

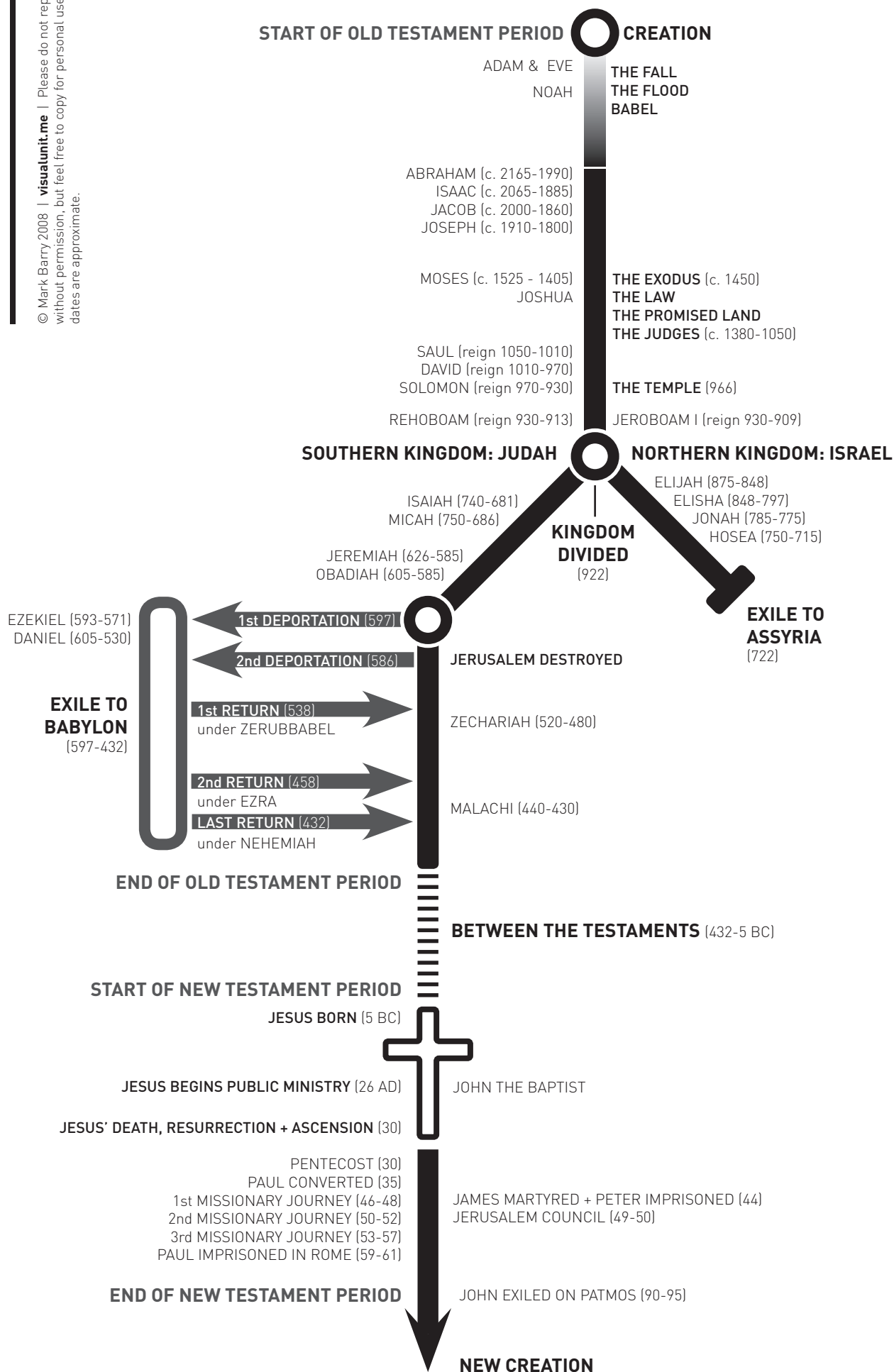


IT ' S NOT THE END
OF THE WORLD

1 1 STUDIES IN DANIEL FOR
INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS

