



## Part 2

### 3 more 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**

## Study 1 – God’s Reign Humbles Nebuchadnezzar

Daniel 4:1-37

*(Sermon on 25-August 2024)*

**Before we begin:** Remind yourself of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream in chapter 2. What was the dream about? What was the interpretation of the dream? Did Nebuchadnezzar learn from that dream or not? (chapter 3 might help answer that)

*In Chapter 2, Nebuchadnezzar dreamt of a statue with a head of gold; arms/breast of silver; thighs and belly of bronze; legs of iron; and feet of iron and clay. The interpretation of that dream: Babylon was the head of gold; and the other metals represented kingdoms that would come along and replace Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar didn’t learn from the interpretation of the dream, nor take heed of it. Instead, in chapter 3, he built a statue completely of gold and decreed that everyone must bow down and worship it. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to bow down and were put in a fiery furnace. It’s like Nebuchadnezzar thought he could thwart God’s interpretation of the dream (supplied to Daniel) by making the entire statue of gold, rather than just the head!*

### Read Daniel 4:1-3

1. Who is Nebuchadnezzar speaking to?

*To the nations and peoples of every language, who live in all the Earth. In other words, all of his vast kingdom.*

2. Who does Nebuchadnezzar acknowledge in verses 2 and 3?

*Nebuchadnezzar acknowledges the signs and wonders that the Most High God performed. He also acknowledges the eternal Kingdom of God.*

### Read Daniel 4:4-18

3. What is Nebuchadnezzar troubled about in verses 4 & 5?

*Nebuchadnezzar was in his palace, contented and prosperous, when he had a dream that made him afraid. The images and visions that he saw, terrified him!*

4. Who does Nebuchadnezzar consult for an interpretation of his dream?

*Nebuchadnezzar consults the wise men: magicians, enchanters, astrologers and diviners; but they could not interpret the dream. Finally, Daniel came and told Nebuchadnezzar what his dream was and its interpretation.*

5. Describe Nebuchadnezzar's dream from verses 10 to 12. Draw a picture if it helps you.

*The dream was of a large tree that touched the sky (déjà vu – the tower of Babel). The tree was visible to the ends of the Earth. The leaves were beautiful; its fruit abundant; wild animals found shelter under it; and birds lived in its branches.*



6. Describe Nebuchadnezzar's dream from verses 13 to 17. Draw a picture if it helps you.

*Then a messenger came from heaven and cut down the tree and left a stump and its roots, bound with iron and bronze.*

*Then Nebuchadnezzar had to live like and an animal and have the mind of an animal for '7 times' (years?)*



7. How does Nebuchadnezzar reason that Daniel (aka Belteshazzar) will be able to interpret his dream in verse 18?

*Nebuchadnezzar reasons that Daniel [aka Belteshazzar] will be able to interpret the dream because the Spirit of the holy gods is in Daniel!*

**Read Daniel 4:19-27**

8. Who is the tree in the dream and how is it described?

*Nebuchadnezzar is the tree; great and strong, ruling a kingdom that extends to the distant parts of the Earth.*

9. What did the messenger in the dream do?

*The messenger cut down the tree and destroyed it; leaving only a stump, bound with iron and bronze.*

10. What does Daniel say will happen to Nebuchadnezzar and what does Daniel tell Nebuchadnezzar he must do?

*Nebuchadnezzar will be driven away from people and live with wild animals and eat grass like an ox and be drenched with the dew from Heaven. This will occur for '7 times' (7 years?) and then Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom will be restored, when he acknowledges that God in Heaven rules.*

**Read Daniel 4:28-37**

11. Describe what happens to Nebuchadnezzar 12 months later in verses 28 to 33?

*One day, Nebuchadnezzar was on the roof of the Palace feeling very proud and puffed up about how great Babylon was and giving himself all the glory. Then God spoke from Heaven and Nebuchadnezzar was driven away to eat grass like an ox and drenched with dew from Heaven (just as his dream showed) and his hair grew long and his nails were like a bird!*

12. According to verses 17, 25 and 32, what is the point of this happening to Nebuchadnezzar? Why do you think the writer repeats himself?

