



DANIEL
FAITHFUL EXILES

SERIES COMPANION

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INTRODUCTION TO DANIEL

Welcome to Daniel - a book of extreme circumstances and wild visions. A book of earth-shattering dreams and beastly kingdoms. A book that can feel so foreign to us in 21st century Australia that it can be hard to understand what God is saying to us through it. But in fact this is a book that is completely relevant to us today in ways that will both comfort us and challenge us as we live as disciples of Jesus right here and now.

It is firstly important to understand the original context of Daniel. In response to Israel's continued rebellion against him God sends his people into exile, and Daniel and his friends are carried off by the foreign power Babylon. They find themselves in this grand city that is the centre of the greatest empire of the time. There they will be tempted to conform to the culture of Babylon. One choice they face is submit to the pressure and let go of their identity and faith, or revolt against the empire. But what we actually see is Daniel and his friends choosing a third way of serving Babylon and contributing to its well-being, while still remaining faithful to God. Daniel and his friends are people of God remaining faithful in the midst of all that exile brings – all because God remains faithful to them.

So how does this relate to us? It can feel like exile is something distant to most of us, yet in 1 Peter 2 all followers of Jesus are urged to live as “foreigners and exiles”. We are called to live in this world - tempted by a Babylon-like culture - knowing that our true home is yet to come. Like Daniel, we are to resist the temptation to conform or revolt, but instead find ways to be faithful exiles in the Babylons of our day, in which God has placed us. We can only do this because we are no longer exiled from God’s presence but are now part of God’s eternal kingdom through the risen Son of Man, Jesus.

Our prayer this term, is that we can have Jesus revealed to us more clearly through the lens of the book of Daniel. Pray that we will see that the fragile kingdoms of this world will continue to rise and fall along with all the anxieties that they bring; that we can find strength & comfort in the fact that we are part of an everlasting kingdom that will never pass away, and will never be destroyed. Pray that as Jesus remains faithful to us, we can remain faithful to him, and that we can resist the world’s attempts to conform us to its image. Pray that we will endure to the end as resilient, non-anxious, faithful exiles taking up all the opportunities presented to us give the reason for the hope we have.

USING THESE SERIES COMPANIONS

Preparation is key – listening to the talk and answering the questions before Growth Group are excellent ways to prepare.

Included for the first time in this Series Companion is a section entitled “This Week”. This is designed to help each of us change to become more like Jesus. Words on a page won't bring about individual change, but if we write possible changes down, ask trusted friends to keep us accountable and then pray together with someone who loves us and loves God – we're getting serious about growth – which after all is what Growth Groups are all about.

There are more questions than is possible to discuss in one Growth Group event – so the Growth Group Leader or in some cases the group can **select a smaller number of questions for discussion together.**

There are different types of questions – so it is good to check every now and again that your group is discussing a range of question types.

Feedback is helpful always - please email me with any time with your thoughts andreapryde@livingchurch.org.au

DANIEL

BOOK STRUCTURE

DANIEL 1-6

Stories of Daniel and his friends in exile in Babylon

DANIEL 7-12

Visions of Daniel

EXILE

CHAPTER 1
Daniel and his friends are exiled to Babylon where their faithfulness is tested.



CHAPTER 2
Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

DREAMS

CHAPTER 7
Daniel's vision of the 4 beasts.

CHAPTER 3
Fleury Furnace

TRIALS

CHAPTER 6
Lion's Den

CHAPTER 4
Nebuchadnezzar's pride cut down

PRIDE

CHAPTER 5
Belshazzar's pride leads to his death

CHAPTER 8
Daniel's vision of the ram + goat.

