



Part 1

3 Studies in the Book of Daniel

Please Note the following:

1. It is not necessary to look up all the Bible cross references listed in a particular question; your Growth Group Leader will summarize these Bible cross references for you.
2. Just a reminder that sometimes in our Growth Groups, people feel comfortable sharing very personal and sensitive things about their lives. This information **MUST BE CONFIDENTIAL and NEVER LEAVE THE GROUP**

Introduction

The book of Daniel tells the story of a young Israelite, **Daniel**, taken into exile from Jerusalem in the days of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (605-562BC).

The book of Daniel combines **two types of literature: court narrative (chapters 1 to 6) and apocalypse (chapters 7 to 12)**¹ The Greek word for apocalypse means an *“unveiling, revealing, disclosure, to take off the cover”*.

The book of Daniel is written in two languages: **Hebrew** for Daniel 1:1-2:4a, 8:1-13:23 and **Aramaic** for Daniel 2:4b-7:28. The use of the international language of Aramaic for chapters 2:4b-7:28 suggests that these chapters had special significance for non-Jews (Gentiles) also.

The opening six chapters present six stories of how God protected four young men who were taken into exile in Babylon. When Daniel and his friends Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, demonstrate their faithfulness to God, they are delivered from deadly perils by God’s mighty acts. Despite a life-long exile and much opposition, Daniel remained faithful to his God. Like Joseph before him (Genesis 37-50), Daniel was gifted with the ability to understand dreams and visions (Daniel 1:17) earning him a valued place in the royal court of Babylon, and later in the Persian Empire.

The second part of the book (chapters 7 to 12) describes visions and messages Daniel received from God through angelic messengers. These visions are presented in the cryptic language and symbolic terms typical of apocalyptic literature. Within them we see how history plays out for the empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome.

The visions in Daniel also reveal the coming of the Messiah, Jesus and to reveal the conditions at the end of the present age, showing it to be a time of definitive conflict between God’s people and their enemies. The people of God will be

¹ The phrase *“apocalyptic literature”* is used to describe the use of symbols, images, and numbers to depict future events. Outside of the book of Revelation, examples of apocalyptic literature in the Bible are Daniel chapters 7–12, Isaiah chapters 24–27, Ezekiel chapters 37–41, and Zechariah chapters 9–12.

sustained through their persecutions knowing they will receive the Kingdom of God.

The Message

The context in which the life of Daniel is set is summed up in the question asked by the exiles in Babylon in Psalm 137:4, *“How can we sing the songs of the Lord while in a foreign land?”*. [A question Boney M asked to!]

The entire book, narrative and apocalyptic visions, teaches us that this world will always be a *‘foreign land’* to the people of God (John 17:16, Philippians 3:20a). God’s people are *‘strangers in the world’* (1 Peter 1:1, 17) surrounded by malignant and destructive enemies (1 Peter 5:8-9). Yet is possible to live in a way which brings praise and honour to God, just as Daniel did. Daniel is the embodiment of Psalm 1.

Two phrases of Jesus might sum up the message of Daniel: *‘the end is still to come’* and *‘but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved’* (Mark 13:7, 13). Having to wait for God to act is not what we would like to hear, especially when we read that: 4998 Christians were killed for their faith in the last year; one in seven Christians are persecuted worldwide; one in five Christians are persecuted in Africa; and two in five Christians are persecuted in Asia! We would love to tell all these people that God has marked on His calendar a specific date in the very near future for their vindication. But no, we have something like Daniel’s book instead – **a realistic survival manual for the saints living in a broken, fallen and dark world!**

Author and Date

No explicit statement about authorship is made in the book of Daniel, although approximately half of the book is autobiographical. There has been much ink spent on dating the book; many arguing that the book was not written in the 6th century BC (i.e., at the time that the events of chapters 1 to 6 occur) but much later in 2nd century BC in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes (we will hear about him in chapter 8). For this study we will take the long-held view of the Christian church that the book of Daniel has its origin in sixth century BC and in Babylon.

Study 1 – There is a God in Babylon

Daniel 1:1-21

(Sermon on 4-August 2024)

Before we begin: Go back and read the introduction which you skipped!

Read Psalm 137

1. What's the context of this Psalm?

Because this psalm is a remembrance of Babylon, many commentators believe it was written after the return from exile. It may also have been written many years into the exile.

The writer of the Psalm/Song is sitting by the banks of one of the rivers of Babylon; most likely the Euphrates river. The writer is an exile from Judah (Israel) and is reflecting on his homeland of Israel and the temple in Jerusalem and asking the question "How can we worship our God in a foreign land and without the temple? Has God forgotten us?"

The people from Judah were taken into exile by King Nebuchadnezzar (605BC to 538BC).

2. How were the "**we**" of this psalm feeling in verses 1 to 6? Why?

They wept (v1). They don't want to play their harps (v2). They are being tormented by their captors to play a song of worship (v3). They don't want to sing a song of worship because they are in a foreign land (v4). They don't want to ever forget Jerusalem (vv5-6) because that's the place of their highest joy! They miss their homeland so much! They feel like God has abandoned them!

3. **Ponder:** How would you feel about living in exile in a country that does not worship the one true God and worships multiple false gods? List some modern-day equivalents to ancient Babylon.

It would be incredibly challenging as you might not have many people who are liked minded and fellowship with other Christians might be limited or even restricted or forbidden. You would feel isolated. However, our faith is personal as well as corporate.

Modern day equivalents:

- a. North Korea has zero tolerance for Christians, so you would have to worship underground/secret.*

- b. India – has Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism and Sikhism which would all be a negative influence on Christians. Depending on the region of India, Christianity might not be tolerated.*
- c. Afghanistan is ruled by the Taliban which would make practicing your faith just about impossible and extremely dangerous.*

4. What does the writer of the Psalm ask God to remember in verse 7? (cf.

Jeremiah 12:6; 25:14; Lamentations 4:21-22; Ezekiel 25:12; Obadiah 1:11-14)
The psalmist directed his words to God, asking Him to remember the people of Edom (to the south east of Israel) for their conduct during the conquest of Jerusalem. In this case, the call to remember was a call to oppose and to judge them.

