

DANIEL

The courage to stand

Term 1 Bible Study Book

BIBLE STUDY PROGRAM – TERM 1 2020

Daniel

Week commencing		Reading Plan
<i>9th March</i>	Offer Yourself	Daniel 1
<i>16th March</i>	Make Your Stand	Daniel 3
<i>23rd March</i>	The Fate of Kings	Daniel 5
<i>30th March</i>	The Lion's Den	Daniel 6
<i>6th April</i>	The Son of Man	Daniel 7

Study 1:

Offer Yourself

Daniel 1

Talk

- 1) What is the most 'non-Christian' place you have ever found yourself? It might be a workplace, school, city, family or friendship group. Have you ever felt surrounded by people hostile to Christianity?

Read: Daniel 1:1-12

- 2) As we read Daniel 1:1-21, make note of what stands out, parts you don't understand and repeated words and phrases.

Investigate

- 3) Which two characters are mentioned in 1:1. What, therefore, is the historic setting for the start of the book?

- 4) Daniel 1:2 makes the jarring statement that the Lord delivered Jehoiakim over to Nebuchadnezzar. Have a read of Jeremiah 25:1-11. How does Jeremiah's message help us understand this historic moment for Jerusalem?

- 5) Since you are already in Jeremiah, flick forward to Jeremiah 29:1-9. Though this letter from Jeremiah to the exiles was written after the events of Daniel 1, in what ways is Daniel already following Jeremiah's instructions and integrating into the life of Babylon?
- 6) In what area does he refuse to integrate? Where does he draw the line? Why do you think he draws the line there?

Apply

- 7) Daniel doesn't rebel outright against Babylon. Nor does he accept the ways of Babylon wholeheartedly. He seems to consider himself a holy object in Babylon or a Priest ministering within Babylon. What may we learn as we seek to live faithfully 'in exile' (1 Peter 2:11)?
- 8) Can you think of any moments when you have either integrated into our world for the glory of God, or drawn a line in the sand for the glory of God?

9) In what ways is Daniel a shadow of Jesus, the perfect High Priest? In what matters was Jesus willing to live as one of us. In what matters did he draw a line in the sand?

10) Consider all the justifications Daniel could give for abandoning his faith at this point in his life? Consider all the reasons it would be especially tempting for him to do so? Do you share any of these circumstances with Daniel? How do you deal with these moments of intense temptation?

Homework: Read Daniel Chapter 2

Digging Deeper

11) Take time to consider 1:2-8. What temple/sacrificial system phrases appear? Why might the author have emphasised this? Do you see any resonances to the theology of Ezekiel from our previous studies?

- 12) At what other times in Israel's history have seeds and water been the diet? How might this help us understand how Daniel conceived of the Exile and his role within it?
- a. Genesis 1:29
 - b. Exodus 16:31/Numbers 11:7
 - c. Ezekiel 4:9-11

Prayers

Pray for our Student Minister, Isaac Shumack, as he joins us on Sundays while studying at Moore College during the week.

Pray for Peter, Katharine, Noah and Atticus Yock. Pray as they work amongst the students at the campus of Griffith University in Brisbane.

Pray for Rob and Jo, Lili and Jemma Copland. Pray for Rob's work as the Anglican Chaplain at the University of Wollongong and for his work as Campus Director of the University Bible Group.

Pray for our witness to our local community – especially as more units are developed and more people move into the area. Pray for opportunities to connect with our community.

Study 2:

Make Your Stand

Daniel 3

Talk

- 1) Have you ever been to a worship event for another religion? Have you ever been to a secular event that felt like a religious worship experience? How did it make you feel?

Read: Daniel 3:1-30

- 2) As we read Daniel 3, make a note of what stands out, parts you don't understand and repeated words and phrases.

Investigate and Apply

- 3) Which character is missing from this chapter? Why might this be? Consider 2:48-49.
- 4) Why do you think Nebuchadnezzar creates this moment of worship? What do you think he is hoping to achieve?