CHAPTER 9
Daniel's prayer

CHAPTER 10-12
Daniel's third vision

WRITTEN IN
HEBREW

WRITTEN IN
ARAMAIC

WRITTEN IN
HEBREW



ARAL SEA

CASPIAN SEA

BLACK SEA

MEDITERRANEAN SEA

PERSIAN GULF

PERSIAN EMPIRE

MEDIA

ASSYRIA

BABYLONIA

ARABIAN DESERT

JERUSALEM

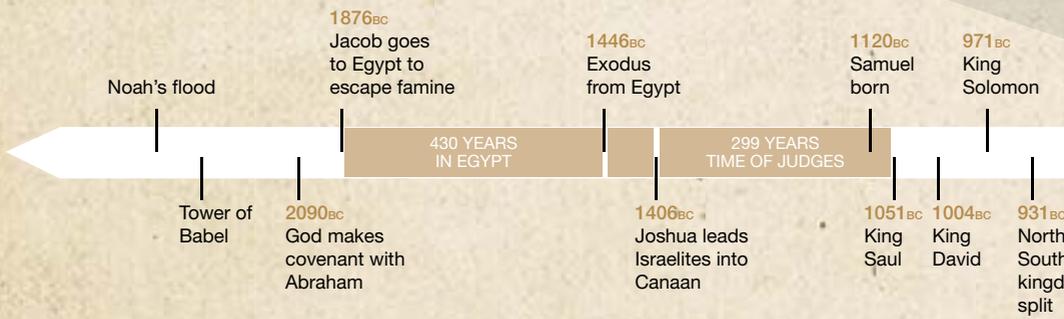
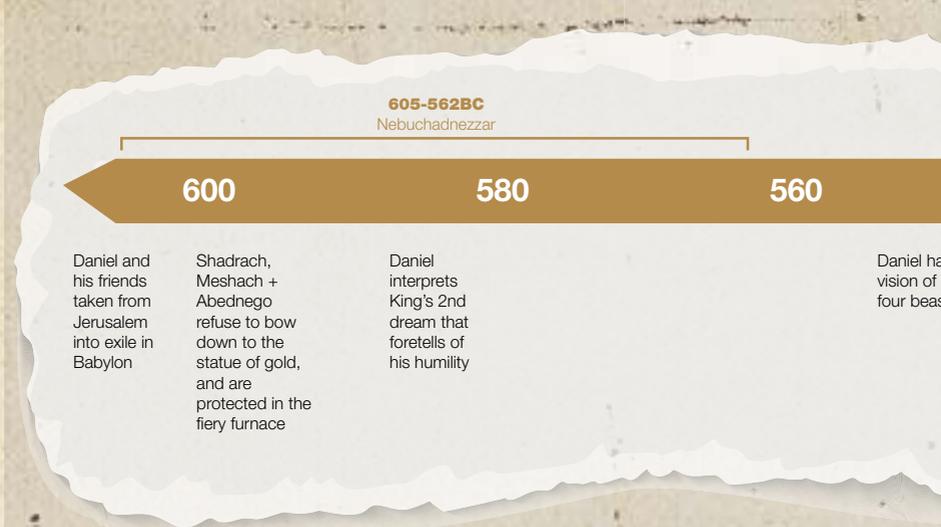
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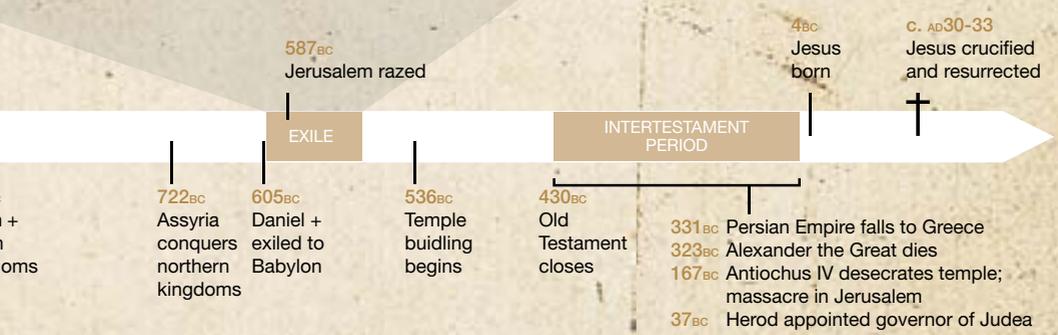
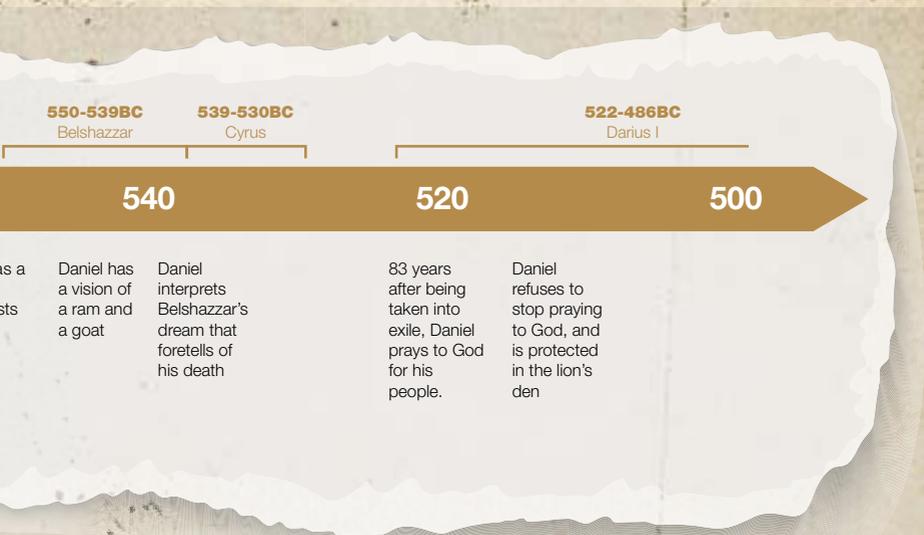
EGYPT