BIBLE TIMELINE

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2020 TERM 2

PREACHING PROGRAM

JANNALI ANGLICAN CHURCH

18-19 April	Overview	It's the end of the world as we know it <i>The Endurance of God's Kingdom</i>
25-26 April	Daniel 1	In Babylon, but not of Babylon <i>Faithfulness in God's Kingdom</i>
2-3 May	Daniel 2	The King who had a dream <i>The Nature of God's Kingdom</i>
9-10 May	Daniel 3	Statues and state-run religion <i>Worship in God's Kingdom</i>
16-17 May	Daniel 4	A road from Babylon experience <i>Humility and God's Kingdom</i>
23-24 May	Daniel 5	The writing is on the wall <i>The Justice of God's Kingdom</i>
30-31 May	Daniel 6	Who's the king of the jungle? <i>Freedom and God's Kingdom</i>
6-7 June	Daniel 7	See him coming on the clouds of heaven <i>A Glorious Vision of God's Kingdom</i>
13-14 June	Daniel 9a	Confessions of a successful man <i>Prayer and God's Kingdom</i>
20-21 June	Daniel 8- 11	The rise and fall of nations <i>Turmoil and God's Kingdom</i>
27-28 June	Daniel 12	I believe in the resurrection of the dead <i>Waiting for God's Kingdom</i>

IT'S THE END OF THE WORLD AS WE KNOW IT

The Endurance of God's Kingdom

Daniel 1,9

1. What things have changed since COVID-19 this year that have made it feel like it's the end of the world as we know it? And what things have surprisingly remained the same?

2. What other events have occurred in your life that have turned everything upside-down?

The Babylonian Exile was the most difficult national disaster for the people of Judah. God's city was destroyed. God's people were scattered. Had God's promises failed? At least one third of the Old Testament wrestles with this exile in one way or another.

** Optional: Can you name any of the other books?*

Five deep questions are raised by the destruction of Jerusalem and exile in Babylon:

What has happened? (past)

Why did it happen? (past)

Where is God in all of this? (past and present)

How should we now live? (present)

Is there any hope left? (future)

3. Read Daniel 1:1-7. This is Daniel as a young man.

a. What details are included in verses 1-2? What is surprisingly emphasised and what is not mentioned?

b. What else do you find interesting in verses 3-7?

c. Which of the five deep questions does the opening of Daniel address directly? Which are hinted at? Which are you left wanting to know the answers to?

What has happened? (past)
Why did it happen? (past)
Where is God in all of this? (past and present)
How should we now live? (present)
Is there any hope left? (future)

4. Read Daniel 9:1-10. This is now Daniel as an older man.

Which of the five deep questions does the prayer of Daniel address directly? Which are hinted at? Which question are you left wanting to know the answers to?

What has happened? (past)
Why did it happen? (past)
Where is God in all of this? (past and present)
How should we now live? (present)
Is there any hope left? (future)

5. From your own knowledge, which of these question(s) do you think the rest of Daniel mostly answers?

6. We need to learn similar things to those in exile. Even though things this side of Jesus are so much better. How would you answer these questions in your life when things are turned upside-down? Which are we as Christians most clear about?

What has happened? (past)
Why did it happen? (past)
Where is God in all of this? (past and present)
How should we now live? (present)
Is there any hope left? (future)

7. What truths (or Bible verses) about God and his son Jesus do you find most strengthening when it feels like the world is turned upside-down?

IN BABYLON, BUT NOT OF BABYLON

Faithfulness in God's Kingdom

Daniel 1

1. We want to stay faithful to God. But what makes it hard to draw a line?
 - a. at work or in our education?
 - b. by ourselves or with our family?
 - c. when we are travelling?
 - d. when we are on the internet?
 - e. when we're with people we want to impress?

Read Daniel 1:1-7

2. We are introduced to the five major characters of the first four chapters of Daniel. What do we learn about: Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel, and his three friends?

3. What do you think is going on with the king's plan? Why did he chose those types of people? What do you think he hoped would be the outcome?

Read Daniel 1:8-20

4. Daniel went along with a lot already. What changes has he already endured to become more like the Babylonians? But where did he draw the line?

5. Why do you think he didn't want to eat the kings food and drink his wine? (amongst many other reasons, read Daniel 10:2-3)

6. What do you think of Daniel's plan?

7. What was the outcome?

8. Where is the Lord God explicitly mentioned in this whole story? What is Daniel teaching us about him?

9. What do you think God's intentions are for these young men? How is it different and same as that of Nebuchadnezzars?

* Optional 1: The names of the main characters are interesting. Most of their new names were after Babylonian gods. But their original names had Hebrew meanings.

Daniel means "the LORD is my judge"

Hananiah means "gift of the LORD"

Mishael means "who is like God?"

Azariah means "the one the LORD helps"

How have these characteristics of God proven true?

