

WHAT IS YOUR BEST NEXT STEP?

Thank you for joining us on the first part of our study of the book of Daniel! Take a moment to reflect on what you've learned over the past six weeks. Ask what your best next step towards Jesus might be. Here are a few ideas:

- Print the Daniel Part II book and engage with each week's message and discussion guide as we continue in the second half of this message series.
- If you were unable to get through all of Daniel Part 1, revisit what you missed at cccomaha.org/daniel.
- Trust and follow Jesus, acknowledging him as the rightful ruler of the world, and join God's people. Let us know about your decision at cccomaha.org/madenew so that we can celebrate with you!
- Share what you've learned with family or friends.
- Find new ways to serve or contribute. To learn more about your spiritual gifts and areas where you might be interested in serving, visit cccomaha.org/serve.
- Visit CCC in person and pick up a copy of the Hub Brochure, where you can learn more about CCC ministries, classes, events, and serving opportunities.
- Visit cccomaha.info to get connected with CCC, learn about upcoming events, join a Community Group, sign up to serve, and more.

DANIEL



WHEN CULTURE AND
CONVICTION COLLIDE



DANIEL

DANIEL

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WHEN CULTURE AND CONVICTION COLLIDE

PART I

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**CONTINUE TO
DANIEL PART II**

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book contains resources for Christ Community Church's message series on the book of Daniel. Each week of the series includes pages for message notes, visual aids when applicable, and a group discussion guide.

We pray that these resources help you experience the book of Daniel and respond in obedience to encounter and become more like Jesus.

MESSAGE NOTES

Write down key questions or takeaways from each week's message. Don't hesitate to use the margins of the book for notes!

VISUAL AIDS

Some aspects of Daniel can be hard to picture or understand. Visual aids are resources for comprehending the truths in this book.

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDES

Use this guide each week to have conversation with your Community Group, friends, or family.

Interested in joining a Community Group at CCC? For more info and to sign up, visit cccomaha.info.

THE STRUCTURE OF DANIEL

CHAPTER	LANGUAGE	DESCRIPTION	FOCUS	PATTERN
1–6 STORIES				
1	Hebrew	Daniel and friends remain faithful to God in exile	Diet test	Faithfulness is exalted
2	Aramaic	A > Nebuchadnezzar dreams of four kingdoms and God’s kingdom	Dream test	<i>Visionary</i> statue
3		B > Nebuchadnezzar sees God’s faithful servants rescued	Idol test	<i>Real</i> statue
4		C > Judgment on Nebuchadnezzar	Humility test	<i>Repentant</i> king
5		C > Judgment on Belshazzar	Goblet test	<i>Unrepentant</i> king
6		B > Darius sees God’s faithful servant Daniel rescued	Lion test	<i>Real</i> animals
7–12 VISIONS				
7	Aramaic	A > Daniel has a vision of four kingdoms and God’s kingdom	Vision of four beasts and the Son of Man	<i>Visionary</i> animals
8	Hebrew	Daniel has a vision of a ram and a goat	Vision of two beasts	<i>Son of Man</i>
9		Daniel prays and is visited by Gabriel	Vision of the seventy sevens	
10–12		Daniel has a vision of Israel’s future and the Tribulation	Vision of a great war	

BABYLONIAN EXILE MAP

2 Chronicles 36:15–21



WEEK ONE DISCUSSION GUIDE

Most of the Bible reads as a story of God reclaiming his world. The book of Daniel describes a prophet's faithfulness to God and hope for the future during exile. Hundreds of years before the earthly life of Jesus, the nation of Israel—God's chosen people—had been defeated by Babylon. The first chapter of Daniel sets the scene as four Jewish exiles remained faithful to God in a foreign kingdom.

SHARE

Optional icebreaker: Hold a mock debate on why you should or should not be a vegetarian.

If you joined for this week's message, what stood out to you? Read and discuss from the below prompts. Share any other questions or reflections as you go. Optional **Dig Deeper** prompts are provided for further study.

