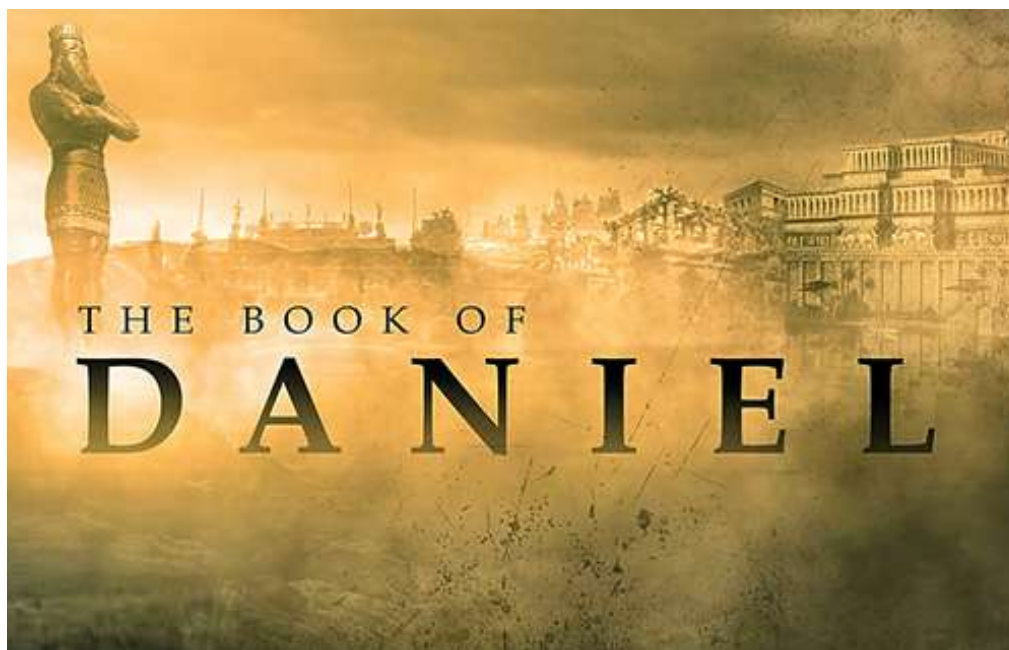


# Let's Worship God

25th-30th October 2021

Daniel



# THE BOOK OF DANIEL

## **Monday -Daniel 1:1-4 - Behind the Headlines**

*For the next few weeks we will be studying the book of Daniel using notes written by Rev. Jonny McCollum.*

The headline on the front page of Jerusalem Journal? “DISASTER FOR FOLLOWERS OF YAHWEH!” The Babylon Bulletin? “ISRAEL’S GOD CRUSHED” The unanimous conclusion of the talk show hosts? The God of Israel is a big fat phoney. The gods of Babylon laid down a challenge and he fell apart like wet tissue paper.

For someone living in Jerusalem in 605 BC that was the obvious inference to make. Yahweh (his covenant name) couldn’t rescue his holy city (v1), couldn’t defend his temple (v2), and couldn’t safeguard his covenant people (v3-4). Breached walls and broken families, shattered families and smirking enemies: the events of 605 BC told their own tale - the God of Israel isn’t worth trusting and isn’t worth worshipping - so stop wasting your time.

That’s a conclusion many reach today. They see the brokenness of the world around them, the suffering that fills our TV screens, and the apparent floundering of the church and conclude that following God is pointless.

Yet, don’t miss one of the most important phrases in this whole book. It would be easy to overlook it in the rush to see the story unfold. Notice v2, “And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand”. To the watching world, the fall of Jerusalem, desecration of the temple, and captivity of its brightest young men looked like evidence of God’s powerlessness, but the eyes of faith see better. Ultimately, it was God, not Nebuchadnezzar, who decreed that these events should take place. Far from being a helpless spectator, the true God was the architect of the events in this book. We’ll see them later (probably in chapter 9), but for now let’s just accept that he had his good reasons.

Let’s also view the world around us with the same eyes of faith. Yes, there is pain and suffering and yes, God’s people can seem to be on the back foot. Yet behind the headlines there’s a God on the throne. That’s the central message of Daniel. It’s never been more relevant.

### **Questions**

1. Can you think of reasons why people write off Jesus and Christianity?
2. Do you think that watching/reading too much of the news can sometimes be bad for our spiritual welfare?

### **Prayer Points**

1. Pray that the Holy Spirit would give you spiritual eyes to see beyond what seems to be going wrong.
2. Thank God for this book and pray that his Spirit would be with us as we study it.
3. Use prayer points from your congregation.
4. Pray for family matters.

### **Memory Verse**

Daniel answered and said: “Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might.” Daniel 2:20

**Praise: Psalm 16 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# THE BOOK OF DANIEL

## **Tuesday - Daniel 1:1-5 - God is With Us in Our Trauma**

The average teenager in our day lives a fairly uneventful life. Go to school, come home, do homework, watch a bit of TV, chat to friends online. The height of trauma for many (although not all) is a tricky math assignment or being asked to help with chores. In this book, we meet four teenagers who had been through trauma beyond what most of us can imagine. They had already been through war. They had friends and family members who had been slaughtered by the Babylonian invaders. They'd seen shattered houses and mangled corpses. To top it all off, they were forcibly marched thousands of miles away from home to a strange land where they would be held against their will.