*So that Nebuchadnezzar would know that 'the Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on Earth and gives them to anyone He wishes and sets over them the lowliest of people'*

13. What changes for Nebuchadnezzar in verse 34 and how does he express this in verse 35? What do you learn from this?

*At the end of the allotted 'seven times' (7 years?), Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged God and his sanity was restored. He expressed his praise of God the Most High, honoured and glorified God who lives forever and acknowledged that God is eternal and does as He pleases; no one can stop God!*

*We learn from this that God is sovereign, eternal, all powerful and His will is always accomplished!*

14. What changes for Nebuchadnezzar in verse 36 and how does he express this in verse 37? What do you learn from this?

*V36 – Nebuchadnezzar's sanity is restored and all his splendour returned to him and his kingdom. He was restored to his throne and became greater than before.*

*V37 – Nebuchadnezzar praised and exalted and glorified God because everything God does is right and just. He humbles the proud!*

***We learn from this that God humbles the proud!***

Read the following new Testament passages and explain how they relate to Daniel 4:1-37...

### **Luke 18:9-14**

*Jesus told a parable of a tax collector and a Pharisee praying. The Pharisee was proud and boastful and superior in his prayer; thanking God that he was not like the tax collector. The tax collector was humble in his prayer, stood at a distance and prayed for mercy. Jesus commended the approach of the tax collector. Nebuchadnezzar was more like the Pharisee to begin with but learnt humility when God humbled him.*

### **Romans 13:1**

*Paul tells us that there are no government authorities established without God's says so. This was demonstrated clearly to Nebuchadnezzar for '7 times'*

### **1 Peter 2:13-14**

*Again, Peter, as Paul did, makes it clear that it is God who establishes all human authority and their purpose is meant to be, to punish those who do wrong and*



*commend those who do right. But Nebuchadnezzar didn't operated as God intended and therefore God humbled him!*

What's the **BIG IDEA** of **Daniel 4:1-37**?

*The Most High God is sovereign over all Kingdoms of the Earth*

**AND**

*God humbles the proud!*



If the Old Testament points to Jesus and **Scripture is all about Him** (Luke 24:27), in what ways **Daniel 4:1-37** point to Jesus?

- 1. Jesus is a forever King as acknowledged by Nebuchadnezzar*
- 2. Jesus has a forever Kingdom unlike Nebuchadnezzar*
- 3. Everyone needs to humble themselves before Jesus*
- 4. Once humbled and repentant before Jesus, we are restored (like Nebuchadnezzar was restored) into a right relationship with God.*

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

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

*V37 - Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just. And those who walk in pride he is able to humble.*

**Finish in prayer:** Thanking God that He is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone he wishes.

## Study 2 – The Writing is on the Wall

Daniel 5:1-31

*(Sermon on 01-Sept- 2024)*

**Before we begin:** Remind yourself what Nebuchadnezzar took from Jerusalem in Daniel 1:2.

*Articles from the treasure house of God, in the Temple in Jerusalem.*

### Read Daniel 5:1-4

1. Who is Belshazzar?

*V11 and V18 say that Belshazzar's father is King Nebuchadnezzar. It's more likely that Belshazzar was King Nebuchadnezzar's grandson, not his son!*

2. What does he use from the temple of God in Jerusalem and for what? Is this a good idea, do you think?

*Belshazzar gave orders to use the silver goblets taken from the temple in Jerusalem and praise the gods of silver, gold, bronze, iron, wood and stone. Not a good idea, these goblets were for sacred use and it was a deliberate act of idolatry!*

3. Why is it such a problem to God that Belshazzar used the gold goblets from the temple?

*They were set apart for God's purposes and not for human purposes. It was a blatant act of idolatry.*

### Read Daniel 5:5-9

4. What caused King Belshazzar to turn pale and be frightened?

*Fingers of a human hand (not attached to a body!) appeared and wrote words on the plaster on the wall!*

5. What does he ask the wise men of Babylon to do and what is the reward?

*He asks the enchanters, astrologers, diviners to read the writing on the wall and tell him the meaning. The reward is to be clothed in purple and have a gold chain placed around their neck and made the third highest ruler of Babylon.*

