

— A STUDY IN DANIEL —

# the PLACE to BE



WHERE GOD RULES & HIS PEOPLE STAND



**Daniel 1** **2**

**Daniel 2** **6**

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# STAND AND BE TESTED

Daniel 1

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## MAIN POINT

The people of God can stand firm because there is nowhere outside of God's rule. While Nebuchadnezzar captured Daniel and brought him to Babylon, it was God who was ultimately in control. What might have seemed like a chaos in Daniel's life was actually the providence of God.

## TEXT

1. Read Jeremiah 25:8-14. What context does this bring to Daniel 1:1-2? Why is it significant that the text says "the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand"?

*(Leader help: Jeremiah 25 shows that Judah's exile was not ultimately Babylon's triumph, but God's judgment and discipline. Nebuchadnezzar is powerful, but he is not ultimate. Daniel 1 opens with what looks like catastrophe: Jerusalem conquered, the king defeated, temple vessels carried away. But Daniel tells us how to interpret it: "the Lord gave." This means exile is not chaos, or an accident. God is sovereign even over disruption, loss, and judgment. The chapter begins by showing that Daniel is not mainly about Babylon's power, but about God's rule*



over kings and kingdoms.)

2. In verses 3-5, what was Nebuchadnezzar's intent in taking Daniel and others? How does this contrast with verse 9 and verse 17?

*(Leader help: The king intended to teach them the culture and language of Babylon making them citizens and servants of Babylon. But God gave them wisdom and had compassion on them. The king intended to assimilate them, but God intended them to be spiritually formed by Him.)*

3. How does God show favor to Daniel and the others in verses 17-21? How does this show that the Kingdom of God is not like the Kingdom of Babylon?

*(Leader help: God gives them wisdom, skill, and understanding so that they are found "ten times better" than Babylon's wise men. They do not succeed through compromise or worldly wisdom, but through faithfulness and God's grace. Babylon takes them and renames them, but God gives them grace and sustains them.)*



## **APPLICATION**

1. Have you ever found yourself in a difficult position where you did nothing obvious to get there? How does Daniel 1 help you interpret that kind of hardship?
2. In what areas of your life have you felt more formed by culture than by God? How does the culture around us try to reshape our identity, desires, habits, or loyalties?
3. Daniel “resolved” before pressure came. What spiritual practices help form our convictions before external pressure shows up?
4. When is it right and good to refuse submission to culture and authority? How do we draw the line between obedience and sinful compromise?

## **PRAYER**

Praise God that he rules over kings, kingdoms, exile, disruption, and every place his people feel out of place. Be specific about where you see his sovereignty in your life.

Pray for the areas where you feel pressure to be formed by the culture around you. Ask God to



give you wisdom, courage, and faithfulness.

Confess the ways you have allowed culture to shape your identity, desires, habits, or loyalties more than God. Ask the Lord to renew your resolve before pressure comes.

# STAND ON GOD'S WORD

Daniel 2

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## MAIN POINT


The people of God can stand on God's Word because God reveals what human wisdom cannot. Babylon's wisdom collapses when faced with mysteries, but God establishes a kingdom that cannot crumble or be destroyed.

## TEXT

1. In verses 1-13, what does Nebuchadnezzar's demand reveal about the limits of Babylon's wisdom? Why is it significant that the wise men say no one can reveal this except the gods?

*(Leader help: Babylon's wise men had knowledge, status, and religious power, but they could not reveal what only God knows. Their confession is almost right: no human being can reveal the mystery. But Daniel shows that the true God is not distant or silent. Babylon's wisdom fails under pressure, but God's wisdom speaks.)*

2. In verses 14-23, what is Daniel's first response to the crisis? What does this teach us about standing on God's Word?



(*Leader help:* Daniel responds with wisdom, gathers his friends, and seeks mercy from God. He does not pretend to have answers he does not have. He prays, receives, and then praises God before acting.)

3. In verses 27-30 and 44-45, how does Daniel interpret both the dream and his own role? What does the stone “cut without human hands” reveal about God’s kingdom?

(*Leader help:* Daniel refuses to take credit and points to “a God in heaven who reveals mysteries.” The statue shows kingdoms that look impressive but are temporary and fragile. The stone is not made by human hands, meaning God’s kingdom is not built by human power. It comes from God and it destroys every rival kingdom.)




## **APPLICATION**

1. Where do you most often look for certainty when life feels confusing or out of control? How can even seemingly good human wisdom give us a false foundation?
2. Daniel received wisdom from God but refused to take credit for it. What giftings, areas of influence, or successes are you tempted to take credit for? What does it look like to give God credit for everything in your life?
3. The kingdoms of this world look impressive but have feet of clay. What worldly sources of power, success, or control are Christians most tempted to treat as more permanent than they really are?

## **PRAYER**

Praise God as the God of heaven who reveals mysteries, gives wisdom, and establishes a kingdom that will never be destroyed.

Pray for the areas where you feel confused, pressured, or where you don't know what to do next. Ask God for mercy, wisdom, and the faith to seek him before you act.



