

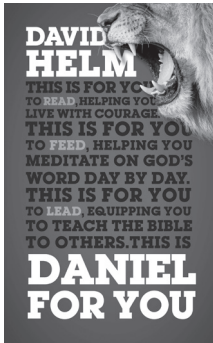
David Helm

Daniel

*Staying Strong in a
Hostile World*



 **7-Session Bible Study**



Daniel For You

These studies are adapted from *Daniel For You*. If you are reading *Daniel For You* alongside this Good Book Guide, here is how the studies in this booklet link to the chapters of *Daniel For You*:

Study 1 > Ch 1-4	Study 5 > Ch 15-17
Study 2 > Ch 5-6	Study 6 > Ch 18-21
Study 3 > Ch 7-10	Study 7 > Ch 22-26
Study 4 > Ch 11-14	

Find out more about *Daniel For You* at:
www.thegoodbook.com/for-you

Daniel: Staying Strong in a Hostile World

A Good Book Guide

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Introduction

One of the Bible writers described God’s word as “a lamp for my feet, a light on my path” (Psalm 119:105, NIV). God gave us the Bible to tell us about who he is and what he wants for us. He speaks through it by his Spirit and lights our way through life.

That means that we need to look carefully at the Bible and uncover its meaning—but we also need to apply what we’ve discovered to our lives.

Good Book Guides are designed to help you do just that. The sessions in this book are interactive and easy to lead. They’re perfect for use in groups or for personal study.

Let’s take a look at what is included in each session.

Talkabout: Every session starts with an ice-breaker question, designed to get people talking around a subject that links to the Bible study.

Investigate: These questions help you explore what the passage is about.

Apply: These questions are designed to get you thinking practically: what does this Bible teaching mean for you and your church?

Explore More: These optional sections help you to go deeper or to explore another part of the Bible which connects with the main passage.

Getting Personal: These sections are a chance for personal reflection. Some groups may feel comfortable discussing these, but you may prefer to look at them quietly as individuals instead—or leave them out.

Pray: Here, you’re invited to pray in the light of the truths and challenges you’ve seen in the study.

Each session is also designed to be easily split into two! Watch out for the **Apply** section that comes halfway through, and stop there if you haven’t got time to do the whole thing in one go.

In the back of the book, you’ll find a **Leader’s Guide**, which provides helpful notes on every question, along with everything else that group leaders need in order to facilitate a great session and help the group uncover the riches of God’s light-giving word.

Why Study Daniel?

How can we remain faithful to our God in a world that rejects him?

Is it even worth standing firm and obeying him, when his kingdom often seems so very far away?

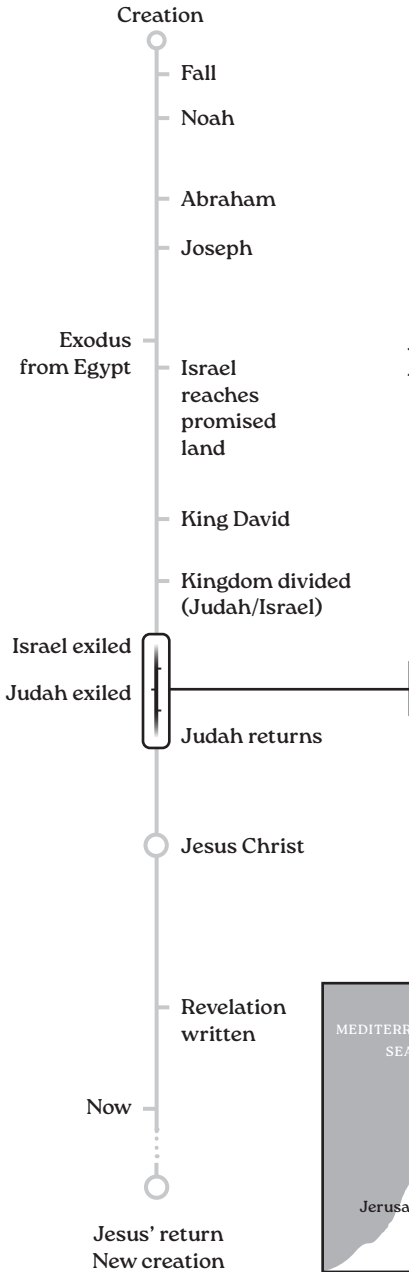
How can we live courageously and confidently in nations that do not seek to live under God's rule?

And is it possible to be a blessing to our nations, and show the power and goodness of our God, even in a time such as ours?

Those are pressing questions for those of us who live in contexts where to be a Christian is no longer the norm (if it ever was), and is increasingly to be misunderstood, maligned, and even mistreated. And since this is the context in which Daniel found himself, the book that bears his name is one that will reassure, challenge, and thrill us as we read it today.

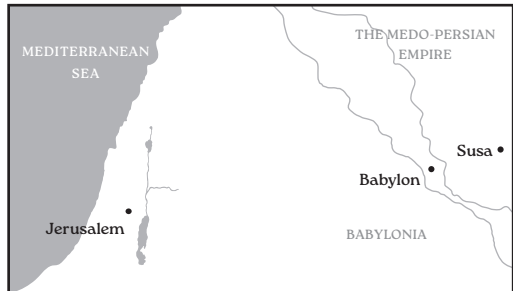
In chapters 1 – 6, we will see Daniel and his three friends seeking to remain faithful to God while making a home in Babylon—in the world. In chapters 7 – 12, we will find Daniel, through a series of visions, discovering how God would bring his people home from Babylon—and learning that the end of exile would not be the moment of fulfillment of God's promises of a King and a kingdom for his people.

