



# Finding hope as we trust our Sovereign God

CALNE FREE CHURCH

Charlie Fadipe | Our Sovereign Lord Reigns | During the Covid19 lockdown

## Welcome

Dear Friends

In this time when we are locked down so as to slow the spread of the Covid19 virus, it is worth us looking up and remembering/realising that the Lord God Almighty reigns! And wonderfully, He knows, cares and loves you. That's why looking at how Daniel, a teenager who trusts the LORD in the most treacherous and life-threatening time of the life of his country, is such a good thing for us to focus on.

In this devotional, there will be a passage to read, a simple message for you to explain to children in your house and a section where you can go deeper, if you wish. The idea is that the study is supposed to take about 10 mins and can be done with all your household. At the end of each study ask the questions: "What does this show me about God?" and therefore, "How am I supposed to respond to Him in this situation". The going deeper section is for those who wish to further study on this topic

I pray this will be a blessing to you and all in your house during this time.

## Prayer:

You may like to use this prayer (or your variation of it) at the start of this study:

*Heavenly Father,  
Blessed be your name for ever and ever. To you belong all wisdom and power. You change the times and seasons; You remove rulers and countries and empires. Yet Your Kingdom endures forever and ever. Please help me to trust You and live with Jesus as my King. Amen*

## Reading 1

## Daniel 1:1-2 □

Hmm, some strange names and something that happened a long time ago. What has this got to do with me? Patience. First, let's try and get our bearings in this passage.

Kids questions: There are 3 main characters in this passage. Who's the baddie and what does he do? Who's the King of Israel? Who hands the victory to the baddie?

Who is ultimately responsible for what happens in these verses?

Why do these events take place (look back at Deuteronomy 28:47-50)?

Why do you think Nebuchadnezzar takes the vessels of the house of God and puts them in the treasury of his own god?

So what does this show you about God?

Think this through: *It's clear from the beginning that the book of Daniel deals with the struggle between kings and God. However, God is still in control, even when the situation seems grim (is there a clearer demonstration of this than Jesus is on the cross?). How does knowing this help us as we face our own tough situation?*

Prayer ideas: Thank God for always being in control, even when it seems like He isn't. Ask Him to help you trust in Him, continually

Going Deeper: It's worth noting that Shinar (v2) is where the Tower of Babel was built (see Gen 11:1-9). The tower was a symbol of human arrogance pitted against God's sovereignty. Remember what happened? What's going to happen to Nebuchadnezzar? And all kings/rulers who pit themselves against God? What does that tell you about how God ultimately reacts to human arrogance?

## Reading 2

## Daniel 1:3-21 □

Kids questions: Daniel and his friends were teenagers when all this happened. Why do you think the Babylonians forced Daniel and his friends to change their names? Do you think they found it easy to 'fit in' with all the people in the palace, when they were so different? Why is the official afraid to do what Daniel asks when Daniel refuses to eat meat from the king's table? What does God do to protect Daniel and his friends?

As well as carrying back treasure, Nebuchadnezzar carries back the people from Israel to Babylon. What's his aim in separating Daniel and his friends from the rest of the Israelite captives and giving them training and positions in his palace?

Daniel takes the king's education, but resolves not to eat the King's food (v8). Why do you think he draws the line here?

How do we decide which issues we are prepared to accept in a society that doesn't acknowledge God and which issues we must take a stand on? How does Daniel's example show us how to go about taking a stand?

So what does this show you about God? And how do you think He wants us to respond to Him in our situation?

Think this through: *We are not much different from Daniel. We too are a long way from home. How does Daniel's example help you to live as an 'exile on the road to glory'? as Peter describes in 1 Peter 1:1-2 & 2:11 - 12 ?*

Prayer ideas: Ask God to give you the same conviction and trust as Daniel. Ask God for help to live out today, the way that pleases Him, even when it means being different from the world around you.

Going Deeper: In the Bible, names are significant. The Babylonians are called 'Chaldeans' (v4). God called Abraham to leave Ur of the Chaldeans and to go to the land of Canaan in Genesis 11:31-12:1. Daniel and his friends learning the "language and literature of the Chaldeans" signifies, in bible terms, that they have ended up right back where Abraham started! What does this teach us about what is the result of chasing after sin as God's people?

## Reading 3

## Daniel 2:1-24 □

Kids questions: Do you ever have dreams that frighten you? Here is the world's most powerful man, the king over all major nations, scared in his pyjamas!! How many different people does he get to try and tell him what his dream means? Why won't he tell them his dream? But what does God show when He reveals the king's dream to Daniel?