Jeremiah 12:6 – Your relatives, members of your own family [Edomites were descendants of Esau]—even they have betrayed you; they have raised a loud cry against you. Do not trust them, though they speak well of you.

Jeremiah 25:12-14 – “But when the seventy years are fulfilled, I will punish the king of Babylon and his nation, the land of the Babylonians, for their guilt,” declares the Lord, “and will make it desolate forever. I will bring on that land all the things I have spoken against it, all that are written in this book and prophesied by Jeremiah against all the nations. They themselves will be enslaved by many nations and great kings; I will repay them according to their deeds and the work of their hands.”

Lamentations 4:21-22 Rejoice and be glad, Daughter Edom, you who live in the land of Uz. But to you also the cup will be passed; you will be drunk and stripped naked. Your punishment will end, Daughter Zion; he will not prolong your exile. But he will punish your sin, Daughter Edom, and expose your wickedness.

Ezekiel 25:12 – “This is what the Sovereign Lord says: ‘Because Edom took revenge on Judah and became very guilty by doing so,

Obadiah 1:11-14 – ¹¹On the day you stood aloof while strangers carried off his wealth and foreigners entered his gates and cast lots for Jerusalem, you were like one of them. ¹²You should not gloat over your brother in the day of his misfortune, nor rejoice over the people of Judah in the day of their destruction, nor boast so much in the day of their trouble. ¹³You should not march through the gates of my people in the day of their disaster, nor gloat over them in their calamity in the day of their disaster, nor seize their wealth in the day of their disaster. ¹⁴You should not wait at the crossroads to cut down their fugitives, nor hand over their survivors in the day of their trouble.

It appears from Jeremiah 12:6; 25:14; Lamentations 4:21-22; Ezekiel 25:12; Obadiah 1:11-14; that the Idumeans [Edomites] joined the army of

Nebuchadnezzar against their brethren the Jews; and that they were main instruments in razing the walls of Jerusalem even to the ground.”

The writer of the Psalm calls for God to remember what the Edomites did and repay them. Also, the Babylonians will one day fall!

5. What does the writer of the Psalm direct towards Babylon in verses 8 and 9?

The psalmist directed his words to future generations of the Babylonian empire, giving them notice that they themselves would be destroyed in God’s judgment. This is a blessing on the one who brings judgment against the Babylonians, and a judgment corresponding to what the Babylonians served on Jerusalem and Judea.

Happy the one who takes and dashes your little ones against the rock: *This awful blessing is understood in light of what happened in verse 7 to Jerusalem. No doubt the psalmist had seen this done to the **little ones** of Jerusalem, and the horrible image was seared upon his mind. He prayed that the Babylonians would get as they had given.*

i. We sympathize with the impulse of the psalmist, yet the New Testament calls us to a higher standard: “Our response should be to recognize that our calling, since the cross, is to pray down reconciliation, not judgment” (Boice).

ii. “Perhaps, if some of their modern critics had been under the yoke from which this psalmist has been delivered, they would have understood a little better how a good man of that age could rejoice that Babylon was fallen and all its race extirpated.” (Maclaren)

iii. “Let those find fault with it who have never seen their temple burned, their city ruined, their wives ravished, and their children slain; they might not, perhaps, be quite so velvet-mouthed if they had suffered after this fashion.” (Spurgeon)

iv. The psalmist also may have known of Isaiah’s prophecy that announced that just this would happen: Their children also will be dashed to pieces before their eyes (Isaiah 13:16).

v. “Today the fortresses of ancient Edom are a desolate waste, and the site of ancient Babylon is a ruin. God cannot be mocked.” (Boice)

Read Daniel 1:1-2

6. What event in history occurs in verses 1 and 2? (see 2 Kings 24:15-16 and Isaiah 39:6-7) What is taken from Jerusalem?

Nebuchadnezzar came against Jerusalem because the Pharaoh of Egypt invaded Babylon. In response, the young prince Nebuchadnezzar defeated the Egyptians at Charchemish, then he pursued their fleeing army all the way down to the Sinai. Along the way (or on the way back), he subdued Jerusalem, which had been loyal to the Pharaoh of Egypt.

This happened in 605 B.C., and it was the first (but not the last) encounter between Nebuchadnezzar and Jehoiakim. There would be two later invasions (597 and 587 B.C.).

2 Kings 24:15-16 describes the event like this - ¹⁵ Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiachin captive to Babylon. He also took from Jerusalem to Babylon the king's mother, his wives, his officials and the prominent people of the land. ¹⁶ The king of Babylon also deported to Babylon the entire force of seven thousand fighting men, strong and fit for war, and a thousand skilled workers and artisans.

Isaiah 39:6-7 predicts this event to King Hezekiah- ⁶ The time will surely come when everything in your palace, and all that your predecessors have stored up until this day, will be carried off to Babylon. Nothing will be left, says the Lord. ⁷ And some of your descendants, your own flesh and blood who will be born to you, will be taken away, and they will become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon."

Note: The Lord delivered King Jehoiakim into Nebuchadnezzar's hand. Some of the articles from the temple in Jerusalem were taken and placed in the temple of Marduk in Babylon. The Lord God allows this, and it would 'appear' to the Babylonians that not only is their King and army greater than the King and army of Judah but so is their God!

It's like Babylon versus Jerusalem – the city of this world versus the city of God (Augustine wrote on the 'city of God'). This conflict can be traced throughout scripture (see Revelation 14:8; 17:5; 18:2-24) – and finds its beginning in Genesis 3:15 when God says that Jesus will crush Satan's head and finds its end in Revelation!

Read Daniel 1:3-8

7. What system of indoctrination does the King order for the Israelite royalty and nobility that were captured?

It's like the King of Babylon is trying to build a master race (sound familiar!).

The King brings the captured Israelite royalty and nobility into his royal courts for indoctrination.

These young men are without physical defect, handsome, have an aptitude to learn, well informed, quick to understand and qualified to serve in the King's palace. They are trained by Ashpenaz, chief of the court officials. The King assigned to these young men, a daily amount of food and wine from the king's table. They were to be trained for three years before entering the king's service.

8. Who are the men in focus in verses 6 & 7. List their original and new names!

Their Judean names: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah

Daniel means: 'God is my judge'

Hananiah means: 'Yahweh has been gracious'

Mishael means: 'Who is what God is?'

