



## Daniel • July - September 2021

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### Overview

Imagine being a 15 year old whose country was invaded by a ruthless king who dragged him and his friends to a foreign country where they would learn the language and culture of the country and serve for the rest of their lives. And yet the events and visions of Daniel and his friends reveal significant things.

Here are some themes to notice:

- That impossible situations are nothing for God.
- God's favour of his people in exile.
- God's sovereignty over the future and ability to accurately predict it.
- The kingdom of God that will endure forever.
- Praise to God from the people who see His work.



## Week 1 • 18 July 2021 • Daniel 1

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1. Have you ever experienced culture-shock? What was it like?
  
2. Daniel was probably 15 when he was taken away to Babylon. It would have been a huge culture shock.
  - a. What do you think contributed to Daniel honouring God even in that environment?
  
  - b. Are there lessons for us here as we seek to follow Jesus in our culture?
  
3. Daniel was immersed in so much of the culture and yet there came a moment where he knew he had to draw the line (verse 8). It's like Jesus' prayer for his followers to be in the world but not of the world (John 17:15-19).
  - a. What are some areas where you feel the tension between being "in" and "of"?

- b. What helps you determine where to draw the line?
  
4. Daniel and his friends enter the king's service and God equips them miraculously for the task (v20 - 10 times better!). It shows that God is able to promote his people into positions of prominence.
  - a. Who are the Christians you know of who have been promoted into positions of prominence whether in the local community, city, or nation. Take some time to pray for them as a group.
  
  - b. If it helps, have a look at Jeremiah 29:4-8 about how the Jews were to pray in exile.



## Week 2 • 25 July 2021 • Daniel 2

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1. What's the weirdest dream you've ever had?
  
2. At a time when people often believed that gods were territorial, the God of Israel does the impossible outside of Israel - in Babylon. V10-12 shows that the people there were about to learn something new about God!
  - a. Do you find it easier to believe in God's power inside of "church" or in the wider world?
  
  - b. Have you ever seen God move in power outside the church?
  
3. In his desperation but also confidence in God Daniel prays and the dream is revealed to him. The result is a rich prayer of praise (v20-23).
  - a. Read the prayer through a couple of times. Reflect on it together and share what it reveals about God.

- b. Why not pray together and praise God for who he is.
4. Daniel knows that God will use him beyond his capability (v27-28). Joseph knew the same in Egypt (see Genesis 41:16).
- a. What are the ways in which you see God calling you to do things beyond your own capability or confidence?
  
  - b. What helps you trust God in these moments?

N.B. The statue picture is significant in Daniel 2 but it is also paralleled with the imagery in Daniel. We'll therefore wait till that week to unpack more about what the layers of the statue mean.



## Week 3 • 1 August 2021 • Daniel 3

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1. Are there moments or situations where you feel under pressure to compromise your faith or “bow down”?
  
2. What might the consequences be for you where you hold firm to your beliefs?
  
3. The core verses in this passage are v16-18.
  - a. Read the verses together - at least twice.
  
  - b. Take a couple of moments to reflect quietly on your own and then share your thoughts.
  
  - c. In what way could you apply what you’re learning?

4. When the men were thrown into the fire, the king saw another in their with them. It reminds us of God's presence with us in the midst of trials.
  - a. Have a look at Psalm 23. What do you notice about God's presence in difficult times?
  - b. How have you seen God present in your life as you have gone through difficult seasons?





## Week 4 • 8 August 2021 • Daniel 4

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1. Have you ever had something you'd describe as a God-encounter. What happened? What was the result?
  
2. In this passage, Nebuchadnezzar tells of his own God encounter moment. It's an account that begins and ends with praise (4:2-3 & 34-35). What do you learn about God from these verses?
  
3. Nebuchadnezzar's journey was about his pride and God bringing about humility (see v27 & 30). Why do you think humility is so important to God?
  
4. Nebuchadnezzar was the most powerful king in his day and he ransacked Jerusalem three times in total. He was the most unlikely man to surrender to God.
  - a. Who in your world is most unlikely to surrender their life to Jesus?



- b. Why not respond to this week's passage by praying for them in the confidence that no one is too great or too proud for God to encounter.



## Week 5 • 15 August 2021 • Daniel 5

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1. Daniel was known and sought after for God's power in his life and his insight and wisdom which came from God (v10-12). See also chapter 1.
  - a. What would the people in your world say you're well known for?
  - b. What would they say about your faith and is there anything you'd want to change as a result of this?
2. This passage is a contrast in responses to pride.
  - a. How does Daniel describe Belshazzar's pride? (v22-23)
  - b. Have a look at James 4:6. Are there areas where you feel challenged over pride? Why not talk about these things together and pray about them together asking God for his grace.
3. Look at verse 23 again.