SUSA

BABYLON

RED SEA





Week one

FAITHFUL EXILES

Like Daniel and his friends, we are
dispossessed in our Babylon. In this study
we see how to respond when Jesus is King



NOTES

READ

Daniel 1

REFLECTION

1. Individually reflect on the passage.
What are your 2 main points from the passage? Share your reflections with the group.

THINK ABOUT IT SOME MORE

2. What was special about Daniel and his friends?
 - a) What sort of things did they accept intellectually?
 - b) What sort of things did they adopt practically?
 - c) What sort of things did they take a stand on?
3. Imagine you were an exile in Babylon. How would you feel knowing that you should make a stand for God?

WHAT ABOUT US?

Watch “The Way of Exile” by Bible Project.

4. How are we exiles in our own lives?

Read 1 Peter 2:11-17

5. How does this illuminate Daniel’s situation and ours?

Daniel and his friends lived in Babylon. We live in our version of Babylon where we are tempted to put aside our faith and conform to our culture.

6. What sort of things do you accept intellectually?
7. What sort of things do you take a stand on?
8. What plans do you need to put in place to stand firm?
9. How can we show similar loyalty to the Lord in our situation?

USEFUL LINKS

The Way of Exile



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XzWpa0gcPyo>

Exile



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xSua9_WhQFE

THIS WEEK...

THESE THINGS STRUCK ME ABOUT
HOW THIS PASSAGE SAYS I
SHOULD LIVE...

I WILL ASK:

TO KEEP ME
ACCOUNTABLE

IN RESPONSE I WILL CHANGE...

I WILL ASK:

TO PRAY THESE
THINGS FOR ME...

PRAYER

Week two

AN ETERNAL KINGDOM

This week we examine kingdoms, what distinguishes them and who ultimately guarantees power for now and for eternity.



NOTES

READ

Daniel 2:24-49

REFLECTION

1. How would you explain the story in your own words?

THINK ABOUT IT SOME MORE

2. What do you think verses 44-45 mean?
3. How does this kingdom compare to all the other kingdoms that come and go?
4. What is the significance of what happens to Daniel?
5. What is the main point of the passage for you?
6. Have another look at verses 46-47. How does Nebuchadnezzar respond and why?
7. Read Isaiah 66:2b. Does this verse and Nebuchadnezzar's response remind you of a time in your life?

WHAT ABOUT US?

8. How do we affiliate ourselves with the power structures of this world?

9. How are the worldly kingdoms attractive?

10. How are the worldly kingdoms in which you live fragile?

Read 1 Peter 2:4-12

11. Given that Jesus is the rock in verse 45, what is the connection with the 1 Peter 2 passage?

12. How does it impact your heart knowing that in Jesus you are part of a kingdom that will never be destroyed?

13. What are we to do in light of this passage?

THIS WEEK...