Azariah means: 'Yahweh has helped'

Note: 'el' suffix means God – 'ah' suffix means Yahweh

*It seems their **Babylonian names** are corruptions to suit Babylonian gods.*

Daniel becomes Belteshazzar – which means "a prince of the god Bel"

Hananiah becomes Shadrach – which means "illuminated by the sun-god - Shamash"

Mishael becomes Meshach – which means "who is like Aku or Abu"

Azariah becomes Abednego – which means "servant of the god Nabu"

9. What decision does Daniel make in verse 8? Why?

Daniel decided not to defile himself by eating the royal food and wine and asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself.

Why? Several reasons:

- a. The royal food likely included meats that were off-limits (unclean according to Leviticus 11:1-23)*
- b. There were religious grounds for not eating food and drinking wine that may have been offered to idols before being brought to the King's table*
- c. Sharing in the King's food was dependence on the King and loyalty to the King – whereas Daniel's loyalty was to God*
- d. Daniel may well have thought 'there is a real danger here, I could get sucked up into all of this' and he recognized that if Babylon gets into you, the show is over. He had to draw the line somewhere to avoid being totally squeezed into the Babylonian mould.*

One commentator says this:

It is not so much something in the food that defiles as much as it is the total program of assimilation (indoctrination). At this point, the Babylonian

government is exercising control over every aspect of their lives. They have little to resist the forces of assimilation that are controlling them. So, Daniel and his friends seize on one of the few areas where they can still exercise choice as an opportunity to preserve their distinct Jewish identity.

Read Daniel 1:9-16

10. How did God intervene in verse 9 and what concerns does the chief official have in verse 10?

God intervened by causing the official (Ashpenaz in v3) to show favour and compassion towards Daniel.

But the official refused because he was afraid that King Nebuchadnezzar having provided royal food might see Daniel and his friends looking worse than the other young men, and then the King would behead the official for allowing Daniel and his friends to eat different food!

11. What test does Daniel propose and what was the surprising outcome?

Daniel uses great wisdom and graciousness when he asks the guard assigned to him and his friends by the official, if they can have a 10-day trial period where Daniel and his friends eat only vegetables and drink only water; and then compare their condition with the other young men after the 10-day trial period. The guard agreed to the 10-day trial.

Surprisingly, after 10 days, Daniel and his friends looked healthier and better nourished than the other young men. Therefore, the vegetable and water diet became permanent.

We also have to be impressed with the way that Daniel goes about his protest with wisdom and respect; we can learn from this!

Read Daniel 1:17-21

12. How does God intervene in verses 17 to 20? What is the outcome for Daniel and his friends?

Again, God intervened.

V17 – God gave Daniel and his friends knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel was given understanding of visions and dreams of all kinds (like Joseph).

VV18-19 – At the end of the indoctrination period when Daniel and his friends were presented to King Nebuchadnezzar, he found not equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azaria; and so, they entered the King's service.

V20 – Whatever the King questioned them about, he found them 10 times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his kingdom.

13. What's does verse 21 tell us about a) Daniel; b) Nebuchadnezzar and c) God?

a) V21 tells us that Daniel lived way beyond Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom; he was still in Babylon and serving when King Cyrus of Persia came along.

b) V21 tells us King Nebuchadnezzar's Kingdom will eventually fall

c) V21 – God is in control of everything. He allowed King Nebuchadnezzar to ransack Jerusalem and take people from Judah into exile. God is in control of the exiles living in Babylon and he hasn't forgotten them. God is in control of what happens to Daniel and his friends. God is in control of what happens to King Nebuchadnezzar. And God is in control of the rise and fall of Kingdoms like: Babylon, Persia, Medes, Greeks and Romans. And where are they now? Just because God allowed the exile to happen – don't be fooled into thinking He is not in control.

14. Read the following New Testament passages and explain how they might relate to Daniel chapter 1?

1 Peter 2:11-25 (especially verse 12)

Peter writes to give advice on living as foreigners or exiles in a pagan land – as Daniel and his friends were doing long before Peter – and as Christians living in the Roman empire were doing.

Peter in verse 12 urges God's people to live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day He visits. This is what Daniel and, in his friends, do in Daniel chapters 1 to 6!

Peter urges God's people to submit to human authority – even to emperors and leaders of nations – who are in these positions of authority to punish wrong doing and commend right living.

Peter urges them to follow Christ's example when living under pagan rule – and suffer in silence and without retaliation.

Although Daniel lived before Christ, he followed these same principles as he served a foreign pagan king; yet Daniel didn't compromise on his faith.

Romans 12:1-2

Romans 12:1-2 urges Christians that in view of the grace and mercy shown by God by sending Jesus to die for the sin of the world, they are to live a sacrificial life, which is holy and pleasing to God.

And verse 2 tells Christians not to conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of our mind.

Daniel refused to conform to the pattern of Babylon – we will see this not only in chapter 1 but in other later chapters.

Romans 13:1-4 (especially verse 4)

Romans 13:1-4 – urges Christians to be subject to governing authorities because they have been established by God for our good and to dispense punishment when the law of the land is broken.

Daniel was under King Nebuchadnezzar whom God allowed to establish his kingdom of Babylon. But King Nebuchadnezzar is God's servant (verse 4), and he is meant to do what is good for the people and if he doesn't, then as God's servant, he is total accountable to God!

Philippians 2:6-8 (more subtle reference to what God allowed in Daniel 1:1-2)

Philippians 2:6-8 describes what Jesus did when He left Heavenly glory to be our Saviour on a cruel cross.

V6 says – Jesus didn't consider being the very nature of God and equal to God as something he should use to his advantage. No!

Instead, Jesus made Himself nothing – became a servant (v7) and humbled himself and was even obedient to death on a cross (v8) to bring about salvation.

The subtle reference to Daniel 1:1-2 – God is prepared to humble himself and suffer shame by allowing the exile to happen and the temple contents to be taken - and God is even look like He is a weak God (just like Jesus did) so that God's people can wake up and worship the one true God!

What's the **BIG IDEA** of **Daniel 1:1-21**?

