do we face when we talk about what we believe?

3. Explore

Unlock the deeper meanings within the story of Daniel

New Church Concept Fire

Fire in the Word means the good of celestial love, and flame, the good of spiritual love; but in the opposite sense, fire signifies the evil arising from the love of self, and flame, the evil arising from the love of the world. It must be understood that goods of every kind derive their existence from celestial love and spiritual love, and that evils of every kind derive their existence from the love of self and the love of the world.
Apocalypse Explained 504

Read

The book of Daniel tells the story of a group of young men—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego—who had the courage to stand up for their beliefs even though they were threatened with death. They refused to bow down and worship King Nebuchadnezzar’s golden statue (Daniel 3). As a consequence, they were thrown into a hot furnace. Despite this outcome they had confidence in the Lord’s power to save them, and when the king looked into the furnace, he saw three men and a fourth who looked like the Son of God walking with them (Daniel 3:25). As he called them out of the fire King Nebuchadnezzar praised their God, “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego...there is no other God who can deliver like this” (Daniel 3:28-29).

Discuss

1. Think about a time when you stood up for what you knew to be true and good. How did your experience compare with what Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego did? Was it easier for these three men to stand up for their faith than it is for you? Why or why not?
2. How do we experience the Lord’s power when we put our trust in Him? Can He save us like He saved these brave men?
3. Sometimes we find ourselves in a group in which people hold differing opinions on sensitive subjects. Which of the following topics would you discuss with a group of people you do not know? Why or why not?

same sex marriage	prayer	abortion	the Bible
married love	Swedenborg	fetal stem cell use	divorce
faith in God	premarital sex	life after death	dating
suicide	gender	depression	body image

4. It can be tricky to be true to yourself and your beliefs, express honestly what you think and still honor the opinions of others. Which strategies have worked for you? Which have not?
5. What challenges you most in discussing religion? Not knowing enough about your religion? Being worried about what others will think of you? Not wanting to offend? Not wanting to “cast pearls before swine?”

Explore the Deeper Meaning of Daniel

The Writings for the New Church unlock the deeper meaning within the Word and show how the stories are relevant in our lives today. Here are a few things that are mentioned in the story of Daniel and their meanings. Use them as keys to discover the message of this story. Use a Bible if you need help remembering details of the story. (Daniel 3)

Nebuchadnezzar the King of Babylon Babylon, which captured Judah, stands for selfish love which captivates us when we turn from the Lord. The king of Babylon is a symbol of the power of that selfish love as it tries to dominate and control our life.

The Golden Image Images are man-made gods. They symbolize the truths that we misconstrue or twist to favor a selfish desire and selfish behavior. The result is something that may sound good or look good, but is really a clever sham. (Truth that is twisted like this is “falsity.”)

Bowing Down to the Image Worshiping images (false gods) means giving more respect to ideas that favor our selfish wishes than we do to ideas that are true and guide us to resist evil and do the right thing. These false ideas may be attractive to some part of us.

The Jews: Shadrach, Meshach, Abed-Nego The Jewish men in the story stand for people of the church—or that part of us that loves the Lord and our neighbor and stands up for what is true.

Fiery Furnace Fire is a symbol of love—either good love or evil love. Here it stands for evil love that threatens to destroy our spiritual life. The “furnace” is a mental state of hell—when we are caught in ugly and selfish feelings and are tempted to act on them.

One Like the Son of Man This refers to the Lord or one of His angels (messengers). The Lord, along with angels, is with us in our struggles and protects those who hold fast and believe in Him.

SON OF MAN

Son of Man, which the Lord often calls Himself in the Word means the Divine Truth emanating from His Divine Human.... The crowd said to Jesus, Why do you say, The Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man? Jesus answered them, The light is with you for a brief while longer. Walk, as long as you have the light, lest the darkness overtakes you. As long as you have the light believe in the light, that you may be sons of the light. John 12:34-36. From these words it is evident that 'the Son of Man' has the same meaning as 'the light'; for when the crowd asked, 'Who is this Son of Man?' the Lord answered that He was 'the light' in which they should believe. 'The light' means Divine Truth, and so therefore does 'the Son of Man'. *Arcana Coelestia* 9807

By Babylon or Babel is meant the church consisting of those who by the holy things of the church aspire to dominate the whole world by means of having power over the souls of others, claiming to themselves the power of saving anyone they want. In the end they seek and appropriate to themselves power over heaven and hell. For this purpose they transfer to themselves all the Lord's power, as if given to them by Him.

Religious people like this change in process of time. To begin with they are zealous for the Lord, the Word, for love and faith, and especially for the salvation of men. But the fire wanting to rule over others lies hidden in that zeal and over time, as dominion increases, it breaks out, and in the degree in which it comes out into act, the holy things of the church become the means, and dominion itself the end. When dominion becomes the end, then the holy things of the church are used as a means to that end, that is, to themselves. And then they not only make the salvation of souls dependent on their own power, but also appropriate to themselves all the Lord's Divine power. And when they do this, they then pervert all the good and all the truth of the church. See *Apocalypse Explained* 1029