* Optional 2: In what ways are Daniel and his friends like the much earlier Moses growing up in Pharaoh's court? How might this be significant? (read Acts 7:22 and Hebrews 11:24-26)

10. Daniel and his friends learn a lot culturally and intellectually, but they draw the line where they think it needs to happen.

How do we need to do the same in our setting?

Where do we need to be shown faithful to God?

Where should we be flexible?

When was the last time you drew a line in the sand?

* Optional 3: Is God against his people succeeding to highly successful roles? What are the particular dangers in those positions?

14. How do you live in Babylon without becoming Babylonian?

15. Pray for each other that we'd be faithful in knowing what lines to draw in our lives

THE KING WHO HAD A DREAM

The Nature of God's Kingdom

Daniel 2

So far in the book of Daniel, it looks like God has abandoned his physical kingdom. Although last week we saw a living hope in Daniel and his three friends, we turn now to see the nature of God's kingdom.

1. When was the last time you couldn't sleep? What caused it?
2. What do you think causes world leaders not to sleep at this time?

Read Daniel 2:1-13

3. What's the initial issue upsetting Nebuchadnezzar?
4. What do we learn about his unfolding character?
5. What do we learn about the "wise-men" of his day?

Read Daniel 2:14-30

6. How does Daniel show wisdom in dealing with people in power and God himself? What lessons can we learn from him? What role do his three friends play?

Read Daniel 2:31-35

7. Before we come to the interpretation, what was the actual dream of the king?
Which features capture your attention most?

Read Daniel 2:36-49

* Optional. Last time we compared Daniel to Moses, growing up in Pharaoh's court, how is he also like Joseph?

9. What is the interpretation of:

- a. the head of gold?
- b. the rest of the body?
- c. the stone?

The most commonly held opinion identifies these as Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Roman empires.

10. How should this interpretation:

- a. have affected Nebuchadnezzar?
- b. have encouraged Daniel and his friends?
- c. impact those who follow Jesus?

11. How does this vision of God's kingdom affect us in the way we endure hardship and sleep at night?

STATUES AND STATE-RUN RELIGION

Worship in God's Kingdom

Daniel 3

1. Christian people today face persecution. What are some contemporary examples? Where does it happen most? What leads to this persecution?

Read Daniel 3:1-7

2. What picture is growing of Nebuchadnezzar's character? Why do you think he acts this way?

Read Daniel 3:8-23

3. What options do Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego have? What option would you have taken?

4. List all the reasons that these three Jews were persecuted:

- a. all the factors that relate to Nebuchadnezzar
- b. all the factors that relate to the Chaldeans ("wise-men" or "magi")
- c. all the factors that relate to the three Jews
- d. all the factors that relate to God

5. Is there anything from this list that can help us understand why even today, many Christians throughout the world are persecuted?

6. How should the story, even up to this point, encourage us to worship God?

Read Daniel 3:24-30

7. How does Nebuchadnezzar respond to the three men being saved? What does he proclaim about God?

8. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego are only recorded as saying one thing. Read Daniel 3:16-18 again. How can these words encourage you to stand firm for God?

* Optional 1. Read Matthew 4:8-11. How is Jesus' temptation in the wilderness similar and different our three Jewish men?

9. There are two key elements in the persecution of Christians. One is people opposing God. The other is a Christians' obedience, integrity and single-minded devotion to worship God only. Read 2 Timothy 3:12. What does it teach us about which Christians will be persecuted?

10. Where do you need to take a stand:

- a. in your home?
- b. in your work?
- c. in your friendship group?
- d. in our country?

12. Pray that God will keep our hearts from idolatry and that we will worship him only.

A ROAD FROM BABYLON EXPERIENCE

Humility and God's Kingdom

Daniel 4

1. How have you seen people learn humility before God? How have you learned it?

Read Daniel 4:1-3

2. Chapter 4 is an open letter Nebuchadnezzar writes to (literally) everyone on earth. What is surprising about the opening of this letter?

Read Daniel 4:4-18

3. In the visions the King of Babylon first sees and then hears.

a. What does the king first see? (10-12)

b. What does the king hear next? (13-17)

4. If you were Nebuchadnezzar, how would you have been comforted or scared by these visions?

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Read Daniel 4:19-27

5. If you were Nebuchadnezzar, how would you have been comforted or scared by this interpretation? What should have been his appropriate response?

