**Daniel 14**

**Bel and The Dragon**

**Lesson 16**

As in chapter 13, this chapter might not be in your Bible or might be in a separate section if you are not using a Catholic Bible. If you do not have it in your Bible, you can find it online at <http://www.usccb.org/bible/daniel/14/>.

1. **When did you feel closest to God this week? *Or* was there a particular verse or message in our study of Daniel this week that you found inspiring?**
2. This chapter contains three stories about Daniel. **What seems to be the common thread that ties the first two stories together? What is Daniel trying to prove? See Daniel 14:1-27.**
3. Read Isaiah 46:5-7 and Habakkuk 2:18-10. Isaiah’s are the words of God placed in the prophet’s mouth.

**How are the words of these two prophets similar to Daniel’s message in Dan 14:5-7?**

**Isaiah 46:5-7**

To whom would you liken me as an equal, compare me, as though we were alike? **6**There are those who pour out gold from a purse
    and weigh out silver on the scales; They hire a goldsmith to make it into a god before which they bow down in worship.
**7**They lift it to their shoulders to carry; when they set it down, it stays, and does not move from the place. They cry out to it, but it cannot answer; it delivers no one from distress.

**Habakkuk 2:18-20**

Of what use is the carved image, that its maker should carve it?
Or the molten image, the lying oracle, that its very maker should trust in it, and make mute idols?
**19**Ah! you who say to wood, “Awake!” to silent stone, “Arise!”
    Can any such thing give oracles? It is only overlaid with gold and silver, there is no breath in it at all.
**20**But the Lord is in his holy temple; silence before him, all the earth!

**Dan 14:5-7**

**5**When the king asked him, “Why do you not worship Bel?” Daniel replied, “Because I do not revere idols made with hands, but only the living God who made heaven and earth and has dominion over all flesh.” **6**Then the king continued, “You do not think Bel is a living god? Do you not see how much he eats and drinks every day?” **7**Daniel began to laugh. “Do not be deceived, O king,” he said; “it is only clay inside and bronze outside; it has never eaten or drunk anything.”

1. **How does Daniel set out to prove that Bel was not a god at all?** See Daniel 14:16-22.

**Daniel 14:16-22**

**16**Early the next morning, the king came with Daniel. **17**“Are the seals unbroken, Daniel?” he asked. And Daniel answered, “They are unbroken, O king.” **18**As soon as he had opened the door, the king looked at the table and cried aloud, “You are great, O Bel; there is no deceit in you.” **19**But Daniel laughed and kept the king from entering. He said, “Look at the floor and consider whose footprints these are.” **20**“I see the footprints of men, women, and children!” said the king. **21**In his wrath the king arrested the priests, their wives, and their children. They showed him the secret door by which they used to enter to consume what was on the table. **22**The king put them to death, and handed Bel over to Daniel, who destroyed it and its temple.

1. **How does Daniel defeat the dragon? What point is he making by using this tactic to defeat the dragon? See Daniel 14:26-27.**

**Daniel 14:26-27**

 **26**Give me permission, O king, and I will kill this dragon without sword or club.” “I give you permission,” the king said. **27**Then Daniel took some pitch, fat, and hair; these he boiled together and made into cakes. He put them into the mouth of the dragon, and when the dragon ate them, he burst. “This,” he said, “is what you revered.”

1. The third story about Daniel is the most familiar of the three. **What or who is being tested in this third story? See Daniel 14:28-42.**
2. **What is the fate of those who persecute or try to kill Daniel? How is this similar to earlier events in the Book of Daniel? See Daniel 14:40-42 and Daniel 6:21-25.**

**Daniel 14:40-42 40**On the seventh day the king came to mourn for Daniel. As he came to the den and looked in, there was Daniel, sitting there. **41**The king cried aloud, “You are great, O Lord, the God of Daniel, and there is no other besides you!” **42**He brought Daniel out, but those who had tried to destroy him he threw into the den, and they were devoured in a moment before his eyes.

**Daniel 6:21-2521**As he drew near, he cried out to Daniel sorrowfully, “Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God whom you serve so constantly been able to save you from the lions?” **22**Daniel answered the king: “O king, live forever! **23**My God sent his angel and closed the lions’ mouths so that they have not hurt me. For I have been found innocent before him; neither have I done you any harm, O king!” **24**This gave the king great joy. At his order Daniel was brought up from the den; he was found to be unharmed because he trusted in his God. **25**The king then ordered the men who had accused Daniel, along with their children and their wives, to be cast into the lions’ den. Before they reached the bottom of the den, the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.

1. **Reflect** on the words of the first of the Ten Commandments as they appear in Exodus 20:3-6.

**Does the Book of Daniel seem to encourage preaching and teaching about the one true God to those of other religious traditions?** **Does the Book of Daniel suggest it is an easy thing to do?**

**Exodus 20:3-6**

**3**“You shall have no other gods beforeme.

**4**“You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. **5**You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, **6**but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

1. There seems to have been temptations to follow first the gods of the Canaanites and then those of the Babylonians for the ancient Jews. **How does the culture of the 21st century tempt Christians to abandon their beliefs?**
2. **Search your memory for highlights that you recall about the Book of Daniel as a whole. How would you describe the book to someone who has never read it?**