Despite what the exiles thought – there is a God in Babylon



If the Old Testament points to Jesus and **Scripture is all about Him** (Luke 24:27), in what ways **Daniel 1:1-21** point to Jesus?

1. **Faithfulness in a Hostile Environment:**

- **Daniel:** Remains faithful to God's laws despite being in a foreign and challenging environment.
- **Jesus:** Remains faithful to God's will, even in the face of temptation and opposition.

2. **Wisdom and Understanding:**

- **Daniel:** Is granted divine wisdom to interpret dreams and reveal God's plans.
- **Jesus:** Possesses divine wisdom and teaches profound truths about God.

3. **God's Favor and Exaltation:**

- **Daniel:** Gains favour and is elevated in the Babylonian government due to his faithfulness and wisdom.
- **Jesus:** Is exalted to the highest place after His obedience and sacrifice.

4. **Suffering**

- God allows Himself to suffer the shame of appearing an inferior God when the temple is ransacked – so that His people would ultimately be saved
- Jesus allowed Himself to become nothing – and suffer death on a cross – that His people would be saved

5. **Future hope**

- Because Daniel is one of God's people – v21 says Daniel has a certain hope beyond Nebuchadnezzar and his Kingdom
- Because of Jesus – we have a certain hope beyond earthly kingdoms – that is eternity – in the Kingdom of Heaven!

6. **Exaltation**

- Daniel is elevated (exalted) to a higher position due to his faithfulness and wisdom (see v19 – ten times smarter than the other young men)
- Jesus was exalted to the highest place in Heaven (Philippians 2:9)

What **questions** do you have about the passages in this study?

Share the verse that had a special meaning to you in this study?

¹⁷ *To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds.*

Finish in prayer: Thanking God for His sovereignty in all things. Ask God to help us to live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse us of doing wrong, they may see our good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

Study 2 – A Dream that will come true

Daniel 2:1-49

(Sermon on 11-Aug-2024)

Read Daniel 2:1-13

1. What's troubling King Nebuchadnezzar?

He is troubled by the dreams he's had and he cannot sleep. There was something disturbing about this dream and Nebuchadnezzar knew it was significant.

2. What does King Nebuchadnezzar demand of his magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers?

King Nebuchadnezzar demands that they tell him what he had dreamed (vv2-3).

3. What's so unreasonable about verses 5 and 6?

King Nebuchadnezzar demands that the wise men tell him both what the dream is and its meaning. If they don't, he will have them cut into pieces and their houses turned to piles of rubble. If they do tell him both the dream and the interpretation, they will receive gifts and great honour from him.

It seems unreasonable for anyone to know what he has dreamed. It's also unclear as to whether Nebuchadnezzar can recall his dream or not; but it is clear that the dream has disturbed him greatly.

4. How do the wise men try to negotiate with the King in verses 7 to 9? Is that successful?

In v7 they try to get the King to tell them his dream, so that they can interpret it. But in v8, the King says they are just playing for more time. The King is adamant in v9 that they must tell him the dream, so he can be confident that they can also interpret it; which perhaps implies that he does recall some of the content of the dream at least.

Their negotiations are unsuccessful; the King insists that they both tell him the content of the dream and interpret it.

5. When the wise men explain the impossibility of Nebuchadnezzar's request in verses 10 and 11, what does the King decide to do in verses 12 and 13?

The wise men explain that "no one on Earth can do what the King asks" and that "No King, however great and mighty, has ever asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or astrologer!" They insist what the King asks is too difficult; only the "gods" can reveal it; and they do not live among humans.

The wise men's response made the King so angry and furious that he ordered the execution of all the wise men in Babylon (v12) – this included Daniel and his friends (v13)

Read Daniel 2:14-23

6. How does Daniel react to the King's decree in verses 14 to 16? What can **we** learn from Daniel's approach?

V14 – Daniel spoke to Arioch the commander of the King's guard with wisdom and tact. V15 – Daniel asked, 'why did the King make such a harsh decree?' and v16 – Daniel went into the King and asked for more time, so that he might interpret the dream.

From this, we can learn how to protest against governing authorities in a wise and peaceful manner.

7. What does Daniel ask his friends to do in verses 17 and 18? What can **we** learn from this?

Daniel returned home and explained what was going on to his friends and he urged them to plead for mercy from the God of Heaven concerning the mystery of the contents and interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, so that neither he, his friends or the wise men would be executed. We can learn to commit everything to the Lord in prayer and seek wisdom and answers from him alone!

Our prayer chain is a wonderful vehicle for prayer. The prayers of a righteous person are powerful (James 5:16b)

8. What answer from God does Daniel receive in verse 19?

During the night, God revealed the mystery of the dream and interpretation to Daniel in a vision.

9. Spend some time reflecting on Daniel's prayer of praise to God in verses 20 to 23? What golden truths about God do we learn?

V20 – God's name is the name above all names and exists forever. All true wisdom and power are His alone.

V21 – It is God who is in control of times and seasons. It is God who installs and uninstalls Kings! It is God who gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning.

V22 – It is God who can reveal deep and hidden things. It is God who knows what lies in darkness and He is the source of all light.

V23 – Daniel thanks and praises God for giving him wisdom and power and for answering his prayer to give him understanding of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. It's important that we always remember to thank God when He does answer our prayers!

Ultimately God is: omnipotent; omniscient and omnipresent.

Read Daniel 2:24-35

10. Daniel is ushered into the presence of the King. Summarise what Daniel says to the King in verses 24 to 30? Who is getting the glory?

Daniel is allowed an audience with the King and explains that "no wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain the mysteries of the King's dream; but God in Heaven, who reveals mysteries can explain!"

Daniel explains to Nebuchadnezzar that God is revealing to him things that are to come in the future.

Daniel also explains (v30) that he has received the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, not because Daniel has greater wisdom than anyone else, but so that the King may know the interpretation and understand what was going through his mind.

Daniel spoke wisely and respectfully.

Daniel makes it clear that God is the one who deserves all the glory; and not Daniel himself, who is merely God's instrument.

11. In verses 31 to 35, how does Daniel describe the statue that Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream? Perhaps draw a picture.



The Statue consists of:

- Head of **Gold**
- Chest and arms of **Silver**
- Belly and thighs of **Bronze**
- Legs of **Iron**
- Feet partly of **Iron** and **Clay**

A rock cut, not by human hands – which is presumably Jesus!

