

Thessalonians 2). Their themes are picked up again in the book of Revelation. This type of literature is known as apocalyptic.

1. Read Daniel 7-12 over the weekend with the help of a good Bible aid or commentary. Look up the entry on 'apocalyptic' in the *New Bible Dictionary* or the *Illustrated Bible Dictionary*.
2. Daniel's prayer recorded in chapter 9 is one of a number of key prayers recorded in the Bible. Think about it as a possible model for your own prayers.

### Notes



[www.elimcarlisle.org](http://www.elimcarlisle.org)

### Meeting With God Bible Reading Notes

*"This extract from Meeting With God published by Inter-Varsity Press, is used with permission"*

**30th June 2014**

### Week 44: The book of Daniel (A bird's eye view)

Daniel was a man after God's own heart. He learned how to play a full and active part in a corrupt institution without wavering in his devotion and loyalty to his Lord God. At this crisis point in Jewish history, when the people were exiled from their homeland, God placed Daniel in a powerful position of influence in the heart of the Babylonian empire. Even there he was influenced by Jeremiah and what had gone on in Jerusalem (see Daniel 9:2 and Jeremiah 29).

The book falls into two parts - history and prophecy. The first six chapters describe Daniel's life and the second six, his visions of what was to befall the Jewish people. But the most striking point about this book is the man himself. In the face of amazing pressures and threats he chooses to serve God every time.

To cover the book in the week we shall concentrate on the first six, more familiar chapters. Weekend reading looks at the last chapters. R. S. Wallace, *The Message of Daniel* (IVP) and Joyce Baldwin's *Daniel, Tyndale Old Testament Commentary* (IVP) are a great help in understanding the book as a whole.

### Day 1. Daniel the student

#### **Daniel 1**

Doubtless there would have been Babylonian youths who would have loved to study in the King's court; but for these Jewish boys it presented potential conflict with their worship of Yahweh. Even as a student Daniel displayed the unashamed resolve and commitment to God which become a hallmark of his adult life.

**Note:** Verse 2. Jehoiakim was probably king from c.608, see 2 Chronicles 36:5-8.

1. Read Daniel 1. Why would Daniel and the others not eat Babylonian food? What could have been their motives for refusing? Leviticus 20:22-26 may help.

Another reason might have been that to eat from the king's table was simply an expression of dependence and allegiance.

2. Describe their manner in dealing with the authorities.
3. Compare this story with John 17:11,16. What qualities did Daniel display which enabled him to be 'in' the world, but not 'of' it?

Pray that God will help you to copy Daniel's example of involvement with diplomacy but without compromise.

## **Day 2. Daniel's bravery**

### **Daniel 2**

The threat of death hung over the four. Daniel reacted by trusting God entirely to deliver them. He did not attempt to find any short cuts by taking matters into his own hands.

1. Note down carefully the steps Daniel took when confronted with the King's threats.
2. Examine the prayer of the four. Write down exactly what they asked for and how God answered them.

**Note:** Verse 39ff. The four kingdoms - Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek and Roman.

3. Daniel obeyed God and acted in faith with his life at risk. Note the effect this had on the King.

When faced with a crisis, is your first reaction to turn to God? Pray that you will be like Daniel in this respect.

## **Day 3. Whom will you worship?**

### **Daniel 3 - 4**

What appears to be repentance is sometimes only a short-lived remorse. As the years passed Nebuchadnezzar forgot about Daniel's God, and built his own! Other officials, jealous at the success of the Jews, were quick to inform the King that Daniel's colleagues, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, would not worship it.

1. Consider the response to authority of Daniel and his three friends. In chapter 2 Daniel obeyed the King's command to interpret his dream, but in chapter 3 the king's command to worship idols was disobeyed by the three friends. Why was this so? What guidance does this give for when you should or should not obey secular authority?

Again the King was forced to acknowledge the God of Israel, but in chapter 4 God took him through a far more humiliating experience.

2. Compare the several 'repentances' the King made. How does this one differ from earlier attempts?

Pray that God will identify sources of pride in your life and then deal with them in a way that will last. You could take Nebuchadnezzar's statement of praise in 4:34-37, to form a basis for your prayer.

## **Day 4. Belshazzar**

### **Daniel 5**

23 years after Nebuchadnezzar's death, the next King needed Daniel's godly powers just as much.

1. Try to work out what sort of man Belshazzar was. Write out the accusations Daniel made about him.
2. To what did Daniel ascribe Nebuchadnezzar's success?
3. In what ways did Belshazzar aggravate his sins against God?
4. Read Psalm 47 and make notes on how God is in control of the nations. Even the most ungodly of Kings will face divine rule.

Use the Psalm that you have just read to praise God that he is the ultimate ruler of the nations. All forms of injustice in the world will be subject to his authority. Pray for any situations in the world where you are now aware that injustice appears to reign.

**Note:** Verse 29. Daniel was the third, highest ruler in the kingdom as Belshazzar was son of King Nabonidus, ruling in his absence.

## **Day 5. The lions' den**

### **Daniel 6**

Even Daniel's colleagues could find no fault in him. The only way they could attack him was to persecute him for his relationship with God. Daniel could have compromised by praying in secret but the zeal of a lifetime knew no such weakness.

1. To have your enemies acknowledge your religion is a marvellous testimony. Make a list of those qualities which made Daniel a man of God.
2. The King's hands were tied by his decree, but God's were not. How did God demonstrate this fact? With what effect? As you consider this, what clues from Daniel's example can help you?

As in study 3, take the words of King Darius 6:26-27 and let them mould your praise to God today.

## **Weekend**

The story of Daniel's life is an inspiration, and in the following six chapters his statements about the future were also a tonic which helped the Jews endure their years of exile. Despite the fact that they are hard to understand, they are an integral part of Scripture, helping us especially to understand Jesus' teaching about his second coming, the man of lawlessness and the book of Revelation (2