Confess the ways you have trusted human wisdom, worldly security, or your own abilities more than God's Word. Ask the Lord to help you stand on what he has revealed.

# STAND WHERE CHRIST IS

Daniel 3

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## MAIN POINT

The people of God can stand faithfully because the safest place to be is not always the place without hardship, but the place where Christ is present. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did not know whether God would deliver them from the fire, but they knew they could not bow. Their faithfulness was not built on guaranteed rescue, but on the worthiness of God.

## TEXT

1. Read Daniel 2:44-45 and Daniel 3:1. How does Nebuchadnezzar's golden image seem to be a response to the dream from Daniel 2?

*(Leader help: In Daniel 2, God revealed that the kingdoms of the world are temporary and will be crushed by his eternal kingdom. Nebuchadnezzar responds by building an image of gold, as if to declare that Babylon will not fall. The statue is an act of resistance against God's word.)*



2. In verses 4-7, what kind of pressure is being placed on the people? Why is the repetition of “peoples, nations, and languages” significant?

(Leader help: The king demands public worship and total conformity. The phrase “peoples, nations, and languages” shows an empire trying to unite the known world around idolatry through pressure, spectacle, and threat.)

3. What do Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego confess in verses 16-18? What does the phrase “but if not” reveal about their faith?

(Leader help: They believe God is able to deliver them, but they do not make obedience dependent on being delivered. “But if not” means their faithfulness is not conditional. They worship God because he is worthy, not because they are promised the outcome they want.)

4. In verses 24-30, how does God meet them in the fire? How do their circumstances become a witness of God’s grace?

(Leader help: God does not keep them from the furnace, but he meets them in it. The fourth figure shows that God is present with his people in suffering, ultimately pointing us to Christ, who enters suffering with and for his people. Christ takes the circumstances of his people and makes His own glory and grace known.)




## **APPLICATION**

1. Where do you see Christians “bowing” to things other than Christ?
2. Where are you tempted to “bow” to something other than God? What areas of your life do you feel tempted to remain quiet, compromise, or even join in with things you know you shouldn’t?
3. How does knowing Christ is present in suffering change the way we endure hardship? What changes if the “place to be” is not the safest place, but the place where Christ is?
4. Do you find it harder to take a stand in the big moments of obvious pressure, or in the small, ordinary areas of daily faithfulness? Why?

## **PRAYER**

Praise God that he is worthy of worship whether he delivers us or meets us in difficult times. Be specific about areas where you’ve experienced him deliver you or meet you in hard times.

Pray for courage in the places where you feel pressure to compromise. Be specific about the areas where you have felt tempted.



Confess the ways you have bowed to fear, approval, comfort, or cultural pressure. Ask the Lord to strengthen your resolve and help you stand where Christ is.

# STAND LOW

Daniel 4

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## MAIN POINT


The people of God can stand faithfully because God rules over the kingdoms of men. Pride makes us stand tall in our own strength, but grace brings us low so that we might truly see God, repent from our sin, and glorify him.

## TEXT

1. What is unique about Daniel 4 compared to the previous chapters? Why is it significant that Nebuchadnezzar tells this story in his own words?

*(Leader help: Daniel 4 reads like Nebuchadnezzar's testimony. The same king who conquered Jerusalem, built the golden image, and demanded worship now publicly declares what God has done to humble him. This shows us that God is not only ruling over kings from the outside, but He is able to bring even the most prideful kings low and He can turn their mouths to praise Him.)*

2. In verses 10-18, what does Nebuchadnezzar see in his dream? What does the tree represent?



*(Leader help: The tree represents Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom: great, visible, powerful, and providing shelter to many. But the tree is cut down by command from heaven. Babylon may look strong and permanent, but God rules over it.)*

3. What repeated truth does God teach Nebuchadnezzar in verses 17, 25, and 32? How does Nebuchadnezzar finally respond in verses 34-37?

*(Leader help: The repeated truth is that “the Most High rules the kingdom of men.” Nebuchadnezzar is humbled until he lifts his eyes to God. Only then does his reason return, his kingdom is restored, and his pride is turned into praise. God’s discipline is severe, but it is also merciful because it brings him low enough to finally see correctly.)*



## **APPLICATION**

1. Where do you see pride most clearly in the world around us? What kind of greatness do people most want to be known for?
2. Where are you most tempted to stand tall on your own merits? In the past, where have you seen yourself fail in this area?
3. Daniel was grieved by the judgment of Nebuchadnezzar. How does compassion change the way we speak to people who might seem proud or resistant to God?
4. Is humility something we choose, or something God has to bring us into? How do we practice humbling ourselves before God while also asking him to expose the pride we cannot see?

## **PRAYER**

Praise God as the Most High who rules over all things and in all areas. Be specific about areas where you need to be reminded that he is still in control.

Pray for humility in the areas where you are tempted to stand tall in your own strength.

Confess the ways pride has shaped your own life and ask that God would, in grace and mercy, replace your pride with gratitude.

