

WORKBOOK

DISCOVERING

DANIEL

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FINDING OUR HOPE IN GOD'S
PROPHETIC PLAN AMID GLOBAL CHAOS

AMIR TSARFATI

WITH DR. RICK YOHN

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HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

What should you look for when you open your Bible? How do you draw out the meaning from what you are reading? And how do you make it work in your life?

Over the years of teaching people how to study the Scriptures, we have refined the process and will be using the following fourfold approach to the book of Daniel as spelled out in this chart.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE YOURSELF

1. CAPTURE THE SCENE (What do I see?)
2. ANALYZE THE MESSAGE (What does it mean?)
3. COMPARE THIS CHAPTER WITH THE REST OF SCRIPTURE (How is it supported elsewhere in the Bible?)
4. EXECUTE (How does this affect my life?)

CAPTURE THE SCENE (What do I see?)

This is the observation stage. As you read the Scriptures, you want to examine the passage with a series of questions, including, What am I seeing? What am I feeling? Who is speaking? Who are the main characters in the passage? What is he (or are they) saying? Why is he saying what he is saying? When is this situation taking place? Where is it occurring?

ANALYZE THE MESSAGE (What does it mean?)

At this stage, you want to dig a bit deeper and see what you can learn from the passage. What teaching is present here? What instructions am I being given? What is the intent of this passage?

**COMPARE THIS PASSAGE WITH THE REST OF SCRIPTURE
(How is it supported elsewhere in the Bible?)**

Our understanding of God's Word is always enhanced when we look to the surrounding context or parallel passages. There is much to gain when we examine comparable stories or teachings in Scripture.

EXECUTE (How does this affect my life?)

This is the application stage. Once we let the passage speak for itself and understand it, we're ready to search for any life lessons that might be present in it. At this point, we ask, What can I learn about God or Christ? What doctrine or principle is taught here? And how can I take these lessons to heart so they influence how I think and live?

With these guidelines in place, let us now begin our study of Daniel!

LESSON 1

SETTING THE STANDARD

DANIEL 1

God had been exceedingly patient.

Some 120 years earlier, judgment came down upon the northern kingdom of Israel. Prophet after prophet had warned the people to turn from their wickedness. But they didn't listen. With brutal force, the armies of Assyria descended upon the northern kingdom, and took the Hebrews captive into exile and slavery.

And now, the southern kingdom of Judah faced a similar fate. Judgment was looming. The prophets had been ignored. The people had repeatedly spurned God. At last, the Lord said, "Enough!"

Among the Jewish people, Daniel was a rare exception. He was one of the few who had remained loyal to God. He also understood the threat posed by the Babylonian armies. He knew they were ruthless and took pity on no one, whether a baby, a mother in distress, an old man, or a woman—none mattered. He knew that what the Assyrians had done to the northern kingdom, the Babylonians would do to the southern. They would destroy the city of Jerusalem and the temple. And they would pillage everything of value, taking these treasures back to Babylon along with the captives.

Daniel was among those taken into exile. He and his fellow Hebrews lost everything. But King Nebuchadnezzar and his soldiers could never take

away Daniel's love and commitment to the Lord. This young Hebrew had a relationship with God that was unusual among other men of his generation.

Growing up, Daniel most likely had been trained in the Torah and other writings of Scripture. This would include the book of Jeremiah, which would come in handy many years later. He was also aware of God's many promises to Israel, and he knew his people's history.

Though Daniel's heart was broken by what he saw in the chaos surrounding him, he accepted that God must have allowed this to happen. He may have wondered why God did not intervene and stop the horrible onslaught carried out by King Nebuchadnezzar. After all, as the prophet Habakkuk had said, the Babylonians were "a bitter and hasty nation which marches through the breadth of the earth, to possess dwelling places that are not theirs. They are terrible and dreadful" (Habakkuk 1:6-7).

But Daniel left that matter up to God.

One "possession" Daniel could take with him to his foreign home was the memory of those who came before him—men of God who had persevered through great difficulty without compromise. He would have heard of Job, whose life was turned upside down by Satan, yet he did not curse God. Though Job's friends and even his wife rebuked him, Job was steadfast. In the end, God honored Job by giving him twice as much as he had before everything was taken away.