Why is Nebuchadnezzar's request in verse 3 unreasonable? (look at vv 7-11, 27-28)

When Daniel hears what has happened, what is his response in vv 12-19?

Take a look at vv 20-23. Which characteristics of God does Daniel praise?

What does this show you about God? How does that encourage us to respond in our situation?

Think this through: *These first 2 chapters introduce us to the battle between the religion of Babylon and the God of Israel. Clearly God is on the winning side. As you observe similar spiritual battles in the world around you, what encourages you to keep trusting God?*

Prayer ideas: Thank God for His sovereign care and control over everything in life.

Going Deeper: Note again the change of names! Daniel and his friends are referred to by their Hebrew here in Chapter 2:

Daniel ('God is my Judge') ⇔ Belteshazzar ('O Lady [wife of the god Bell], protect the king');  
Hannaniah ('Yahweh is gracious') ⇔ Shadrach ('I am very fearful of [of god]' or 'command of Aku [moon god]);

Michael ('Who is what God is?') ⇔ Meshach ('I am of little account' or 'Who is like Aku [moon god]);  
Azariah ('Yahweh is my helper') ⇔ Abednego ('Servant of the shining one [Nebo, another god])

However Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians refer to Daniel by his Babylonian-given name. Imagine how that felt; constantly being referred to as being people whose very identity is to serve foreign gods. They are exiles, living in a foreign land, but they know their true identity!

Who gives both Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel the dream? Why do you think God does this? And btw, were the enchanters right in verse 10?

## Reading 4

## Daniel 2: 25-45 □

Kids questions: who is it that saves all the magicians, astrologers, enchanters and soothsayers in Babylon? Who does Daniel say gave and can interpret the king's dream?

Have a go at drawing and labeling King Nebuchadnezzar's dream. (do it as a household)

What is the significance of each part of the image (vv. 36-45)?

What makes the fifth and final kingdom distinct from all the others (vv. 44-45)?

So what does this show you about God?

Think this through: *God lets human kings (and their kingdoms) rise and fall, but His own Kingdom lasts forever. What is the implication for your life? What are the implications for our leaders and governments?*

Prayer ideas: Ask God to help you recognise human rulers and institutions for what they are. Praise Him that living with Him means living with Him in His Kingdom which lasts forever.

Going Deeper: Whose Kingdom is going to last forever? What then are the implications for us who are part of that Kingdom because of the sovereign grace of God in Jesus Christ?

It should be obvious from this chapter that God lives outside of time. His sovereignty and providence are truths that every generation must come to terms with. Yet, they remain as 'blessed thoughts', unless they are lived out in the reality of present experience. For Daniel and his friends, these issues were literally life and death. We too need to look at our world with the same conviction, even when there is little evidence that our God reigns. How do we do that? What passages in the Bible can help you know that God is sovereignly in control of this world now and forever?

## Reading 5

## Daniel 2:46 – 3:30 □

Kids questions: When we play 'I'm the king of the Castle' what are we really saying? King Nebuchadnezzar, the king of all the known world, is playing that game with God! Who do you think is going to win? Daniel's friends know the correct answer to that, even when it doesn't seem that God is 'winning'. So what do they do when asked to bow to the image? How does God rescue them? What is this passage teaching us about God and what He wants us to do, even when it is hard?

In 2:46-49 is Nebuchadnezzar really acknowledging God as almighty or simply acknowledging Daniel (as having access to another 'god')?

Read 3:1-17. Does this section change your answer to the previous question?

As you read 3:8-23, what is the basis for Shadrach, Meshach & Abednego's defiance of the king (vv. 16-18)?

By 3:24-30, is Nebuchadnezzar acknowledging that God is God or that God is a god? What reason do you have for your answer?

So what does this show you about God? And how do you think He wants us to respond to Him in our situation?

Think this through: *Why is it easy for us humans to suppress the truth about God?*

Prayer ideas: Ask God to help you serve Him humbly. Praise God that He can deliver you from death and will raise you from the dead one day.

Going Deeper: If God demonstrates that He can keep Daniel's friends from death in the fiery furnace, why do so many people (even Christians) think that He won't raise us from the dead as He did with Jesus?

Notice the silliness of idolatry! We bow to that which cannot and will not save but don't come to the One who does. This was Israel's problem that got them into this mess of exile in the first place. In what ways do we bow to idols and what should we do about it, now?