Read Daniel 4:28-33

6. What mistake does the King make? How do people make this kind of mistake today?

Read Daniel 4:34-37

7. What deep and profound lessons does Nebuchadnezzar learn about his own life and position in the world?

8. How is Nebuchadnezzar's transformation like any other Biblical characters?

9. How is his story like any Christians you know, including yourself?

10. What do powerful and influential people you know need to learn from Nebuchadnezzar's whole letter?

11. What do I need to learn from Nebuchadnezzar's story found in this chapter?

12. Pray, amongst other things, for humility.

* Optional 1. How is Nebuchadnezzar's journey similar, yet different to Jesus Christ? (Philippians 2:1-10)

* Optional 2. I wrote a short article asking the question, "Nebuchadnezzar, will I see you in Heaven?" This article is attached.

THE WRITING IS ON THE WALL

The Justice of God's Kingdom

Daniel 5

1. Sometimes the next generation (in families and in nations) seems doomed to make the mistakes of the previous generation again and again. Where have you seen this happen? And where have people “bucked this trend”?

*Daniel has outlived Nebuchadnezzar, and now a new King rules in his place.
Read Daniel 5:1-9*

2. What details are important in Daniel's telling? Which painting captures them best? (if you are reading this on a pdf, click the title for a better view)



Rembrandt, *Belshazzar's Feast*, 1635, (National Gallery, London).



John Martin, *Belshazzar's Feast*, c. 1821; half-size sketch held by the Yale Center for British Art

3. This is the first time since chapter 1, that the vessels from the house of God are mentioned. What do you think is their significance in the story?

Read Daniel 5:10-17

4. What do we learn about Daniel's growing reputation? What do we learn about his tact and wisdom in dealing with the king?

5. What is appropriate (and perhaps ironic) about the king seeking Daniel, of all people, to read this writing on the wall? (5:2-3 and 13-14)

Read Daniel 5:18-30

6. In verses 25-28, Daniel interprets the writing on the wall. What is the heart of God's message to Belshazzar?

7. Before he interprets the writing on the wall, Daniel give a theological history lesson about Belshazzar and his predecessor Nebuchadnezzar. Why is this important background and how does it fill in the back-story to make sense of the writing on the wall?

8. Belshazzar's response is interesting. He doesn't acknowledge God, but does give gifts to Daniel. What lessons do we need to learn from what happened to Belshazzar?

9. From all of Daniel 5, what do we learn about:

a. God's opinion of human pride and humility

b. God's justice and patience

10. 1 Peter 5:5 say, "And all of you clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble." What mistakes do you need to avoid making?

WHO'S THE KING OF THE JUNGLE?

Freedom and God's Kingdom

Daniel 6

1. What would you say are the top five obstacles that you have to overcome to pray to God each day?

Read Daniel 6:1-9

2. So far, we have seen Daniel as a model of godly wisdom and the blessings he received far from his home in Jerusalem. How would you compare his wisdom to the wisdom of those who hated him? (*optional. Read James 3:13-18)

Read Daniel 6:10-15

3. What does Daniel do as soon as he hears the king's decree? why?

4. How does that compare with us and the obstacles that we face in our prayer-life? How would things be different for us if our government forbid personal prayer for a month?

Read Daniel 6:13-28

5. What happened from King Darius' perspective?

6. What happened from Daniel's perspective?

7. What encouragement can we take from this story? Read Daniel 3:16-18 again. How is this story similar to that one?

Read 2 Timothy 4:16-18.

8. Thousands of years later, as a follower of Jesus, Paul uses the language of Daniel to describe his situation. How can you use it to describe your life too?

9. Would you willing to keep praying even if meant you were executed?

10. Would you be confident that God would look after you?

11. What does the whole story of Daniel

* Optional 1. We'll see in chapter 9 an example of a prayer that Daniel prayed during the reign of the same King Darius. Why do you think Daniel faced Jerusalem when prayed? (1 Kings 8:44-45)

* Optional 2. Daniel prays three times a day. How does this discipline compare to your own prayerfulness? (Psalm 55:16-17)

SEE HIM COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN

A Glorious Vision of God's Kingdom

Daniel 7

1. When things are turned upside-down, how important is it for Christians to know God's plan for the world? What happens to us when we lose sight?

We now leave the narrative part of the book of Daniel.

He survives through the reigns of four kings:

- *Nebuchadnezzar*
- *Belshazzar*
- *Darius*
- *Cyrus*

Chapters 7-12 do not push the story forward historically, but flash-back to some of the visions, prayers and experiences Daniel himself had during the reigns of those four kings. Chapter 7 is set during the reign King Belshazzar. Bear in mind his attitude to God and the writing that was on his wall.

Read Daniel 7:1-8. The first half of the vision.