12. What's significant about verses 34 and 35?

A rock, not cut by human hands [therefore from God!], struck the feet of iron and clay and smashed them! The rock caused the iron, clay, bronze, silver and gold statue to be broken into pieces and become like chaff on a threshing floor! The wind swept them away and left no trace! The rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the earth!

Note: The rock (as Jesus) is more powerful than all the other metals AND fills the whole Earth!

Read Daniel 2:36-49

13. What does Daniel say about Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom in verses 36 to 38?

Daniel says that Nebuchadnezzar is currently the king of kings and that God has given him dominion and power and might and glory; and all humankind and animals are in Nebuchadnezzar's hands.

Daniel says that the gold of the statue represents Nebuchadnezzar (v38)

14. What does Daniel say the various metals in the statue represent in verses 39 to 43?

The silver represents a kingdom after Nebuchadnezzar's which is inferior.

Followed by another Kingdom, represented by the bronze, which will rule over the whole Earth. Then a fourth Kingdom, strong as iron – which will break all the other Kingdoms. The feet and toes, which are partly iron and clay – represent a divided Kingdom; yet it will have some strength. The mixture of iron and clay also represent this Kingdom being partly strong and partly brittle and also represent a mixture of people, which will not remain united, just like iron and clay doesn't mix.



One view is that:

Gold = Babylonian Empire

Silver = Mede-Persian Empire

Bronze = Greek Empire

Iron = Roman Empire

Iron & Clay = Divided Kingdom?

Other interpretations

- a. Gold=Babylon; Silver=Media; Bronze=Persia and Iron=Greece.
- b. Gold=Babylon; Silver=Mede-Persia; Bronze=Greece and Iron legs=successors of Alexander the Great.

Opinions differ on the fifth empire of the clay and iron feet. Some have tried to identify various periods in Europe's history as the clay-and-iron feet; others claim the feet represent the divided remnants of Rome before supposedly being "conquered" by Christianity. Still others believe that the clay/iron empire is yet to come: the kingdom of the Antichrist will be a "revived Roman Empire." The last theory seems to be the best. We know, according to Revelation 17:12-13, that the Antichrist will lead a coalition of ten nations (the statue's ten toes?). And we know that Christ will defeat the forces of the Antichrist (Revelation 17:14). After that, Jesus will set up His kingdom—the rock smashes the image—and the kingdoms of this world will "become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever" (Revelation 11:15).

15. **Ponder:** Is there perhaps a meaning in the various metals mentioned decreasing in value/quality?

One possible meaning in the various metals mentioned decreasing in value/quality is that the world is deteriorating, declining and becoming more ungodly, as the time for Jesus to return approaches.

16. What does Daniel say about God's Kingdom and the interpretation of the dream in verses 44 and 45?

***This is the main point of the passage:** God will set up His Kingdom that will never be destroyed and it will crush all the other kingdoms represented by the metals in the statue. The rock that is cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands, is Jesus.*

17. How does Nebuchadnezzar respond to Daniel's interpretation of the dream in verses 46 and 47? Is this surprising? Does Nebuchadnezzar go far enough? *Nebuchadnezzar fell prostrate before Daniel; paid him honour and ordered that an offering and incense be presented to him.*

The King said that 'Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and revealer of mysteries'

Not surprising really, since no-one else could say what his dream was or give an interpretation. However, Nebuchadnezzar does not denounce the other gods but only that they are inferior to the one true God! Nebuchadnezzar could have repented and even released the exiles and returned them to Israel.

18. How does Nebuchadnezzar reward Daniel in verses 48 and 49? Who's really behind all of this?

Daniel is placed in a high position and lavished with many gifts. Daniel is made ruler of the entire province of Babylon and placed in charge of all the wise men. Daniel also requests his friends, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego are made administrators over the province of Babylon, whilst Daniel remained in the royal court.

Note: God is in control of a) giving Daniel the gift of understanding dreams and visions (1:17) and b) giving Nebuchadnezzar a favourable disposition towards Daniel.

19. Read the following New Testament passages and explain how they might relate to Daniel chapter 2?

Matthew 6:33

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Just as Matthew 6:33 says: Daniel sought God first and His righteousness and these things [a position in the royal courts and jobs for his friends] were added to him as well!

The connection between the two passages is that both emphasize the supremacy and priority of God's kingdom over worldly concerns and powers. In Matthew 6:33, believers are encouraged to seek God's kingdom first in their daily lives, trusting that God will take care of their needs. In Daniel 2, the vision and its interpretation reveal that God's kingdom will ultimately prevail over all earthly powers and kingdoms. Both passages point to the central importance of recognizing and prioritizing God's authority and plans.

Matthew 21:42-44

⁴² Jesus said to them, *"Have you never read in the Scriptures:*

"The stone the builders rejected

has become the cornerstone;

the Lord has done this,

and it is marvellous in our eyes'?"

⁴³ *"Therefore, I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. ⁴⁴ Anyone who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed."*

Connections between the passages:

The Stone Symbolism: Both passages use the imagery of a stone to symbolize God's kingdom. In Daniel 2, the stone represents God's eternal kingdom that will overcome all earthly empires. In Matthew 21, Jesus is identified as the stone rejected by the builders (the Jewish leaders) but destined to become the cornerstone of God's kingdom.

Judgment and Replacement: Daniel 2 depicts the stone destroying the statue's various parts, symbolizing the replacement of earthly kingdoms by God's kingdom. Matthew 21:42-44 speaks of the kingdom of God being taken from

those who reject Jesus and given to those who accept and bear fruit for it. Both passages highlight that God's kingdom will supplant worldly authorities and be established as supreme.

