

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

SESSION 1

Book of Daniel: Introduction - PARTICIPANTS GUIDE

WELCOME

Welcome! Thank you all for signing up for this CORE Seminar on **The Book of Daniel**. This Seminar will cover the first **6 chapters of Daniel**. So, each week we'll dive into a particular section of Daniel and at the end of each participant guide you will have the Scriptural content for next week's lesson. Please read AND study ahead. This will make our time more interesting as we grow together and learn together.

QUESTION

What do we know about Daniel?

the **Book of Daniel** was one of the last books written in the Old Testament, it communicates the _____ that the story of God is building towards.

BACKSTORY

So, as we study the **Book of Daniel**, we should seek to understand the immensity, the sovereignty, and the unstoppable power of God.

- For God is the sovereign Lord
 - The One who _____ kingdoms and rulers.
 - And, also the One who brings them _____.

He is also the God who provides for His people. He allows them to continue to sing the "**Lord's song**," even when they are in a foreign land.

And last, as we study this book – at least the first six chapters – our understanding of God will grow. As we read each story of Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, the Holy Spirit will lead us to truly understand how _____ God was to His people - then, and how _____ He is to us - now.

HISTORY OF DANIEL

Daniel begins directly following the first deportation of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon in **605 BC**. [**2 Kings 24**] Babylon takes the "cream of the crop" of the peoples they conquered: the royalty; the aristocracy; the young people of wealth, talent and promise [**Isaiah 39:6-7**]– and then takes all of them off to Babylon. This includes Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

You are relocated to a new city:

- To receive a new _____.
- To learn a new _____.
- To wear different _____.
- And, receive an _____ – a Babylonian one at that.

And this whole book is about how these guys struggle to maintain _____ and _____ and _____ to God in the midst of this foreign land.

The book of Daniel is tracing the stories of how these young men navigate faithfulness to God while the culture is pushing against them. The reason we are exploring this book is because it has so much to teach us about how to remain faithful to God in a dominant culture that surrounds us.

- **A culture – with a values system – that pressures and works against an attempt to maintain faith and hope in our God.**
- Because for most of history, God's people have found themselves as the _____ – surrounded by a culture that doesn't live like us and doesn't know God like we should know Him.
- These cultural pressures are constantly pressing against us, and they create this persistent battle and struggle to answer **"What does it mean to remain faithful to God in the new and foreign culture – where everything is working against you."**

For Israel, the question they asked themselves is this, **"How can we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?"**

PSALM 137

Psalm 137 is an exile poem. It is a lament over Israel's defeat as a nation and the people's deportation 500 miles east to Babylon – where they became slaves of the Babylonians.

Derek Kidner once remarked of **Psalm 137** that **"Every line of it is alive with pain."** The psalmist starts weeping in **verse 1** and continues lamenting on through to **verse 9** and the call for ultimate justice against those who raised their hand against God's people. This is not a Psalm of joy, not a Psalm of thanksgiving.

The whole Psalm is a longing to get back to normal in a very real sense. And normal in the Old Testament was in the promised land where God had settled his people with the temple in the middle of his people, surrounded by the walls of Jerusalem, where they dwelled in God's presence continually. And they are longing for that when they're in exile.

SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read **Psalm 137:1-3**

QUESTION

How does the Psalmist describe the emotional state of the Israelites in exile?

- *Who requested that the exiles sing the "songs of Zion"?*

SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read **Psalm 137:4-6**

QUESTION

How does the Psalmist express the depth of his longing for Jerusalem?

- *What role does memory play in this Psalm, and how is it connected to the idea of identity?*

One of the most striking things about this question in **Psalm 137** is that the Psalmist does not answer the question. He never tells us how we sing the Lord's song. To answer that question, we have to look at the historical books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther. In **Nehemiah 8**, Israel is back in the land. No longer at the rivers of Babylon, they are gathered at the square in front of the Water Gate. In their midst, Ezra stands on a podium, a podium made just for this occasion, and he reads the Law, the Five Books of Moses, from morning until midday. Eyes forward, leaning in, rapt attention—this is the very Words of God that they did not hear in that foreign land.

QUESTION

Psalm 137 shows us that it is difficult to sing the Lord's song in a foreign land.

- *Do you think that we are in a position where we are required to “sing the Lord's song in a foreign land”?*
- *Are we often required or asked to do things that might go against our Christian character?*
- *How do you sing the Lord's Song?*

CONCLUSION

Outline for how we will study Daniel:

- **March 3rd: Daniel 1: Daniel's Early Years**
- **March 10th: Daniel 2: King Neb's Dream**
- **March 17th: Hangout Night**
- **April 7th: Daniel 3: Fiery Furnace**
- **April 14th: Daniel 4: King Neb's Pride and Humility**
- **April 21st: Daniel 5: The Handwriting on the Wall**
- **April 28th: Daniel 6: Daniel in the Lion's Den**
- **May 5th: Hangout Night or Summary of Daniel**