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Week three

STAND FIRM

This week we dig into the question “How do we stay faithful to God, even in the face of death?”



NOTES

READ

Daniel 3

REFLECTION

1. What stood out to you in this passage?

THINK ABOUT IT SOME MORE

2. What is idolatry?
3. Why is idolatry so destructive? What sort of idols are we pressured to bow down to in our own Babylon?
4. What do you think lay behind Shadrach, Meshach & Abednego's confidence in the face of certain death?
5. How are Shadrach, Meshach & Abednego exposing the insecurities of Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom? What reminds you of Jesus in this passage?
6. How would you feel facing the same challenge as Shadrach, Meshach & Abednego?

WHAT ABOUT US?

Read 1 Peter 3:13-18

7. How does Jesus help us remain faithful in the face of threats?

8. What do each of you personally need to do to be able to remain faithful exiles?

9. What opportunities are there as we remain faithful exiles?

You might like to listen/watch together to “Another in the Fire” by Hillsong United and pray in response

USEFUL LINKS

Another in the Fire



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zmNcOL7Ac5c>

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Week four

HUMBLER BY GOD

Humility and pride are two opposing responses – here we examine the consequences of following our own desires and ignoring God.



NOTES

READ

Daniel 4:19-37

REFLECTION

1. What questions came to mind as we read the passage?
2. What do we learn about Nebuchadnezzar in verse 30?
3. Why did God warn Nebuchadnezzar rather than bring immediate punishment?
4. Why does judgment for Nebuchadnezzar look so beastly?

THINK ABOUT IT SOME MORE

5. Why do warnings from God often fall on “deaf ears”?
6. Re-read verses 33-34. What did Nebuchadnezzar do to get out of his predicament?
7. What does Nebuchadnezzar do in response?

WHAT ABOUT US?

Nebuchadnezzar was king over a vast empire.

8. In what areas of your life do you feel pride?
9. In what areas of your life do you feel humble?

Read Philippians 2:5-8

10. How does this change your thinking about humility?

Read Philippians 2:1-4

11. What do you need to do to be more humble?
12. What is God convicting you of personally?

USEFUL INFO

*“**Humility** is the noble choice to forgo your status, deploy your resources or use your influence for the good of others before yourself.” or “a willingness to hold power in service for others.” - John Dickson, Humilitas*

*“**Pride** gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next man... It is the comparison that makes you proud: the pleasure of being above the rest. Once the element of competition is gone, pride is gone.” - C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity.*

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PRAYER

Week five

WRITING ON THE WALL

Individualism brings consequences. Here we examine what happened to one group of people who chose to dishonour God by doing exactly what they wanted.



NOTES

READ

Daniel 5:1-31

REFLECTION

1. Think back to what happened in last week's passage. Compare and contrast this week's and last week's passages.
2. What did we learn about God in this chapter?

THINK ABOUT IT SOME MORE

3. How does Belshazzar show contempt for God?
4. How is everyone else at the banquet implicit in this rebellion?
5. Read verses 22-24. Daniel brings a number of "charges" against Belshazzar. Write them below:

6. How do these charges relate to each other?

7. What do you feel about the harshness of what is being said in this passage?

8. Belshazzar is not humble. He is thinking more highly of himself than he ought. How often do we fall into that trap?

9. What does it tell us about the human heart?

WHAT ABOUT US

Belshazzar did whatever made him feel good.

10. In what areas of life are we seeking to feel good?

11. How often do we say “I’m the exception, the rules don’t apply to me?” (See Daniel 5:23)

Daniel sought to honour God. “Honour God who holds our life in his hands” is our key application this week.

12. How are we to think about “God’s hands”?

13. In the table below are two aspects of God’s hand that are equally true. List out what you find below:

Psalm 21:8 Psalm 75:8	Psalm 17:7 Psalm 63:8

14. How are we to hold these two truths in tension as we seek to honour God?

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Week six

FAITH UNDER PRESSURE

This week we look at what happens when
you live a faithful life.