Divine Authority: *Both passages underscore the ultimate authority and sovereignty of God. In Daniel 2, it is God's kingdom that will triumph over all others. In Matthew 21, Jesus asserts that the kingdom of God is determined by one's relationship to Him as the cornerstone.*

Hebrews 7:11-28 (especially verse 26)

²⁶ *Such a high priest truly meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens*

Connections between Hebrews 7:26 and Daniel 2:

Eternal Sovereignty: *Both passages emphasize the permanence of God's plan. In Daniel 2, the stone (representing God's kingdom) replaces all earthly kingdoms and fills the entire earth, symbolizing the eternal and unshakeable nature of God's rule. Similarly, Hebrews 7:26 highlights Jesus as the eternal and perfect high priest, whose role in salvation is complete and lasting.*

Superiority Over Earthly Systems: *Daniel 2 shows that God's kingdom will surpass and ultimately replace all earthly kingdoms, demonstrating the superiority of divine authority over human rule. Hebrews 7:26 underscores Jesus' superiority over the Levitical priesthood, showing that His priesthood and sacrifice are far superior to the old covenant system.*

Fulfillment of God's Plan: *Daniel 2 prophesies the coming of a divine kingdom that will end the succession of earthly powers. Hebrews 7:26 explains how Jesus fulfills the need for a perfect high priest who bridges the gap between humanity and God, completing God's plan for redemption through His superior priesthood.*

1 Peter 2:6-8

⁶ *For in Scripture it says:*

“See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.”

⁷ Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, “The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,”

⁸ and, “A stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall.” They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for.

Connections between both passages

Cornerstone Imagery: Both passages use the imagery of a stone to represent significant aspects of God's plan. In Daniel 2, the stone symbolizes God's eternal kingdom that will replace all earthly kingdoms. In 1 Peter 2, Jesus is described as the cornerstone, which is foundational and central to the new spiritual edifice of the Church.

Rejection and Acceptance: Daniel 2 shows that the divine stone (God's kingdom) triumphs over human kingdoms, indicating that God's plan will ultimately prevail despite opposition. 1 Peter 2 highlights that Jesus, though rejected by some, is the cornerstone and is precious to those who believe. This mirrors the theme in Daniel where the stone (representing God's kingdom) is initially overlooked but ultimately prevails.

Ultimate Authority: Both passages emphasize the ultimate authority and power of God's plan. In Daniel 2, God's kingdom is shown to be supreme over all earthly powers. In 1 Peter 2, Jesus as the cornerstone represents the fulfillment of God's plan for salvation and the establishment of a new spiritual order.

Judgment and Transformation: Daniel 2 predicts that the stone will destroy the statue (symbolizing earthly kingdoms), indicating a transformation of worldly power structures. In 1 Peter 2, the rejection of Jesus as the cornerstone leads to stumbling and judgment for those who disobey, while the stone is precious to believers.

Revelation 11:15

¹⁵ The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign for ever and ever."

Connections between Revelation 11:15 and Daniel 2:

The Triumph of God's Kingdom: Both passages emphasize the ultimate establishment of God's kingdom over all earthly powers. Daniel 2 prophesies that God's kingdom, symbolized by the stone, will replace all earthly kingdoms and endure forever. Revelation 11:15 announces that the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of God and His Messiah, signaling the realization of this prophecy.

Eternal Reign: Both passages highlight the eternal nature of God's reign. In Daniel 2, the stone becomes a great mountain, indicating an everlasting kingdom. Revelation 11:15 proclaims that Jesus will reign "for ever and ever," affirming the eternal sovereignty of God's kingdom.

Fulfillment of Prophecy: Revelation 11:15 can be seen as the fulfillment of the prophecy found in Daniel 2. The vision in Daniel foretells the coming of God's kingdom, while Revelation 11:15 marks the moment when this kingdom is established, and Jesus' reign is proclaimed.

Transition of Power: Daniel 2 describes the transition from earthly kingdoms to God's kingdom through the destruction of the statue. Revelation 11:15 declares that this transition has been completed, with God's kingdom now reigning supreme over all other powers.

What's the **BIG IDEA** of Daniel 2:1-49?

**The sovereignty of God over human history and kingdom – OR
God's Kingdom cannot be destroyed and will last forever and ever!**



If the Old Testament points to Jesus and **Scripture is all about Him** (Luke 24:27), in what ways **Daniel 2:1-49** point to Jesus?

- *V11 – The gods don't live amongst humans – but Jesus (who is fully God) did come and make His dwelling amongst humans (John 1:14)*
- *V34, V38 and V45 – a rock made not by human hands – refers to God sending His rock, Jesus.*
- *The Rock = Jesus the Cornerstone = Matthew 21:42 and 1 Peter 2:6-8.*
- *Kingdom of God = Jesus mentions this throughout His ministry*
- *Jesus is the fulfilment of all Old Testament prophecy*
- *Daniel is a type of Christ – through his intervention, Daniel saved the lives of all the wise men in Babylon.*

What **questions** do you have about the passages in this study?

Share the verse that had a special meaning to you in this study?

⁴⁴ *“In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever.*

Finish in prayer: Praise God that He is sovereign over all earthly kingdoms, and He has established His King, Jesus, over an everlasting kingdom.

Study 3 – Facing the Heat for Remaining Faithful

Daniel 3:1-30

(Sermon on 18-Aug-2024)

Read Daniel 3:1-7

1. Describe the image that King Nebuchadnezzar made and its dimensions.

The image is of gold.

60 cubits (90 ft or 27.43 metres) high and 6 cubits (9ft or 2.74 metres wide.

*Being so large, it is safe to say that it was not made of solid gold but probably wood **overlaid with gold**. This was a common method of construction in the ancient world.*

The image is not necessarily an image of King Nebuchadnezzar but represents the “gold head” of chapter 2 which represented Babylon; only in this case the whole image is of gold. The statue was most likely meant to represent the god Nabu whose name was the first element of Nebuchadnezzar’s own name!

2. What do you think might have prompted Nebuchadnezzar to have this image made? (**Hint:** think back to previous chapter)

*There is a link between Nebuchadnezzar’s dream in chapter 2 and the image he makes here in chapter 3. It seems that Nebuchadnezzar deliberately made an **entire statue of gold**, to say that the day of his reign and authority would never end — in contradiction/defiance of God’s declared plan.*

3. What’s happening in verses 2 and 3?

*Nebuchadnezzar summoned the satraps [a Persian loan word that means protector of the realm. It refers to a specific category of public officials], prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials to come to the **dedication of the image** he had set up.*

The summons that all officials must come to the dedication ceremony means that Nebuchadnezzar meant to use the worship of this image as a test of allegiance and loyalty.