View past messages online at cccomaha.org/messages or on CCC's YouTube channel at youtube.com/cccomaha.

READ DANIEL 1:1–7

Optional: What's your best pronunciation of "Jehoiakim" or "Belteshazzar"?

What stood out to you in this passage? What confused you?

Why is it important that "the Lord delivered" Judah's king to the Babylonians? Why did their king bring captives into his service?

Dig Deeper: In Jeremiah 25:5–9, God warned his people of this event through prophets. How did the people of Judah bring harm onto themselves?

READ DANIEL 1:8–16

What was so special about Daniel's meal plan? How were his actions more than just a diet?

God's people are called to "Love the Lord... walk in obedience... and to hold fast to him" (Deuteronomy 11:22). In what ways were Daniel's actions consistent with this call?

Dig Deeper: Read Acts 15:19–20 and Matthew 15:10–20. These passages might seem to contradict each other. How might these passages correlate to Daniel's situation in exile?

READ DANIEL 1:17–21

One interpretation of this chapter is, "If I only eat vegetables and drink water, God will make me ten times smarter than everyone." What might be a better takeaway from this passage, and how might it motivate our response to God during uncertain times?

We may not face exile in Babylon, but many people are forced into new environments today. Reflect on any experiences that someone in the group might have, such as starting a new job or moving to a new country. Compare these experiences to Daniel's situation.

What other questions do you have about what you read today?

PRAY

Together, share your requests with God.

Dear Lord, thank you for your faithfulness to your people. Help us to remain faithful to you, to know your will, and to do it. Keep us from evil. Amen.

WORLD POWERS

FORETOLD BY DANIEL



Babylon

DANIEL 2:32, 36-38; 7:4

607 BC | Babylonian exile begins
586 BC | King Nebuchadnezzar destroys Jerusalem



Medo-Persia

DANIEL 2:32, 39; 7:5

539 BC | Conquers Babylon
537 BC | Cyrus decrees return of Jews to Jerusalem



Greece

DANIEL 2:32, 39; 7:6

331 BC | Alexander the Great conquers Persia



Rome

DANIEL 2:33, 40; 7:7

63 BC | Rules over Israel
70 AD | Destroys Jerusalem

Kingdom of God

DANIEL 2:34-35, 44

Matthew 21:42-44; Micah 4; Luke 1:33; 2 Peter 1:11



WEEK TWO DISCUSSION GUIDE

In the first chapter of Daniel, four Jewish men decided to follow God even if it endangered their lives. God lovingly responded to their choice to follow him by giving them wisdom and elevating them above the other wise men in Babylon.

The second chapter continues the story and demonstrates how these four men relied on God to interpret the king's dream.

SHARE

Optional icebreaker: What is the strangest dream you've ever had?

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READ DANIEL 2:1–16

What did King Nebuchadnezzar ask the astrologers to do?

What did the astrologers believe about “the gods” in verse 11? What were the implications of their view?

How did Daniel's response differ from that of the astrologers? In verse 15, why was the king's order so “harsh” or urgent?

Dig Deeper: Read and reflect on Psalm 139:1–18. How does this view of God differ from that of the Babylonian astrologers? How does your view of God compare with this psalm?

READ DANIEL 2:17–23

When Daniel and his friends were faced with a death sentence, they reacted by praying. What do we learn about God from Daniel's prayer? How can we imitate Daniel's prayer when we pray?

Dig Deeper: Read Isaiah 40:12–24. How is God portrayed in these passages? Is your view of God more similar to the astrologers' view or Daniel's view? Explain your answer.

READ DANIEL 2:24–49

Why could Daniel do what the astrologers could not do? How did his view of God differ from the astrologers' view in verse 11?

Daniel's interpretation demonstrated that human kingdoms come and go, but God's kingdom will last forever. Why would this story have brought hope to the Jews who were living as captives in a foreign land? How does it bring hope to us today?

Dig Deeper: Read Mark 1:14–15 and Romans 16:25–27. How does the arrival of God's kingdom impact how we live today? Daniel revealed the mystery of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. In the gospel, who has revealed a greater mystery to us and why?