NOTES

REFLECTION

1. For many this is a familiar story. What surprised you this time?

READ

Daniel 6

THINK ABOUT IT SOME MORE

2. In this story we get another picture of Daniel. What do we understand about Daniel's character?
3. What are people's responses to Daniel?
4. What is the foundation of Daniel's actions?
5. In what ways is Daniel's faith public and consistent?

Read Jeremiah 29:1-14

6. How was an elderly Daniel still upholding what Jeremiah instructed the exiles to do?

7. Daniel is a foreshadowing of Christ, what similarities can you see in this story to Christ?

WHAT ABOUT US

8. What emotions are people displaying in the passage?
9. What do I feel about what is being said in the passage?

Read 1 Peter 3:13-22

Reflect on this passage silently for a couple of minutes.

10. From what you've heard and discussed, ask God to show you one thing that you need to do or one area in which you need to make a change or be obedient.
11. How will you be accountable for what God has shown you?

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Week seven

AUTHORITY OVER THE BEASTS

This week we examine how to respond to the violence of this world, while knowing that God establishes and sustains his everlasting kingdom that is our home.



NOTES

REFLECTION

1. What do you recall about the Bible talk?
2. If you were Daniel what would you think?

THINK ABOUT IT SOME MORE

3. What are the parallels with King Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2?
4. Verses 9-10 introduce us to the Ancient of Days. Who is this? What does it mean?
5. Verses 13-14 introduce us to the Son of Man. Who is this? What does it mean?
6. What is the simple message from this passage?
7. How do you feel when you read verses 13-14 and 26- 27?

READ

Daniel 7

As we enter the chapters of Daniel that are known as apocalyptic literature, we have actually been prepared well by reading about the dreams in Daniel 1-6. The imagery of these dreams give us a glimpse of heavenly realities that point to Jesus as the eternal king over all.

For an overview of apocalyptic literature watch the video on YouTube "Apocalypse" by Bible Project

Apocalyptic Literature



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UNDX4tUdj1Y>

The Son of Man



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z6cWEcqxhll>

In verse 28, we see Daniel in a state of shock from what he has seen and we understand his response. We are also part of God's kingdom just as Daniel was, so the vision is for us as well.

8. How does this vision apply to us?

9. What might be the "beastly" threats to our lives in Australia?

10. How are we to respond in our lives to this vision?

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Week eight

HUMANITY'S BEST FUTURE

This week we spend time considering the future. Do we buy into the world's definitions of a good future or do we turn to God and his plans for our future?



NOTES

REFLECTION

1. How did the sermon help you understand the imagery in these chapters?

READ

Daniel 9:1-27

THINK ABOUT IT SOME MORE

2. What does Daniel understand at the beginning of the passage?
3. What does he do?
4. In verses 4-19 Daniel comes before God in repentance for his people. What does he specifically include in his prayer?

8. As Daniel prayed, he detailed the people's sin to God. How do you feel when your sin is detailed to God?

9. What is your vision for your best future? How does the life, death & resurrection of the Anointed One, Jesus, change that vision?

10. How can you live a life of repentance in response to what Jesus has done?

11. How will that impact your best future?

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Week nine

RESURRECTED FROM EXILE

This week, like Daniel, we think about the end of the exile. On what does our freedom depend?



NOTES

READ

Daniel 12

REFLECTION

1. What has God put on your heart from our journey with Daniel?
2. What might Daniel have thought about the events of his life?

THINK ABOUT IT SOME MORE

3. In verse 8, Daniel asks the question “My lord, what will the outcome of all this be” What is the response?

WHAT ABOUT US

4. How do you feel when you read verse 13?

Read Revelation 22:1-5

5. How does this flesh out what the inheritance will be for all who trust in Jesus?

6. How does this impact your heart?

7. How does this affect the way you live right now?

8. As Daniel looked back, he saw a life of exile, yet God remained faithful. What do you see when you reflect on your life as an exile?

9. What peace do you take from the book of Daniel?

10. What challenge do you take from the book of Daniel?

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**Living
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Daniel - Faithful Exiles

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