4. What command does Nebuchadnezzar issue in verses 4 to 6?

When the people present hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, they must fall down and worship the image of gold that Nebuchadnezzar has set up. If they don’t, they will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace.

5. What do “*all the nations and people*” do in verse 7? Why would this be a problem to the Israelites living in Babylon? (cf. Exodus 20:3-6)

They all fell down and worshipped the image of gold that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. This includes people who have been taken from other nations and brought to into exile in Babylon, including the Israelites.

Exodus 20:3-6 says: ³ “You shall have no other gods before me. 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.

Nebuchadnezzar’s command would be a problem to the Israelites because it would break the commandment to a) have other gods and b) make images and worship them.

Read Daniel 3:8-15

6. What do some astrologers report to King Nebuchadnezzar?

These astrologers had an obvious political motivation against Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego who were promoted to high office along with Daniel at the end of the last chapter. There’s nothing like jealous to motivate someone!

It seems the three men’s failure to worship the image was not discovered until these astrologers reported it. With so many thousands of government officials in attendance, it would be easy to overlook these three men. Additionally, we see from this that the three Jewish men did not lodge a formal protest; they simply refrained from sharing in the sin of idolatry themselves.

Their actions were not public but neither were they hidden. These three Hebrew men must have known they would be discovered, yet they obeyed God rather than man. “You will not be able to go through life without being discovered: a lighted candle cannot be hid. There is a feeling among some good people that it will be wise to be very reticent and hide their light under a bushel. They intend to lie low all the wartime and come out when the palms are being distributed. They hope to travel to heaven by the back lanes, and skulk into glory in disguise. Ah me, what a degenerate set!” (Spurgeon)

7. How does the King react to this report about Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego?

The King was furious when he heard and summoned Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to be brought to him. He gives them the opportunity to change their mind and bow down and worship the gold image, telling them that if they refuse, they will be immediately thrown into the blazing furnace; adding 'then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?' Here Nebuchadnezzar is acted like there's no "god" greater than him!

Credit to Nebuchadnezzar that he didn't accept the astrologer's accusation without personally interviewing the three men.

It was also a greater test for Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego as to whether they would 'stick to their guns' when interviewed personally by the King. A comparison with Peter the Apostle, who meant to stick up for Jesus, but when challenged "is it true, you are one of Jesus' disciples?" – said 'No!'.

"If, standing before the heart-searching God at this time, you cannot say, 'It is true,' how should you act? If you cannot say that you take Christ's cross, and are willing to follow him at all hazards, then hearken to me and learn the truth. Do not make a profession at all. Do not talk about baptism or the Lord's Supper, nor of joining a church, nor of being a Christian; for if you do, you will lie against your own soul. If it be not true that you renounce the world's idols, do not profess that it is so. It is unnecessary that a man should profess to be what he is not; it is a sin of supererogation, a superfluity of naughtiness. If you cannot be true to Christ, if your coward heart is recreant to your Lord, do not profess to be his disciple, I beseech you. He that is married to the world, or flint-hearted, had better return to his house, for he is of no service in this war." (Spurgeon)

We can imagine the enormous pressure on Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego to compromise. Everything in front of them — the king, the furnace, the music, their compatriots, their competitors — all of it conspired to convince them to compromise. Yet God was more real to them than any of those things. "Do not judge the situation by the king's threat and by the heat of the burning fiery furnace, but by the everlasting God and the eternal life which awaits you. Let not flute, harp, and sackbut fascinate you, but hearken to the music of the glorified. Men frown at you, but you can see God smiling on you, and so you are not moved." (Spurgeon)

Read Daniel 3:16-18

8. What's so impressive about Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego's response to the King? What can **we** learn from this?

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego's responses are amazing:

- a. They feel they have no need to defend themselves – they felt no guilt in not bowing down to the image that Nebuchadnezzar set up. Their obligation is to God, not Nebuchadnezzar.*
- b. They trust God will deliver them from the furnace.*
- c. And even if God did not deliver them, they still would not bow down to Nebuchadnezzar's image. They recognized that God's plan might be different than their desires. We have our own desires and dreams and we pray that God fulfills them. But if He doesn't, we can't turn our back on God.*
- d. They were not willing to compromise on their obedience to God before humans, even if it meant roasting in a furnace. Usually, the prospect of roasting tends to motivate people to cave in, but they didn't!*

In our day, many do love Jesus and think highly of Him — yet they are far from God because they also love and worship the world, sin, and self. “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (1 John 2:15).

Read Daniel 3:19-23

9. What extra measures does the King take because of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego's defiance?

Because of their defiance, the King makes the furnace seven times hotter than usual. This measure was so drastic, that the flames of the fire even killed the soldiers who took the three men to the furnace!

10. What does this show about Nebuchadnezzar?

He is very wicked and cruel indeed. A monster!

Read Daniel 3:24-30

11. What amazing thing does Nebuchadnezzar discover in verses 24 and 25? How can we explain this?

*Nebuchadnezzar is amazed because he sees a **fourth person** (like a son of the gods) in the furnace with the three men who are now unbound and walking around in the furnace. **Jesus was literally in the furnace with them!***

Spurgeon observed that God's people are often in the furnace, and though there are different kinds of furnaces, they serve similar purposes in our life.

There is the furnace that man prepares.

There is the furnace that Satan prepares.

There is the furnace that God prepares.

12. What condition were Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in when they came out of the fire? How can we explain this?

The fire had not harmed their bodies. Their hair was unsinged. Their robes were not scorched and there was no smell of fire on them! It can only be explained as a miracle.

God can deliver us from a trial, or He can miraculously sustain and strengthen us in a trial. Trapp quotes an English martyr who said this as he was burnt at the stake: "O ye Papists, behold ye look for miracles; here now you may see a miracle; for in this fire, I feel no more pain than as if I were in a bed of down; but it is to me as a bed of roses."

13. What statement does Nebuchadnezzar make about God in verse 28? What does he think of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego?

Nebuchadnezzar says "Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God."

Nebuchadnezzar is impressed with their trust in their God and that they were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any other god except their own God!