Daniel would also have known about Noah, who found grace in the eyes of the Lord because he was a man of righteousness living in a degenerate world. On a planet that had never seen rain, Noah set about building a large boat. This surely puzzled his onlookers. But Noah's obedience ended up saving him, his wife, his sons, and their wives. Though water literally destroyed Noah's world, God gave him and his family a new beginning.

Then there was Joseph, who was hated and rejected by his brothers and sold into slavery. After being falsely accused by his master's wife, he was thrown into prison. There, he interpreted the dreams of two fellow prisoners, who quickly forgot what he had done for them. But later, he was called upon to help interpret dreams that had bothered the Pharaoh. And God honored Joseph by making him the number two ruler in Egypt.

Though Nebuchadnezzar could take away the familiar, comfortable, and

beautiful amenities of Jerusalem—a great city set on a hill—he could never take away what counted the most in the heart of this young man we know as Daniel.

Daniel and some of his friends were forcibly removed from their homes and surroundings to live in a faraway city filled with spiritual darkness, depravity, and demonic worship. Life took the most dramatic turn possible for them.

Yet they did not let their circumstances dictate how they responded. Daniel and his friends did not respond with fear to the unknown. They trusted that God would sustain and preserve them. As we make our way through the book of Daniel, we will see this trust on display, and learn how their example can help us today.

CAPTURE THE SCENE (What do I see?)

Using your Bible, answer the following questions.

1. What did King Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian army do to Jerusalem and the treasures in the house of God, the temple (Daniel 1:1-2)?

2. Upon returning to Babylon, which of the Hebrew captives did Nebuchadnezzar want brought to him, and what qualifications were they expected to meet (verses 3-4)?

3. For what purpose did Nebuchadnezzar want these captives, and how long would their training period last (verses 4-5)?

9. What was the short-term result of the test (verse 15)? And the long-term result (verse 16)?

10. Who enabled Daniel and his friends during their training period (verse 17)?

11. After all the training was completed, what did King Nebuchadnezzar find out about Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah (verses 18-20)?

ANALYZE THE MESSAGE (What does it say and mean?)

Using both your Bible and your copy of the book *Discovering Daniel*, answer the following questions.

1. How long of a journey was it for Daniel and the other Jewish exiles from Jerusalem to Babylon (see page 22 in *Discovering Daniel*)?

7. On page 35 of *Discovering Daniel*, we read, “Every decision as to whether we sin or not is a big one, because every sin is big.” Why is this true?

**COMPARE THIS PASSAGE WITH THE REST OF SCRIPTURE
(How is it supported elsewhere in the Bible?)**

1. How does God call His people to live with regard to the world?

- a. Deuteronomy 14:2—

- b. 2 Corinthians 6:17-18—

- c. 1 Peter 2:9—

2. What does Scripture say about those who engage in compromise?

- a. James 4:4—

b. 1 John 2:15—

3. According to Hebrews 7:26, what did Moses give up when he lived a separated life?

4. What principle does Matthew 6:24 teach about compromise?

5. What questions should we ask ourselves when confronted with a choice or decision?

EXECUTE (How does this affect my life?)

1. What are some ways that we attempt to justify compromise?

CLOSING THOUGHTS

In the times when we find our world turned upside down—as happened with Daniel and his friends—we’re prone to ask: Where is God when bad things happen to good people?

That question has been asked by countless people through the ages. When we are going through tough times, we may wonder, *Is God aware of my situation? If so, why doesn’t He stop it and make things better?*

In the times when we doubt God is with us, it’s helpful to remember what happened to Daniel and another servant of God when they found themselves in difficult circumstances.

In Daniel’s case, we read that when Daniel was faced with a choice between compromise (eating the king’s food) or conviction (abstaining from the king’s food), “*God had brought Daniel into the favor and goodwill of the chief of the eunuchs*” (Daniel 1:9).

And back when Joseph was unjustly thrown into prison after being falsely accused of seducing Potiphar’s wife, “*the LORD was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison*” (Genesis 39:21).

In both situations, God was right there *with* His servants. Though they found themselves in tough situations, we see God at work *within* their circumstances.

So when we find ourselves asking, Where is God?, He is right there by our side. He has not gone away. We might not *feel* that He is near, but our feelings should never dictate our faith. God has promised, “I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Hebrews 13:5).

No matter what situation we face, God is faithful. He always has been, and always will be.