2. If you saw this vision, how would you be feeling at the sight of each of the four beasts? What do you think they symbolise?

Read Daniel 7:9-14. The second half of the vision.

3. What comfort comes in the second half of the vision?

4. What do we learn about God, and his plans for the world?

* Optional 1. How is this vision similar to Nebuchadnezzar's in chapter 2? Notice the perspective differences. Why do you think, in one, the nations are depicted as a grand statue, and in the other, grotesque beasts? How is God's kingdom presented in each?

Read Daniel 7:15-28. The divine interpretation.

5. What meaning does the interpreter give of the four beasts and horns?

6. We know that in the New Testament, Jesus is the Son of Man, but who does the interpreter say the "Son of Man" is? (Daniel 7:13-14, 17-18, 21-22, 27) How does this even better shape our understanding of Jesus as the representative of God's people?

7. How might this vision and its interpretation have been an encouragement to Daniel in exile? How might it have helped him to stand firm under all the future trials he faced in Babylon?

* Optional 2. Daniel is distressed by the vision (7:15) and even more terrified by its interpretation (7:28). Why would this be the case, when it is full of good news? How is this similar to the women who find the tomb of Jesus empty? (Mark 16:5, 6-8)

Read Mark 14:60-65.

8. We know that Jesus calls himself the "Son of Man". How is he different to all other world kingdoms and their leaders?

9. From Daniel 7, what are God's plans for Jesus and all his people? How is this a comfort to us when our world feels like it is turned upside-down?

CONFESSIONS OF A SUCCESSFUL MAN

Prayer and God's Kingdom

Daniel 9a

1. There is a famous saying that "confession is good for the soul". To what extent do you agree or disagree? When was the last time you did it?

Before we read Daniel 9, we'll consider the part of God's word that Daniel himself has just been reading. Read Jeremiah 25:8-12 and 29:10-14, written much earlier than Daniel.

2. How does Jeremiah explain what would happen to the people of Jerusalem?

3. If you yourself were reading Jeremiah while in exile in Babylon, what difference would it make to your conduct and life-direction for those 70 years?

As we turn to Daniel's prayer in chapter 9, during "the first year of Darius". Bear in mind this was not at the beginning of Daniel's time in Babylon.

- a. Daniel had already outlasted two kings.*
- b. Daniel held the position of being administrator over 1/3 of the empire.*
- c. During this king's reign, Daniel was thrown into the lion's den for praying.*
- d. Daniel is now reading Jeremiah.*

Read Daniel 9:1-19

4. What in his prayer resonates with what he read in Jeremiah?

5. This is an amazing model of prayer. What can you learn about:

a. how to praise God's character?

b. the nature and importance of true confession?

c. how to ask God for our needs?

6. What similarities and differences does being a follower of Jesus make to the way we pray? (If you are stuck consider the Lord's Prayer. Which of its ideas are reflected in Daniel 9:1-19?)

7. How can you deepen your own prayer-life based on what Daniel prays in this chapter?

*Optional. Read an article on Jeremiah 29. B = Babylonian Captivity and Our Captivity

THE RISE AND FALL OF NATIONS

Turmoil and God's Kingdom

Daniel 8-11

1. What have been some of the greatest political and international upheavals in the last ten years?
2. How do different people—Christians and non-Christians—“read these times”?

We turn now to the trickiest part of Daniel. We'll try not to get lost in the details this time around. Study them in detail yourself. Chapters 8-11 return again and again to that period of time when the nations will rule before God establishes his kingdom.

Daniel 8 is a vision of the Persian and Greek kingdoms.

Daniel 9 is the prayer of Daniel and its answer.

Daniel 10-11 is a vision of God's victory in the time of the current Persian and future Greek kingdoms to come.

In these chapters there is mention of 70 weeks or 'sevens' (The word for week is literally 'sevens'). Jeremiah had predicted that the exile would finish in 70 years, and here Daniel predicts that even though that is true, their spiritual exile would finish in another $70 \times 7 = 490$ years, which most Christians acknowledge as lining up historically with the end of the rebellion of God's people in the coming of Jesus Christ. Others see this number as purely symbolic of a long period of time.

We pick up God's answer to Daniel's prayer. This section is the key to unlocking the rest of chapters 8-11.

Read Daniel 9:20-27

3. What is the ultimate good news that the angel Gabriel gives to Daniel?

4. Before that good news comes, what hard things will happen? What questions do you have?

5. How is God's answer an appropriate response to Daniel's prayer which we saw in the last study?

6. How do you see these good things being born out in the first coming of Jesus Christ? What significance is there that the angel Gabriel broke the silence with God's people and announced the good news about Jesus' birth?