Yet as we go through this book we're going to see these four young men living fruitful lives of faithfulness to the one true God. We'll learn more of their secret soon, but for now let's just learn one lesson: even in the midst of the worst trauma imaginable, you can still live a life of productive integrity for Christ.

Perhaps you have been through trauma. Perhaps you're going through it right now. Divorce, unfaithfulness, abuse, bereavement, long-term sickness, exam failure, rejection, infertility, miscarriage, unemployment. Perhaps you need the sweet encouragement that the Holy Spirit provides us with as he showcases these four lads from Israel. Whatever you're going through and however heartbreaking it may be - there's still hope in the midst of the darkness. The reason for this is what we saw yesterday. He is on the throne. The fall of Jerusalem was directed by him; the four lads' trauma was in his hand too.

It can be hard to accept when you're in the darkest darkness, but your pain is under his control. That's good news, because it means our suffering has purpose. The world may treat you as damaged goods, but Jesus Christ does not. He can still use you for his glory. He can still cause you to be a blessing to others.

### **Questions**

1. Can you think back to times in your life or someone else where God used trauma for his glory?
2. How would you react to trauma if you didn't have the hope that God is in control?

### **Prayer Points**

1. Think of someone you know who is going through a traumatic time. Pray that God would bless them as he blessed Daniel.
2. Pray that God would work through your experiences so you can be a blessing to others.
3. Use prayer points from your congregation.
4. Pray for family matters.

### **Memory Verse**

Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might." Daniel 2:20

**Praise: Psalm 17 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# THE BOOK OF DANIEL

## **Wednesday - Daniel 1:3-7 - Re-education**

A “Vocational Education and Training Centre” sounds like a wholesome place. These centres list their objectives as “promoting social integration” and promise to provide a quality education for the all the underprivileged people who enrol. Yet, behind the innocuous name is a terrifying reality. Mountains of evidence prove that these “training centres” are in fact concentration camps: a key instrument in the tool box of the Chinese government as it attempts to impose its will on the Uighur minority. The “students” are really prisoners who can spend months or years in these camps being subjected to both physical and psychological pressure that is designed to break their spirit and force them to conform to the ideals of the Chinese state.

Daniel and his friends found themselves in a similar position. They were provided with an education (v5), but they weren’t students; they were prisoners. These four lads were expected to let go of their religious beliefs and embrace the Babylonian way of life. A failure to conform could be deadly. There was a flip side of course: if they threw their faith in the trash they could be richly rewarded with prestigious and influential jobs. They could have a nice house, big garden, and comfy car in the driveway. All they had to do was go with the flow. This is particularly apparent when we see the name changes forced on these lads in v7. For example, Daniel (God is my judge) and Azariah (Yahweh is the helper) became Belteshazzar and Abednego (tributes to the false gods Bel and Nebo).

So, can these four young followers of God survive the brainwashing of the wicked Babylonian regime? Many of us, particularly parents, face the same fears today as we consider the agendas of the media and world around us. Is there any hope? Take heart and praise God! One of the great lessons of this book is this: by the grace of God you and your family can flourish even amidst indoctrination. God’s truth triumphs over the lies of the world.

### **Questions**

1. Have you, perhaps without realising it, embraced some of the world’s values?
2. How do those values go against God’s values as revealed in the Bible?

### **Prayer Points**

1. Pray for Christians around the world who, like Daniel, could face physical harm because of their faith.
2. Pray for the covenant children in your congregation. Pray that God would give them strength and wisdom to resist the indoctrination of the world.
3. Use prayer points from your congregation.
4. Pray for family matters.

### **Memory Verse**

Daniel answered and said: “Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might.” Daniel 2:20

**Praise: Psalm 18 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# THE BOOK OF DANIEL

## Thursday - Daniel 1:8-20 - “Daniel resolved”

By the end of this book, Daniel and his three friends will have faced overwhelming pressure to turn away from God, but by his grace they will remain faithful. Today we see some of the seeds of their success. I won't go into WHY they felt that they should not eat this food or drink this wine. We simply don't have space to consider the various possibilities. Suffice to say, Daniel was determined to honour God and his conscience told him that he couldn't do that by eating this food. In time, Daniel would face stiffer, sterner temptations, but the path to obedience starts here.

There's a key lesson for us in v8, “Daniel RESOLVED that he would not defile himself”. Of course, we rely ultimately on God's strength, but there is a great need for gutsy determined obedience. Part of following Christ means making resolutions and sticking to them no matter what. And so, let me challenge you: will you do this today? Will you pick out one small part of your daily life where you can show faithfulness to Christ and resolve to obey no matter what? Maybe your resolution will be to pray this evening. Maybe it will be to worship with your family. Maybe it will be to tell the truth when you're asked that awkward question or to stay clear of that gossipy conversation at work. These may seem like minor skirmishes, but if you don't resolve in the small things you won't be able to flip the obedience switch when the bigger challenges come.