PRAY

Together, share your requests with God.

God in heaven, thank you for coming to earth to establish your kingdom. Help us to learn from you and obey you in our daily lives. Amen.

WEEK THREE DISCUSSION GUIDE

Everything that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego faced begged them to compromise. The threat of death, impressive music, and the many people around them screamed to “bow down!”, but God was more valuable to them than anything else.

SHARE

Consider a time when you had to make a decision quickly. What made it easy or difficult to make that decision?

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READ DANIEL 3:1–30

Have one person read the passage aloud. What do you notice? Did anything stand out that you had not noticed before? Was there anything you misremembered from hearing this story as a child?

READ DANIEL 3:1–7

Based on what you know about King Nebuchadnezzar, why did he craft this image of gold?

Why did the king demand that all the people come to the dedication ceremony? Would you have gone to the ceremony? Why or why not?

Are there idols you are being asked to bow down to right now? How might you ask God to help you remain faithful to him?

READ DANIEL 3:8–18

Why do you think that “certain Chaldeans” came forward to accuse the Jews (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego)? Talk about a time when you were tempted to hide your faith in God or a time when you were able to make it known.

In verse 14, how did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego respond when King Nebuchadnezzar asked, “Is it true?”

Dig Deeper: Read Mark 14:66–71. How did Peter respond when he was asked a similar question?

Read Daniel 3:18 again. What does this verse demonstrate about the faith of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego?

Have you ever had an opportunity to say, “I will not serve your gods”? What was that experience like?

What were the small steps of obedience that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego took before they faced the big test of worshiping the king’s idol? Are there any areas in your life where God is asking you to faithfully obey him, even in small ways?

READ DANIEL 3:19–30

Why is it important that these three Hebrew men were bound while still wearing all of their clothes?

How did King Nebuchadnezzar respond to what was happening inside the fire? What do you think Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did while they were in the furnace? Who do you think was in the furnace with them? Consider reading these verses in several translations.

When have you experienced God loosening the binds and walking with you through the fire?

What does this passage teach about God’s character?

PRAY

Together, share your requests with God.

Consider praying Psalm 27:1–14 and Isaiah 43:2 back to God.

WEEK FOUR DISCUSSION GUIDE

The book of Daniel follows the story of Israelite exiles walking faithfully with God in a different culture. The story has focused on Daniel and his friends, who worked as government officials in Babylon.

In the fourth chapter, King Nebuchadnezzar wrote about another strange dream that Daniel helped interpret and how God humbled the foreign ruler to praise the God of Israel.

SHARE

How has the book of Daniel impacted you over the past few weeks? What is God teaching you? How have you changed because of it?

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READ DANIEL 4:1–18

Who wrote this chapter? Who was the intended audience?

Why did Nebuchadnezzar react the way he did to his dream? Why did the king believe Daniel was able to interpret the dream when no one else could?

If you had a dream like Nebuchadnezzar's, what would you think it means?

READ DANIEL 4:19–27

How did Daniel respond to Nebuchadnezzar's dream?

Why do you think Daniel expressed sympathy toward the king before sharing the interpretation?

Why do you think God did this to Nebuchadnezzar? What was it intended to accomplish?

Dig Deeper: Read Proverbs 3:32–35, James 4:10, and 1 Peter 5:6–7. What is important about these passages?

READ DANIEL 4:28–37

What becomes known about Nebuchadnezzar's heart in verses 28–30?

If you had a humbling experience such as Nebuchadnezzar's, how would you respond?

"Your royal authority has been taken from you" (verse 31). God can humble a world power with a word. What does this demonstrate about God's authority?

What was the result for Nebuchadnezzar? What did he learn about God? When have you learned a similar lesson?

Dig Deeper: Read Matthew 11:25–30 and Luke 14:12–14. How is King Jesus different than Nebuchadnezzar?