6. How does Belshazzar feel when no one can read the writing on the wall?

*He became even more terrified and his face became even more pale!*

## Read Daniel 5:10-30

7. What bright idea does the Queen come up with? What is her reasoning?

*The Queen reminds Belshazzar that during Nebuchadnezzar's reign, he had appointed Daniel (aka Belteshazzar) as chief of the magicians and that Daniel had the ability to interpret dreams. She suggests that Belshazzar consult Daniel about the writing on the wall.*

8. What does Belshazzar offer Daniel if he can read the writing on the wall? What does Daniel think of these gifts?

*To be clothed in purple, gold chain and to be third highest ruler in Babylon. Daniel tells Belshazzar to keep his gifts and give them to someone else.*

9. What does Daniel say about Belshazzar's father, Nebuchadnezzar, until he acknowledged the Most High God is sovereign over all kingdoms?

*Daniel says that King Nebuchadnezzar's heart was arrogant and prideful, and so God deposed him from the royal throne and stripped him of his glory, drove him away from his people and gave him the mind of an animal, and he lived like a wild donkey and ate grass like an ox; and his body was drenched with the dew of Heaven, until he acknowledged the Most High God as sovereign over all kingdoms.*

10. What accusation does Daniel lay on Belshazzar in verse 22?

*That Belshazzar has not humbled himself even though he knew what had happened to King Nebuchadnezzar and instead Belshazzar had deliberately worshipped gods of silver, gold, bronze, iron, wood and stone, and did not honour God!*

11. What are the three words written on the wall and what are their meaning?

*The words are Aramaic words:*

*MENE, MENE = Mina (a unit of money) = God has numbered the days of Belshazzar and brought him to an end*

*TEKEL = Shekel (a unit of money) = Belshazzar has been weighed on the scales by God and found wanting*

*PARSIN = Half a mini/shekel (a unit of money) = Belshazzar's Kingdom will be divided and given to the Medes and Persians.*



12. How is Daniel rewarded?

*Daniel is clothed in purple, given a gold chain around his neck and proclaimed third highest ruler of Babylon; which is all pretty meaningless given what happened to Belshazzar next!*

13. What happens to Belshazzar and who replaces him? How does that fit in with the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream in chapter 2?

*He was slain at the age of 62. Apparently, according to history books, the Medes and Persians had already surrounded the city, and Belshazzar had proceeded to have a party, thinking that Babylon was impenetrable.*

*In the statue in chapter 2, the head of gold was Babylon, but the arms and breast of silver represented the Persians and Medes who would replace the kingdom of Babylon. God's interpretation of the dream and His prophecy and beginning to come true here.*

Read the following new Testament passages and explain how they relate to Daniel 5:1-31...

**Matthew 18:15-17**

*This passage deals with how sin is pointed out to someone and whether they listen or not. Belshazzar did not listen or learn from what had happened to Nebuchadnezzar and how God had dealt with Nebuchadnezzar's sin. Instead, Belshazzar became prideful and arrogant. If people do not listen to God's warnings from His people, they are cut off.*

**Matthew 21:12-17**

*In this passage, Jesus is full of righteous anger because the people were using God's temple courts for trading and money changing. The temple was meant to be for God's purposes (like the goblets Belshazzar had used) and was a 'house of prayer'. In this passage and Daniel 6, the sacred things of God were misused and abused!*

**1 Corinthians 1:18-25**

*Paul warns against human wisdom and preferring it over God's wisdom. God's ways and wisdom are way higher! Belshazzar thought he knew better than God because he was foolish, prideful and arrogant; what a disastrous combination!*

### 1 Corinthians 10:21

*Paul warns against worshipping two masters. We cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. Belshazzar used God's sacred cups to worship false gods; that was demonic!*

### 1 Corinthians 6:15, 19

*V15 – Paul says we cannot as Christians/God's people/believers and unite with non-believers.*

*V19 – As Christians, we are the temple of the Lord; the temples of the Holy Spirit. God's people cannot defile their bodies and mix with unbelievers and ungodly behaviour; which is what Belshazzar did!*

### 1 Corinthians 11:27

*When we are at the Lord's table, we must worship with all due reverence, respect to the Lord Almighty, and do nothing unworthy. Belshazzar behaved in an unworthy manner and disrespected the Lord's sacred cups and reaped punishment on himself, as Paul warned here would happen!*