For Daniel, that moment remained in the future, and that king a figure in the distant shadows. For us today, we can look back to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and forward to his return, as the glorious moments when all this was and will be fulfilled. In many ways, we can see more clearly even than this faithful prophet of God—and yet, as these seven studies will show, how Daniel lived and what Daniel saw has so much to teach us. This book will show us what we can expect from this life, and how we can and must remain faithful and courageous in our world.



Daniel 605-538 BC

- 605 Daniel and the other exiles taken to Babylonia by King Nebuchadnezzar
- 562 Nebuchadnezzar's reign ends
- 550 Belshazzar rules Babylonia
- 539 Babylonia falls to the Persians. Reign of King Darius/ Cyrus begins
- 538 Small group of Jews return to rebuild the Jerusalem Temple and city wall.



1

Babylon: Surviving and Thriving

Daniel 1 - 2

Talkabout

1. When do you find it easiest to excuse doing something you know is wrong?

Investigate

 Read Daniel 1:1-7

DICTIONARY

Judah (v 1): God's people had divided into two kingdoms: Israel and Judah.

Articles (v 2): precious objects used to worship God in the temple in Jerusalem.

2. When King Nebuchadnezzar takes the city of Jerusalem, what does he take into exile in Babylon (v 2-4)?

- Read Genesis 12:1-3; 2 Samuel 7:12. Why is what has happened in Jerusalem so serious?

In Daniel 1:6-7, we meet the leading characters of the first half of the book: Daniel and his three friends—four youths who were part of the deportation. They were stripped of their Jewish names and given Babylonian ones. How will they fare in Babylon? What will become of them, so far from Jerusalem? Will there be a future for God’s people, as God’s people?

 **Read Daniel 1:8-21**

DICTIONARY

Defile (v 8): make unclean or unacceptable in God’s sight.

3. What does Daniel (and his friends) resolve not to do (v 8)?

- Why does this cause a problem, and what solution does Daniel propose (v 9-14)?

Why do the four refuse the food? Three possibilities are...

- the kind of food: it may have contradicted the dietary requirements in Leviticus 11.
- the use of the food: it may have been food taken from sacrifices to pagan gods.
- whose food it was: sharing a meal meant unity in fellowship—here, with a pagan king.

Whichever it was, it is clear that their consciences simply would not allow them to accept this food and wine.

Explore More | OPTIONAL

What makes someone into the kind of worshiper of God who will have this kind of resolve?

Read 2 Kings 22 – 23

- What did King Josiah do?
 - This all happened while Daniel and his friends were young and (as nobles' children) very possibly being reared in the royal palace. What does this suggest about the influence of childhood on our adulthood? How does this encourage and challenge parents? What about the wider church family?
-

4. How does this episode conclude (v 15-20)?

5. Reread verses 2, 9, and 17. In each verse, God "gives" someone something. For each, pick out what he gave and to whom.

Apply

6. How does knowing that God gives, on both a national level and in personal ways, change the way we view life?

- How does it encourage us to follow our consciences, even when this could be costly?

Getting Personal | OPTIONAL

Has there been a time (perhaps it is now) when your conscience has urged you to follow a potentially difficult path? Did you listen to your conscience, or bow to pressure? Next time you're in a similar situation, what truths do you need to remember that will give you the strength to follow your conscience?

Investigate

 **Read Daniel 2:1-13**

7. Why can the king's advisers not explain his dream to him (v 10-11)?

- Why is this serious news for Daniel and his friends (v 12-13)?

 **Read Daniel 2:14-23**

DICTIONARY

Mercy (v 18): here, being spared punishment (by having the dream revealed to them by God).

Deposes (v 21): removes from power.

8. When God reveals the content and meaning of the king's dream to Daniel, how does Daniel respond (v 20-23)?

- What truths about God are we reminded of in these verses?

 **Read Daniel 2:24-49**

DICTIONARY

Chaff (v 35): the inedible husks of corn, blown away by the wind when the grain was "threshed."

Incense (v 46): sweet-smelling substance.

9. What was the content of the dream (v 31-35)?

10. What is the interpretation of the dream (v 36-45)?

11. Why would the words "after you" (v 39) have been a great relief to Nebuchadnezzar?

12. What were the rise and fall of various powerful empires all heading toward (v 44-45)?

- Read Luke 20:17-19. How does Jesus link the image of Daniel 2:44-45 to himself?

Apply

Nebuchadnezzar needed to hear that the major event in history would be the coming of the stone—and we now know that the stone is Christ. He is the one who replaces all humanity's self-rule—who, in fact, smashes it.

13. How is this both exciting for us and a warning to us?

- Remember that the meaning of the dream was intended for the pagan king, not the godly servant. What does this mean for us today?

Getting Personal | OPTIONAL

Daniel is not only pointing us to Jesus; he is also an example to us. Daniel told the king that God was speaking to him, through the dream. We are to tell the world that God is speaking to it, through Jesus. Wherever God has placed you, remember this: he has a word to be made known.

What difference will it make this month if you see yourself as having been placed where you are by God to make his word known and intelligible?

Pray

Turn the words of Daniel 2:20-23 into your prayer of praise, thanking God for revealing his wisdom to the world in the person of Jesus Christ. Ask God to use you to make his word known.

Pray for the resolve to follow your conscience even when that's difficult. Pray through any particular situations you have shared together.