- 5) This chapter is very stylised in the way it recounts the story. What was it like to hear it read out loud? Why do you think there are so many lists and so much repetition? What impression does this give of Nebuchadnezzar's empire?

- 6) As comical as the whole scene feels, those gathered obey without question. What is motivating them? Have you ever found yourself driven by similar forces?

- 7) Why don't Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego bow down (3:12, 3:16-18 cf also Matt 16:26)? Could you ever see yourself showing courage like this? What opportunities do we have to show similar courage?

- 8) What are the consequences in the passage when these men refuse to live for the approval of the king and the empire? What might we learn from this? Do you see this dynamic at play in Australia?

9) God protects these men in the flames. Have you ever felt God's presence with you when you have suffered in obedience to him (Matt 28:20)?

10) Consider Isaiah 53:4-6, 2 Corinthians 5:21 and 1 Peter 2:24. How is the 'son of God' in the flames a shadow of Christ's work at the cross?

Homework: Read Daniel chapter 4

Prayers

Pray for the congregation at Miranda North; that there would be many opportunities to connect with the local community through school and other activities.

Pray for David, Kathryn, Reuben and baby Luis. Pray for David as Campus Director of Geelong Christian Union at the Deakin University Campus in Victoria.

Pray for the wide range of outreach opportunities that we have with local schools. Pray that our scripture teachers would be diligent and loving as they teach classes. Pray that our school chaplains would effectively model Christ in the way they love and support the school community. Pray that our Kids Hope mentors would be a loving and stable relationship for children with social needs. Pray that School Lunch program leaders will be bold in their example and witness to their school communities. Pray for the volunteers running Breakfast Club at Miranda Public and Port Hacking High School.

Study 3:

The Fate of Kings

Daniel 5

Talk

1) Who is the most powerful person you have ever met? What were they like?

Read: Daniel 5:1-31

2) As we read Daniel 5, make a note of what stands out, parts you don't understand and repeated words and phrases. What themes from previous chapters are present here as well?

Investigate

3) Have a look at 5:1. What significant change has occurred between chapters 1-4 and chapter 5?

4) Read 5:1-4. What is your impression of Belshazzar's Royal Court? Why do you think Belshazzar's first command in the scene is to bring out the articles from the Temple in Jerusalem?

5) The appearance of "the fingers of a human hand" seems strange. How does it link to previous stories in the bible where proud kings are brought low (Exodus 8:19)? How is the symbolism of a 'hand' further filled out in the chapter (5:23) and throughout the book as a whole (1:2, 2:34, 2:38, 3:15, 3:17, 4:35)?

6) Two wise characters now appear on the scene.

a. Firstly, "The Queen". Considering Belshazzar's wives and concubines are already in the room, who might this be? How might this explain her knowledge of Daniel?

b. Secondly, why is Daniel not already in the room? How has his position in the Kingdom changed?

7) How does this chapter expose the difference between the gods that are praised in Babylon (5:4) and the true and living God (5:5)? How does it expose the difference between the servants of the Babylonian gods (5:8) and the servants of the True God (5:17)? Consider Isaiah 41:21-24. How is the theology of Isaiah echoed in Daniel?

Apply

8) Consider Daniel's core criticism of Belshazzar (5:22-24).

- a. Pride: What may be the marks of pride getting an upper hand in your life?

- b. Idolatry: How may we assess if idols are creeping into our hearts?

9) Consider Philippians 2:1-11. How does our King differ from Belshazzar?

10) How might the life of Daniel: the ups and downs, glory one moment and a no-body the next, help set our expectations for the life of God's people in exile?

Prayers

Pray for Sharyn as Office Administrator, Lisa as Office Assistant and Eddie as assistant bookkeeper.

Pray for Kylie Zietsch and her work at Johannesburg Bible College, South Africa.

Pray for Little Beats Playtime, which runs on Fridays during school term, as young parents come from surrounding units with their children. Helps us Lord to connect and care well for them. Helps us Lord to be a good witness of your love.