- a. What does it tell us about God's involvement in our lives? It's a bit like Paul in Athens (Acts 17:24-28).
- b. If this is true, what obligations do you think it puts on the way we live as a response?



## Week 6 • 22 August 2021 • Daniel 6

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1. Daniel's life was above reproach. The only thing that the officials could find against Daniel was his devotion to prayer.
  - a. Why is a life above reproach important?
  - b. What challenges you in this?
  
2. When times were difficult for Daniel, he continued his discipline of praying 3 times a day.
  - a. What are the spiritual disciplines you're practicing?
  - b. What do you find most useful about them?
  - c. From what others are sharing, what might you want to start?

3. The details of the story show how impossible the situation was - even the king couldn't change things.
  - a. How have you seen God move in impossible situations in your life?
  - b. Why might God taking you through such times be good?





## Week 7 • 28 August 2021 • Daniel 7

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1. Daniel 7 gives us a glimpse of some things that are still future for us, often referred to as “end times.”
  - a. How important do you think it is for us to talk about and understand this subject?
  - b. Why? Why not?
  
2. Daniel sees a ‘son of man’ - one who is shown to be God because he uses God’s transportation system (clouds), and yet is distinct from the Ancient of Days.
  - a. What things are associated with the son of man in Daniel 7:13-14?
  - b. Why do you think the Jewish leaders reacted like they did when Jesus uses this term to refer to himself? (Mark 14:62-64)

3. The 'books' in 7:10 refer to God calling things to account - bringing judgment and justice (see also v22, 26). God's judgment is a pretty controversial subject in our culture. Have a look at this quote from Tim Keller.

*"If there is no day of judgment (to account for all the wrongs of the world that people have gotten away with), what hope is there for the world? But if there is a day of judgment, what hope is there for me? Jesus is our answer to both questions."*

- a. What do you think he means?
  - b. How does it shape your view of God's judgment?
4. V14 tells us that all peoples and languages will worship the "son of man," which is something we see in the church that Jesus is building (Revelation 5:9-10).
    - a. What are some barriers to our church community and groups being more culturally diverse?
    - b. What steps might we take for our church to be a greater reflection of the church Jesus is bringing together?
  5. Matt talked about Daniel identifying with a different king and kingdom to the earthly one he was a part of. What difference does such an attitude make in your life? What does it take to remind yourself to hope and long for the return of Jesus?



## Week 8 • 5 September 2021 • Daniel 8

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1. What was your favourite subject at school?

On Sunday we looked at Daniel 8 and a time of history where God's people went through acute pain and suffering.

2. Have a look at **one** of the following passages. How does it affect our perspective of painful experiences and seasons?

- a. 2 Corinthians 4:7-18
- b. 2 Corinthians 12:1-10
- c. James 1:1-12

3. How might the perspective of pain and suffering be different for someone who does not believe in Jesus?

4. We talked on Sunday about reminding ourselves and one another of the power of God.



- a. What do the things you're praying about right now reveal about your expectation of God to move in power?
- b. What most helps to remind you of God's power?
- c. How can you create a habit where those things are consistently present?



## Week 9 • 12 September 2021 • Daniel 9

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1. A major theme of Daniel's prayer is the confession of sin.
  - a. Have a look at v5-6 and 9-11. How does this help us to understand what sin is?
  - b. How would you define sin?
  
2. Daniel is clearly grieved over the sin of his people and its consequences.
  - a. What are some other ways we respond to sin?
  - b. Grief took on particular forms in Daniel's culture (see v3). What might grieving sin look like for us?
  
3. Daniel's response to sin was one of humility - something that was clearly important to Jesus. Have a look at Luke 18:9-14.

- a. What does humility look like here?
  - b. Why do you think it's so important to God?
  - c. What would humility look like in your life right now?
4. Jenny talked about how Daniel trusted God with the outcome.
- a. As you think of the things you are praying for in your group, what would it look like to trust God with the outcome?
  - b. How might this change your perspective?



## Week 10 • 19 September 2021 • Daniel 10-12

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1. How did it make you feel when Jerram didn't come on screen straight away? What point was he making?
  
2. There was a lot of information that we went over at quite a high level including things that will still be unclear.
  - a. What do you think are the most important points that came out of Sunday's message?
  
  - b. What impact does this have on life today?
  
3. One of the more controversial aspects of the passage is 12:2 about the eternal separation of people (something Jesus talks about in Matt 25:46).
  - a. What do you think C.S. Lewis meant by this following statement in "The Problem of Pain?"

*“I willingly believe that the damned are, in one sense, successful rebels to the end; that the doors of hell are locked on the inside.”*

- b. How do you think God would have us respond to this future reality?
  
4. At the end, Daniel is told, “go your way...” (Daniel 12:9) which Jerram referred to as each of us responding with the truth you know. How is God leading you to respond today?