14. What decree does Nebuchadnezzar make in verse 29? Why is this ironic? (cf. Daniel 2:5)

Nebuchadnezzar decrees: Therefore, I decree that the people of any nation or language who say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be cut into pieces and their houses be turned into piles of rubble, for no other god can save in this way

This is ironic because he was going to chop people to pieces for not interpreting his dream and also going to set fire to people who didn't bow down before his golden image but now, he's acknowledging the power of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego's God above all others! Quite a turnaround!

Chapter 3 begins with a decree from Nebuchadnezzar which threatened to destroy the Kingdom of God; and ends with a further decree in which all other kingdoms were threatened with destruction should they offend the Kingdom of God! While this is a triumph for the Kingdom of God and humiliation for the Nebuchadnezzar, the writer hints that Nebuchadnezzar's faith is not genuine. He is impressed by the miraculous deliverance from the furnace and his response was to promote the three men but he did not share their faith (v28).

15. What was the reward for Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in verse 30?
They were promoted in the province of Babylon.

16. **Ponder:** Jesus met Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in a fiery furnace; where can we 'meet' Jesus, today, so to speak?

We can meet Jesus today:

- a. Through reading God's Word. Remember Jesus is God's Word in flesh (John 1:14)*
- b. Through prayer*
- c. Through Him speaking to us – as we meditate on His Word and feel His presence and voice.*
- d. Through fellow believers who show the love of Jesus to us*
- e. By engaging in acts of service – we feel part of His servant hearted ministry*
- f. Through worship*
- g. By listening to the Holy Spirit*
- h. Even a personal encounter – like the Apostle Paul did.*
- i. Through the trials we face – He is with us!*

20. Read the following New Testament passages and explain how they might relate to Daniel chapter 3?

Matthew 10:28-33

Fear of God vs. Fear of Man:

- **Matthew 10:28:** Jesus teaches that fear of God is paramount, and it should overshadow the fear of human consequences.
- **Daniel 3:** Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego exemplify this by prioritizing their reverence for God over their fear of Nebuchadnezzar and the fiery furnace.

Faithfulness Under Persecution:

- **Matthew 10:32-33:** Jesus assures that those who stand firm in their faith despite opposition will be recognized and rewarded by God.
- **Daniel 3:** The three men's refusal to worship the golden image, despite the threat of death, demonstrates their unwavering faithfulness. Their deliverance from the furnace serves as a testament to God's power and faithfulness. They are also rewarded for their stand by the very one who was trying to execute them! Only God can arrange that!

God's Provision and Protection:

- **Matthew 10:29-31:** Jesus promises that God is intimately aware of and cares for His followers, reassuring them of His protection.
- **Daniel 3:** God's miraculous protection of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the furnace illustrates His care and ability to deliver His faithful servants from harm.

Acts 12:6-11

The context is that the Apostle Peter is in prison. The night before his trial, an angel of the Lord comes and helps Peter escape from prison in the most miraculous way.

In Acts 12:11 Peter says: "Now I know without a doubt that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches and from everything the Jewish people were hoping would happen"

This verse relates to Daniel 3 in that in both stories God intervenes with a miraculous rescue!

Hebrews 11:32-34

Hebrews 11 is a who's who of faith in action.

Verses 32-34 lists a whole heap of Old Testament prophets who show their faith in God in exemplary ways. Prophets like: Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David and Samuel are mentioned; as well as prophets who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice and gained what was promised, who shut the mouths of lions (Daniel), quenched the fury of flames (Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego) etc. A clear connection with Daniel chapter 3!

2 Corinthians 6:14-17

2 Corinthians 6:14-17 warns believers against being unevenly yoked to unbelievers. Warning that righteousness and wickedness, and light and darkness cannot mix. Paul also contrasts believing in Christ versus believing in demons (Belial); and contrasts a temple of idols with us being the temple of God. Paul calls for separation from idolatry which is the clear stand Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego make in Daniel chapter 3.

2 Timothy 3:10-12

In 2 Timothy 3:10-12, Paul gives a final charge to his protégé Timothy as he passes the baton on to him. Paul points out the persecutions, sufferings that happened to him on his missionary journeys to Antioch, Iconium and Lystra; yet the Lord rescued Paul from them all! The latter is exactly what the Lord did for Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

Revelation 2:10

*As Jesus writes a letter to the church in Smyrna and says: **Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor's crown.***

John urges the church in Smyrna to be faithful even to the point of death – which is exactly what Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego did!

What's the **BIG IDEA** of **Daniel 3:1-30**?

*A saving God delivers His people OR
Trust and obey, for there's no other way OR
Thou shall have no other gods before me!*

No matter what we go through, Jesus is with us!



If the Old Testament points to Jesus and ***Scripture is all about Him*** (Luke 24:27), in what ways **Daniel 3:1-30** point to Jesus?

- a. The fourth person in the furnace was a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Christ, known as a Christophany.*
- b. The fourth person (whether an angel or Christ) is a saviour type and shadow of Jesus our saviour*
- c. The faithfulness and perseverance of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego even to the point of death foreshadows Jesus' faithfulness to the Father's will and His perseverance even though he not only faced death but was in fact crucified.*
- d. God's protection and presence with the Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego foreshadows Jesus promise to be "with you always, to the end of the Age" (Matthew 28:20)*
- e. God's action in "defeating death" for Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego prompted Nebuchadnezzar to witness the power of God to all nations; similarly, Jesus' resurrection [defeating death] was also a witness to the power of God to all nations.*
- f. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego said to Nebuchadnezzar in v16 said "we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter". Similarly, when Jesus was before Pilate, he remained silent and did not defend Himself (Mark 14:61; 1 Peter 2:23)*

What **questions** do you have about the passages in this study?

Share the verse that had a special meaning to you in this study?

¹⁶ *Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, "King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. ¹⁷ If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand. ¹⁸ But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."*

Finish in prayer: Praise God that He is the only true and holy God; He alone deserves our worship. Ask God to help us to stand firm as we follow Jesus.

Studies prepared by Paul O'Rourke
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Resources:

The MacArthur Study Bible

New Bible Commentary (Carson, France, Moyter & Wenham)

The Message of Daniel (Dale Ralph Davis)

Daniel Study Commentary (Allan M. Harman)

The Big Picture of Daniel (M.A. Butler)

The Message of Daniel (Ronald S. Wallace)