**Daniel 13**

**Susanna**

**Lesson 15**

This chapter of Daniel appears only in the Greek translations of the Hebrew Bible known as the Septuagint. It may have originally been written in Hebrew or Aramaic, but only the Greek versions of the text exist today. In some English translations of the Bible this chapter might be in a section called an appendix, additions to Daniel or Apocrypha. Other translations may not include this chapter and chapter 14 at all. In Catholic and Orthodox traditions, these last two chapters of Daniel have always been included in the Old Testament as inspired sacred texts. If this chapter is not in your Bible, you can find it on line at <http://usccb.org/bible/daniel/13/>.

1. **When during the past week did you feel closest to God? Or was there a verse or a lesson in our study of Daniel this week that you found inspiring?**
2. This setting of this story is Babylon during the Babylonian Captivity**. How does the story depict the influence of Babylonian (pagan) influences on the Jewish population? See Daniel 13:5-14.**

**Daniel 13:5-14 5**That year, two elders of the people were *appointed judges, of whom the Lord said*, “Lawlessness has come out of Babylon, that is, from the elders who were to govern the people as judges.” **6**These men, to whom all brought their cases, frequented the house of Joakim. **7**When the people left at noon, Susanna used to enter her husband’s garden for a walk. **8**When the elders saw her enter every day for her walk, they began to lust for her. **9**They perverted their thinking; they would not allow their eyes to look to heaven, and did not keep in mind just judgments. **10**Though both were enamored of her, they did not tell each other their trouble, **11**for they were ashamed to reveal their lustful desire to have her. **12**Day by day they watched eagerly for her. **13**One day they said to each other, “Let us be off for home, it is time for the noon meal.” So they went their separate ways. **14**But both turned back and arrived at the same spot. When they asked each other the reason, they admitted their lust, and then they agreed to look for an occasion when they could find her alone.

1. **What do we know about the character of the two elders? Why were they frequent visitors at the home of Joakim? See Daniel 13:5-14.**
2. **Sin begins with a single thought. How does this story support Jesus’ strict teaching on adultery?**

 **See Matthew 5:27-30, Daniel 13:5-14, Daniel 13:15-16, and Daniel 13:19-21.**

**Matthew 5:27-30** “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’28But I say to you, everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your members than to have your whole body thrown into Gehenna. 30And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your members than to have your whole body go into Gehenna.

**Daniel 13:15-16 15**One day, while they were waiting for the right moment, she entered as usual, with two maids only, wanting to bathe in the garden, for the weather was warm. **16**Nobody else was there except the two elders, who had hidden themselves and were watching her.

**Daniel 13:19-21 19**As soon as the maids had left, the two old men got up and ran to her. **20**“Look,” they said, “the garden doors are shut, no one can see us, and we want you. So give in to our desire, and lie with us. **21**If you refuse, we will testify against you that a young man was here with you and that is why you sent your maids away.”

1. **How do both lust and pride lead the two respected elders and judges down the “slippery slope” of sin? How does one sin lead to another?**
2. In some of the ancient transcripts of the Book of Daniel, this chapter is used as *an introduction* to the book of Daniel. **Read Daniel 1:4, 1:19-20,**

**Daniel 13:45-50 and Daniel 13:63-64. What do we know about Daniel’s character? Why would it make sense for this chapter to be an introduction?**

**Daniel 1:4,**

**4**They should be young men without any defect, handsome, proficient in wisdom, well informed, and insightful, such as could take their place in the king’s palace.

**Daniel 1:19-20**

**19**When the king had spoken with all of them, none was found equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; and so they entered the king’s service. **20**In any question of wisdom or understanding which the king put to them, he found them ten times better than any of the magicians and enchanters in his kingdom.

**Daniel 13:45-50 45**As she was being led to execution, God stirred up the holy spirit of a young boy named Daniel, **46**and he cried aloud: “I am innocent of this woman’s blood.” **47**All the people turned and asked him, “What are you saying?” **48**He stood in their midst and said, “Are you such fools, you Israelites, to condemn a daughter of Israel without investigation and without clear evidence? **49**Return to court, for they have testified falsely against her.”

**50**Then all the people returned in haste. To Daniel the elders said, “Come, sit with us and inform us, since God has given you the prestige of old age.”

**Daniel 13:63-64 63**Hilkiah and his wife praised God for their daughter Susanna, with Joakim her husband and all her relatives, because she was found innocent of any shameful deed. **64**And from that day onward Daniel was greatly esteemed by the people.

1. **Looking at the chapter as a whole, what would you say is the moral meaning of the text?**