PRAY

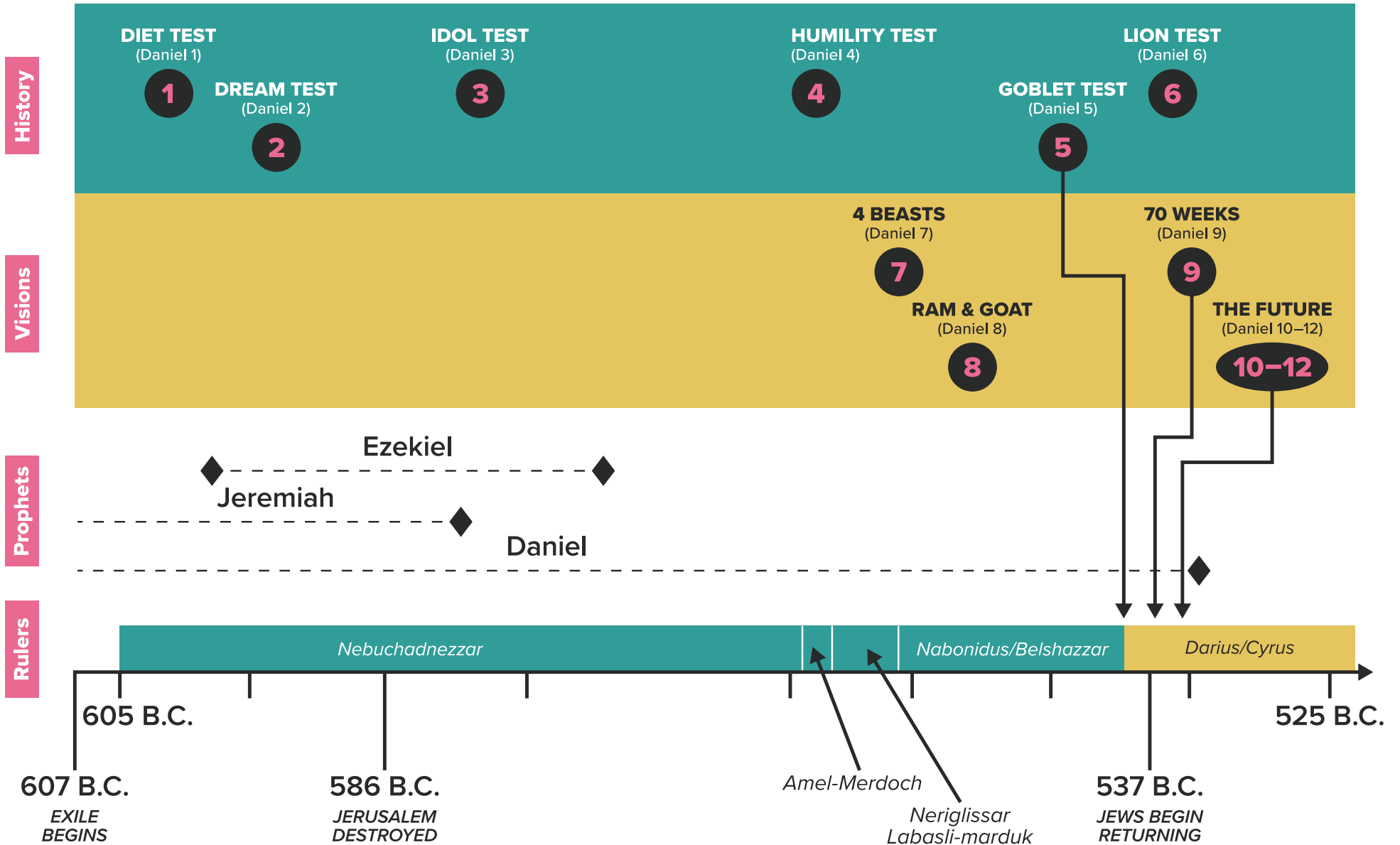
In one of his sermons, C. H. Spurgeon wrote:

*We do not worship enough, my brethren. Even in our public gatherings we do not have enough worship. O worship the King! Bow your heads now—bow your spirits rather, and adore him that liveth for ever and ever. Your thoughts, your emotions, these are better than bullocks and he-goats to be offered on the altar: God will accept them. Worship him with lowliest reverence, for you are nothing, and he is all in all.**

Together, share your requests with God. Praise God for his power and majesty and ask him to humble your hearts.