Pray for our Prime Minister and government. Pray for our state and federal members, our Premier and government. We pray also for our local Council including our Mayor.

Pray for those who serve to protect our country. Pray for health and safety for the service men and women and their Chaplains both here and overseas. Pray for their families waiting at home.

- c. “They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent.” How does Daniel’s character work for his advancement. How does it work against him? What may we learn from this as we live as exiles?

4) Have a look at 6:6-9.

- a. Why do you think Darius issues the decree?

What might be the motivating forces?

- b. Do we see similar parties in our culture trying to force similar ‘decrees’ upon us? What parts of our society are happy for us to practise our religion, as long as it does not cross the lines they have established.

5) Have a look at 6:10-16.

a. What is Daniel's response to the decree (6:10)?

b. Consider again your answers to question 1. Of these practices and beliefs that are at odds with our world, which would you a) give up if 'push came to shove', b) fight to retain, c) die to retain?

6) Have a look at 6:11-28.

a. Do you think there is any significance to a lion's den as the chosen form of execution? Considering the associations between Lions and the nation of Babylon (Dan 7:2-4), what might be the symbolism of Daniel being sealed in the den, but then released?

- b. Thinking through the events of chapter 6, is there a familiar pattern here in the way faithfulness leads to persecution, and faithfulness in persecution leads to vindication and worship? Where else do you see such a pattern in the bible? What is God teaching us through this repetition through history? Have you taken this to heart?

Digging Deeper

- 7) What do you think is the significance of Daniel's window being opened 'towards Jerusalem'? What is the significance of the City of Jerusalem to Daniel at this particular juncture in history?

Prayers

Pray for Sarah Prabhakar and Tim. Pray for Sarah's work in India with BCTI and SIM.

Pray for peace and wise leadership in our world. Pray that there would be opportunities for Christians to share the love, peace and saving grace that Jesus offers to all.

Praise God for our Bible Study leaders and for their faithful work in teaching and ministering to us throughout the term.

Thank God for the many and varied resources available to us as a parish. As we seek to witness to the goodness of God daily, pray that we might make the most of opportunities to invite people we know to events at church. Pray that God would be preparing the heart of people we could invite to an upcoming event.

Study 5:

The Son of Man

Daniel 7

Talk

- 1) What are some of the biggest 'world-changing events' you have seen in your life-time?

Read: Daniel 7:1-28

- 2) As we read Daniel 7, make (perhaps copious) notes of what stands out, parts you don't understand and repeated words and phrases.

- 3) How has the style of writing and genre changed from the previous chapters?

Investigate

- 4) Have a look at 7:1. Where in the sequence of rulers are we up to?

5) How does the dream, and the interpretation given to Daniel, match with the actual events of history?

6) Who does the “one like a son of man” represent (vv. 18, 26-7)?

7) Regardless of the exact identity of the beasts and horns, what is the overall message of the dream? What would it mean to Daniel? What assurance does it offer us as well?

8) Spend some time reflecting on the portrait of God in this chapter. How may it affect your worship, prayers and praise?

Digging Deeper

- 1) Daniel had had this dream before the events of chapters 5 and 6? How may it have affected his actions throughout those two chapters and the way he relates to the King's demands?

Prayers

Pray for Jess Moran, our Early Childhood Ministry Coordinator, as she oversees our Crèche and Playtime programs. We pray for energy and enthusiasm as she looks after this age group as well as providing support and encouragement for the parents.

Pray for Geoff and Liz, Johanna, Will, Tom and Zoe Robson and their work with Christian Union in Canterbury University, Christchurch, New Zealand.

Pray for Kerry Brissenden and her craft leaders as they meet on a Thursday during term, to encourage and support the craft community. Pray that God would soften the hearts of this community as they listen each week to devotionals about the love that Jesus has for them.

Pray for our witness to families that bring their children along to Thursday Children's groups, Kids' Clubs, and Friday Youth groups. Pray that church families would be given opportunities to befriend families who don't come to church, and that hearts may be softened to the gospel.