There's also a great encouragement in this passage. Notice v9, “God gave Daniel favour and compassion in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs.” That favour was obvious every step of the way (v15, 20) I can't promise that God will work in quite such a dramatic way as you resolve to obey him, but I can tell you this: Daniel's experience backs up God's promise in 1 Samuel 2:30: “Those who honour me I will honour.”

## Questions

1. What godly resolutions could you make today?
2. What has made you give up on previous resolutions?

## Prayer Points

1. Pick one godly resolution and pray that God would give you the strength to keep it.
2. Pray that others would see God working in your life, just as they did in Daniel's life.
3. Use prayer points from your congregation.
4. Pray for family matters.

## Memory Verse

Daniel answered and said: “Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might.” Daniel 2:20

**Praise: Psalm 19 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**



# THE BOOK OF DANIEL

## **Friday - Daniel 1:21 - 2:12 - The Magicians Mess Up**

Nebuchadnezzar was a bundle of nerves; the iron willed strongman reduced to a quivering wreck by the events of the night before. He may not have understood the finer points, but it didn't take Sherlock Holmes to work out that the news wasn't good. So he gathered together his best and brightest mystics to explain the mystery, but to no avail. Their plan was to listen carefully to the details, twist them into some plausible sounding message, and convince the king that they knew what they were talking about.

A less wily man might have been sucked in by their request in v4, but this king knew better than to have the wool pulled over his eyes. So he gave them a test: they were to prove that their interpretations were genuine by first describing the dream itself (v5, 9). Any fool can talk the talk. Can these guys walk the walk? The answer was an emphatic NO.

For all their supposed wisdom, these men were powerless to fulfil the king's request (v10). For all their persuasiveness, they were powerless to quench the king's thirst for blood (v8). Now their lives dangled by a thread, held in place by the whims of a maniac king. Even before we get to the dream itself, these men of worldly wisdom are exposed for the charlatans they were.

Yet notice the contrast with Daniel in 1:21. He "was there until the first year of King Cyrus." That verse is like a flash forward, 65 years into the future. You can be sure that these wise men were toast by then; even the Babylonian Empire itself was gone. Yet, by God's every day grace, Daniel stood firm day after day and outlasted them all.

Surely there's hope for us in that? The world seems to be in a constant state of upheaval, yet God equips his saints to keep going. Have you been slowly and steadily walking in his ways for many years? You are a triumph of the grace of Jesus Christ.

### **Questions**

1. Can you think of believers who have slowly and steadily been walking in Christ's ways for decades? What about them stands out?

### **Prayer Points**

1. Give thanks for an older member of your church who has been walking faithfully for many years.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### **Memory Verse**

Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might." Daniel 2:20

**Praise: Psalm 20 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# THE BOOK OF DANIEL

## **Saturday - Daniel 2:12-30 - The Revealer of Mysteries**

Daniel and his friends are in trouble. Unless something dramatic happens, they will be murdered before the chapter is out (v13). Yet, we know this is not the end. God's plan for Daniel involves him serving faithfully into old age (1:21). Today the tide turns.

Notice that there is no hint of panic from Daniel and his friends. While the enchanters lose their heads, the followers of God keep theirs. They simply get on their knees and pray (v18). What is the secret to their faith? They know what God is like. The enchanters give the appearance of wisdom, but true wisdom is not found in the star charts or in constellations. Wisdom and might belong to God and God alone (v20). Nebuchadnezzar can give the order and have anyone he wishes put to death, but God can snap his fingers and remove the king any time he likes (v21).

This conviction that God is sovereign even over the most powerful of rulers is central to the book of Daniel and if we are to survive as Christians in a fallen world, it must be central to our lives as well. In his grace, this sovereign God makes the whole dream known to Daniel (v19). These four faithful believers will be spared, all because of the "God in heaven who reveals mysteries" (v28).

Let me direct your thoughts down two paths. Firstly, we should be thankful that this God is still the one who "removes and sets up kings". As Christians we will often be frustrated or even targeted by the rulers God has placed over us, so what a comfort to know that behind these thrones lies a greater king who does all things well.

Secondly, give thanks for the greatest mystery that this God has revealed - the mystery of Christ, hidden for generations, but revealed to us in the gospel (Colossians 1 & 2). The mystery revealed to Nebuchadnezzar was a troubling one (for him); the mystery revealed to us leads to life and peace and hope.

### **Questions**

1. If God is the one who "reveals mysteries", what does that say about how we should view the Bible?

### **Prayer Points**

1. Pray that God would reveal the mystery of Christ to your family and friends who do not yet believe.
2. Pray for the preaching and hearing of God's Word tomorrow.
3. Use prayer points from your congregation.
4. Pray for family matters.

### **Memory Verse**

Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might." Daniel 2:20

**Praise: Psalm 21 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

The goal of Let's Worship God is to encourage and help you in your worship of God each day.

**God tells us that  
Ezra read from  
the book of the Law  
day after day  
and that  
the people of God  
were filled with joy!**

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