7. Jerusalem's previous destruction had already been called "a desolation" (9:2, 18) but in the future something far worse is on view, just before the end of the "seventy-weeks". One of the phrases used in these chapters is "the abomination of desolation".

a. What can we learn from Daniel about the abomination of desolation (9:27; 11:31; 12:11)?

b. Jesus uses this phrase too. Read Matthew 24:4-22. What does he mean by it?

* Optional. Christians have been divided over whether "the abomination of desolation" refers to two events where Greek and Roman leaders set up pagan idols in the holy of holies, the Roman destruction of Jerusalem, the death of Jesus himself or an event in the future. Could it be all of the above? or do you think one of these fits the description best?

8. What encouragement should Daniel hold about God's plans for the future even though these terrible days must happen first?

9. Tie everything together that you have learned from Daniel about the nature of God's kingdom. What do we need to remember in times of great political or international upheaval?

I BELIEVE IN THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

Waiting for God's Kingdom

Daniel 12

1. What difference would there be if there was no resurrection of the dead?

- a. for Christians?
- b. for ultimate justice?
- c. for the nature of God's kingdom?

Read Daniel 12:1-4

2. What do we learn here?

- a. who will be raised from the dead?
- b. how are the two types of people described?
- c. when will it happen?

Read Daniel 12:5-13. The last few verses are about timing. Like much of Daniel 8-12, the language is very similar to Revelation and the numbers might here be symbolic. A time, times and half a time is 3.5, which is half of the symbol of perfection, also the length of 'a week'. The number of days mentioned (1290 days and 1335) is close to the number of days in 3.5 years.

4. What has to happen first before the resurrection of the dead?

5. What is Daniel told he doesn't have to know and that he won't clearly understand?

6. From all of chapter 12, what is Daniel told extremely clearly that God's people must do?

*Optional. Wisdom has been such a strong theme in the whole book of Daniel. Where have you seen it in the course of the book and what does chapter 12 show the greatest reward of wisdom will be?

7. How does the New Testament teach the same truth as Daniel?

a. John 5:25-30?

b. Philippians 2:8-16?

8. What difference will it make to you, living in these very strange times:

a. that God allows kingdoms and nations to rise and fall?

b. that God's kingdom has come in Jesus Christ?

c. that God's kingdom still endures?

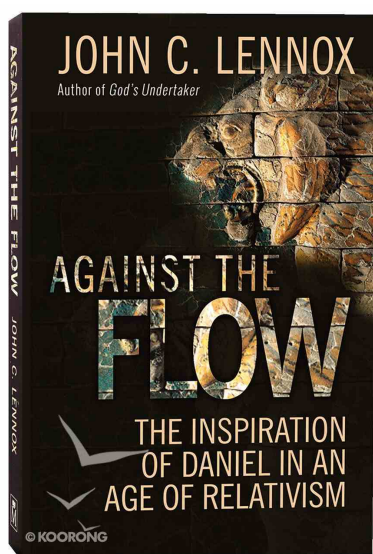
d. that eventually, the resurrection of all the dead and final judgment will occur?

AB'S SUGGESTIONS FOR DIGGING DEEPER

1. READ THE WHOLE BOOK IN ONE SITTING

There is nothing that compares with actually letting God's word speak for itself. If you've never sat down and read an entire book of the Bible, try doing this with Daniel.

2. READ A GOOD CHRISTIAN BOOK



John Lennox is an Emeritus Professor of Mathematics at Oxford University. I'm halfway through listening to his book on audible and have



found it incredible so far. He doesn't just work through verse-by-verse, but deals with the great practical and theological truths of Daniel for us. He approaches it from the perspective of a Christian apologist. [Amazon](#) / [Audible](#) / [Lectures](#).

3. LISTEN TO SOME GOOD SERMONS



[Phillipjensen.com](#) has some really helpful sermons on Daniel. I remember hearing a version of them years ago. It really shaped a lot of own my thinking.

4. READ A COUPLE OF ARTICLES I HAVE WRITTEN



[Nebuchadnezzar, will I see you in heaven?](#) (for Daniel 4)

[The Babylonian exile, and ours?](#) (for Daniel 9)

Then I praised the Most High and honoured and glorified
Him who lives forever:
For His dominion is an everlasting dominion,
and His kingdom is from generation to generation.

- Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4:34)



J A N N A L I A N G L I C A N
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