* Spurgeon, C. H. (September 4, 1870). *The Unconquerable King*. Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington, London, United Kingdom.

OUTLINE OF DANIEL



WEEK FIVE DISCUSSION GUIDE

A key theme of the book of Daniel is God’s sovereignty over our future and destiny. Daniel 5 teaches about honoring God and following his commands. It also demonstrates that there are consequences for disobedience. This truth is played out in the story of King Belshazzar and “the writing on the wall.”

SHARE

What comes to mind when you hear the proverbial saying, “I can see the writing on the wall”? What is meant by this? Is it ever a good thing? Can you think of any examples of this from your own life?

If you joined for this week’s message, what stood out to you? Read and discuss from the below prompts. Share any other questions or reflections as you go. Optional **Dig Deeper** prompts are provided for further study.

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READ DANIEL 5:1–9

In this passage, twenty-three years had passed since the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4. In Daniel 5, King Belshazzar was the ruler of Babylon and threw a huge party for his nobles, wives, and concubines. What stands out to you about this party?

What is the difference between blasphemy and sacrilege? In what ways did Belshazzar commit both? Reflect upon and repent of any times you might have blasphemed God or committed sacrilege (*this is just between you and the Lord, but feel free to share if you feel called*).

What were the consequences? How did Belshazzar respond? How would you respond if you saw a disembodied hand writing on the wall?

From whom did he solicit help? What were the results?

READ DANIEL 5:10–17

Daniel was called upon to read the writing on the wall when all the other diviners and sages could not.

How was Daniel described by the queen? Why is this significant?

How did Daniel’s response to the king’s promises of power and wealth enhance his credibility?

Who are people of “insight and intelligence and wisdom” who can speak truth to you?

READ DANIEL 5:18–30

What sins had Belshazzar committed? What words were written on the wall? What did the individual words mean? How did the prophecy come true?

Dig Deeper: Read Daniel 4. Describe the similarities and differences between King Nebuchadnezzar and King Belshazzar. Why is this significant? In what ways can we be like these two kings? What can we learn from them?

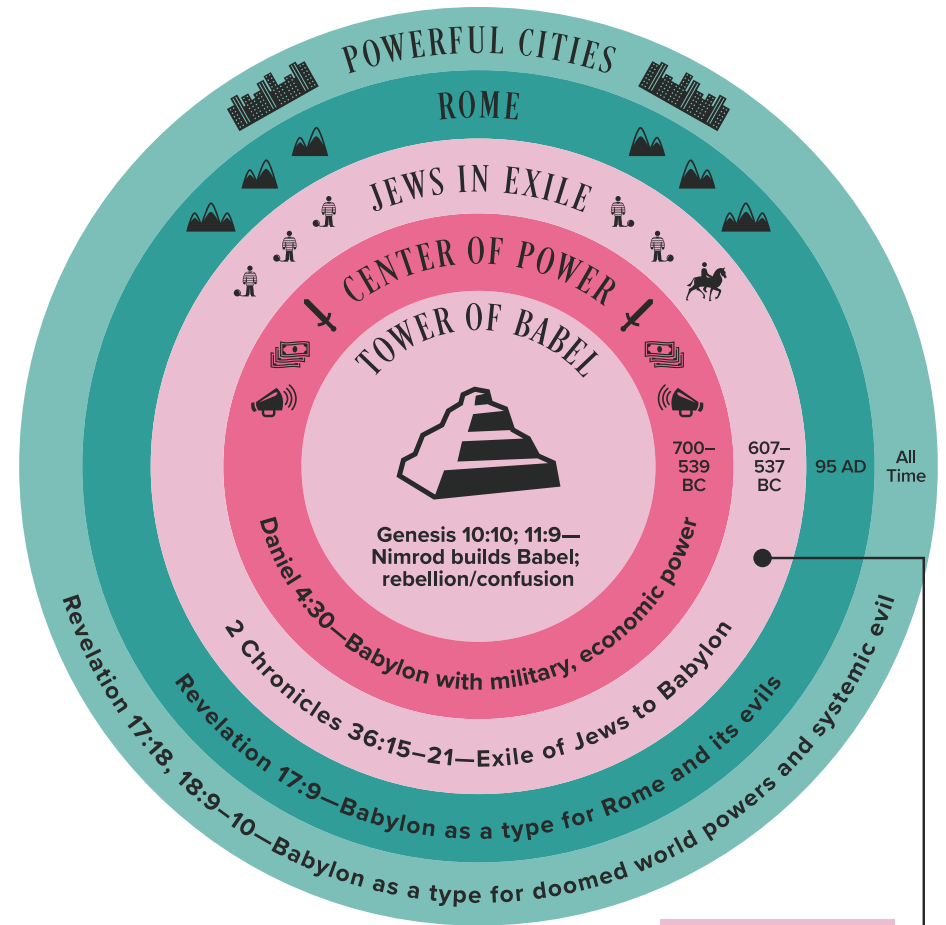
What is your key takeaway from Daniel 5? How do you plan to apply its truths in your life?