### Revelation 18:1-8

*The Book of Revelation talks about the battle of good versus evil; a battle between two cities, the city of evil (represented by Babylon) and the city of Jerusalem (represented by Jerusalem). Revelation 18:1-8 describes the condition of those associated with evil (Babylon) in vv1-3 which is a dwelling place for demons; and warns people to escape from associating with the evil of Babylon in vv4-8, which is doomed for God's judgment, just as Belshazzar discovered firsthand!*

### What's the **BIG IDEA** of Daniel 5:1-31?

*The writing is on the wall for all who thumb their noses at God in pride and arrogance!*



If the Old Testament points to Jesus and **Scripture is all about Him** (Luke 24:27), in what ways **Daniel 5:1-31** point to Jesus?

1. *The writing is on the wall was Divine Judgment – Jesus is the appointed Divine Judge*

*2. Daniel is a prophet as he interprets the writing on the wall. Jesus is the ultimate prophet!*

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

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

*Vv25-28 – The interpretation of the words: mene mene, tekem, parsin, are crucial to the judgment and fall of Babylon.*

**Finish in prayer:** Thanking God that despite human pride and arrogance, God's judgment and sovereignty are inevitable.

### Study 3 – Dare to be Daniel or the Night the Lions were fasting! Daniel 6:1-28 (Sermon on 08-Sept- 2024)

**Before we begin:** Remind yourself what we learnt about Daniel in chapter 1 verse 21. Can we see how this is playing out? Daniel has outlived Nebuchadnezzar and his son Belshazzar and outlived the Babylonian Kingdom. Who is Darius?

*In Daniel 1:21 – Daniel is in Babylon, taken there by Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon. But this verse says Daniel remained there until the first year of the reign of King Cyrus of Persia. As we finish chapter 5 and verse 31, we see Darius the Mede ruling. Daniel is being preserved by God even though kings are dropping like flies!*

#### Read Daniel 6:1-5

1. What position does Daniel hold? And what did King Darius plan for him?

*Daniel is one of three administrators overseeing 120 satraps ruling the Kingdom of Babylon. Darius was so impressed with Daniel and his exceptional qualities that Darius planned to put Daniel in charge of the whole kingdom. The story of Daniel parallels Joseph's time in Pharaoh's Egypt. There is nothing new under the sun!*

2. What do the administrators and satraps plot for Daniel and why?

*The Administrators and satraps know they will find no fault in Daniel's work or loyalty to the King. They realize they will have to catch Daniel out in relation to Daniel's God and God's Law and in relation to Daniel's faith. The administrators and satraps are super jealous of Daniel, especially as he has this high position and he's a foreigner! Daniel is a godly man and incorruptible, so the administrators and satraps want to get rid of him, so they can be corrupt.*

3. What area of Daniel's life to they plan to attack?

*They attack Daniel's faith and commitment to God. Daniel is unwavering in his faith and commitment to God. God is paramount in Daniel's life!*

#### Read Daniel 6:6-9

4. What sneaky plan to the administrators and satraps go to King Darius with and what decree does Darius issue?

*They tickle Darius' ego and suggest that he issue a decree in writing, which cannot be altered or repealed in accordance with the law of the Medes and Persians. The*

*decree/edict is that anyone who prays to any god or human, except King Darius, in the next 30 days will be thrown into the lions' den!*

*Darius is very naïve in not spotting what they were up to; and the administrators and satraps approach did not include Daniel who was one of the three administrators; Darius should have picked up on that!*

### **Read Daniel 6:10-18**

5. How does Daniel react to this decree in verse 10?

*Daniel is unwavering in his faith and commitment to God!*

*Despite living in exile for many years, Daniel had a habit of praying on his knees, through an open window, praying 3 times per day, towards Jerusalem where the temple was, and which is symbolic of God's presence.*

*Despite the decree/edict, Daniel persists with his prayer habit.*

*He could have closed the window but he didn't!*

6. When Darius found out Daniel has broken his decree, why is Darius unable to save Daniel?

*Darius was greatly distressed and determined to rescue Daniel and made every effort until sundown to save him. But the law of the Medes and Persians says that no decree/edict issued by the King can be changed!*

7. What punishment is decreed for Daniel? How does Darius feel about this? Why?

*The punishment is the lions' den. Darius is greatly distressed; he tells Daniel in v16 – "May your God whom you serve continually, rescue you!"*

*Having sealed the mouth of the lions' den with Daniel inside, Darius spent the night in the Palace without sleep, food and entertainment.*

*Darius really likes Daniel which is why he was planning to put him in charge of the whole kingdom.*

### **Read Daniel 6:19-28**

8. What surprise does Darius find the next day?

*God preserved Daniel's life from the lions!*

9. What reasons does Daniel give for not being eaten by the lions?

*a. God sent an angel to shut the mouths of the lions*

- b. Daniel was innocent in God's sight*
- c. Daniel had not done anything wrong before King Darius*

10. What happened to Daniel's accusers?

*They became 'cat food' because they falsely accused Daniel!*

11. **Ponder:** Can you think of other Old Testament miraculous escapes? List some. What does this say about God?

*Here's some examples of miraculous escapes:*

- a. Noah and his family before the flood came – Genesis 7*
- b. Isaac was preserved when Abraham went to sacrifice him – Genesis 22*
- c. Joseph in Egypt – Genesis 35-50*
- d. Moses in the bullrushes – Exodus 2*
- e. The Israelites' exodus and crossing of the Red Sea – Exodus 14*
- f. Jonah from the belly of the fish – Jonah 2*

*There are many more!*

*God is a rescuing God!*

12. Write down the key points of Darius' praise of God in verses 25 to 27? What impresses you about Darius' praise of God?

*V26 – God is the living God – as opposed to the dead false gods and idols. God's Kingdom is everlasting – as opposed to the kingdom of Babylon*

*V27 – God rescues and saves. God performs signs and wonders.*

*It is a perfect appraisal of the one true God Almighty!*

13. **Ponder:** What miraculous rescue have we received? From what? By whom?

*We have the miraculous rescue from sin, death, and Hell!*

*By Jesus' death and resurrection.*

14. What happens to Daniel in verse 28 (cf. Daniel 1:21)

*He prospered during the reigns of Darius the Mede and Cyrus the Persian – as indicated in Daniel 1:21*

Read the following new Testament passages and explain how they relate to Daniel 6:1-28...

**John 15:19**



*Jesus warns against belong to the world and following what the world says. By committing to God/Jesus, the world hates us, just as the administrators and satraps hated Daniel because of his commitment and faithfulness to God*

### **Hebrews 11:32-34**

*Hebrews chapter 11 is a “who’s who” of faith; it lists Old Testament heroes of faith. People who conquered kingdoms and shut lions’ mouths by their faith, just as Daniel did through his faith in the living rescuing God!*

### **Matthew 10:16-18**

*Jesus warns that there is a ‘cost’ to following him. His followers will be handed over to local councils, flogged and brought before governors and kings, just as Daniel was brought before Darius. But Daniel’s faith and stand were a great witness and stand against the world!*

### **Acts 5:17-20**

*In this passage the Apostles were arrested and jailed because of jealousy and hatred from members of the Jewish Council, the Sanhedrin. But during the night, an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and rescued them, just like the angel of the Lord, closed the mouths of the lions and rescued Daniel from the lions’ den!*

What’s the **BIG IDEA** of **Daniel 6:1-28**?

- a. Daniel’s faithfulness and commitment to God*
- b. God is a rescuing God!*



If the Old Testament points to Jesus and **Scripture is all about Him** (Luke 24:27), in what ways **Daniel 6:1-28** point to Jesus?

- a. Daniel is portrayed as innocent and righteous – like Jesus*
- b. Both Daniel and Jesus were mistreated for their faithfulness to God*
- c. Both Darius and Pilate believed Daniel/Jesus were innocent and tried to release them*
- d. The lions’ den is like the tomb of Jesus*

- e. Daniel was rescued from death in the lions' den. Jesus was raised from the dead after 3 days. Both were divine intervention!*
- f. The rescue of both Daniel and Jesus generated the testimony and witness of the power of the living God, to Gentiles/Jews alike!*

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

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

*V26 - My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, Your Majesty."*

**Finish in prayer:** Praise God that salvation belongs to the Lord (Jonah 2:9) and there is no other name, but Jesus, by which we are saved (Acts 4:12)

**Studies prepared by Paul O'Rourke**  
**August 2024**

**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)