PRAY

Share your prayer requests with the group.

Lord, we thank you for your love and faithfulness, and for the times you correct our behaviors. Help us to always give you the honor you deserve. Help us to remain faithful to you and to maintain hope in difficult circumstances. We love you. Amen.

BABYLON THROUGHOUT THE BIBLE



- HISTORY
- BABYLON AS A TYPE

- Books Written in Babylonian Exile**
- Esther
 - ½ of Jeremiah
 - Lamentations
 - Ezekiel
 - Daniel

WEEK SIX DISCUSSION GUIDE

In the sixth chapter of Daniel, Darius the Mede took over as king after the demise of Belshazzar. He appointed political leaders, including satraps, who were provincial governors.

Where political corruption and scheming were prevalent, Daniel shone as an example of one who was faithful to the end.

SHARE

Optional icebreaker: What is the closest encounter you have had with a wild animal?

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READ DANIEL 6:1–5

Daniel distinguished himself by his exceptional qualities. How do you imagine others would have described Daniel? What character qualities do you think were present in Daniel?

What one thing did the other administrators and satraps find to use against Daniel as they plotted against him?

READ DANIEL 6:6–18

In the New International Version of the Bible, the rulers who plotted against Daniel were referred to as “a group” three times in just ten verses. Describe how this group manipulated Darius and planned to trap Daniel.

Dig Deeper: The decree by Darius was irrevocable, which was repeatedly emphasized. Why was this important in Daniel's story?

Describe a time you felt “the group” stood against you, but you remained faithful to God. Consider whether there have been times when you caved to the pressure of “the group” rather than remaining faithful to God.

A stone was placed over the mouth of the lions' den after Daniel was thrown into it. What do you imagine Daniel thought at this moment?

READ DANIEL 6:19–28

Darius was overjoyed to find Daniel alive and unharmed in the morning. The false accusers were harshly punished in accordance with Persian custom. Darius credited God for Daniel's rescue and proclaimed God's greatness. What was Darius' new decree (verse 26) and what impact might this decree have had on the kingdom?

Darius had been reluctant to penalize Daniel, wanting to save him. How might Daniel's story have changed if he had been saved from the decree's penalty? Would God have been more glorified if he had saved Daniel from going to the lions, or was he most glorified by saving Daniel in the midst of the lions as he did?

How does Daniel's example of faithfulness in uncertain times motivate you to live for God in our world today? What is the next step of faithfulness to which God might be calling you? How does Daniel's story bring you hope amid your proverbial lions?

PRAY

Reflect on Darius' words about God in verses 26–27 and glorify God in your heart as you pray.

Dear Lord, we trust in your faithfulness when we walk through difficult circumstances. Help us to honor you by remaining faithful when we are surrounded by challenges.