

KINGS WILL BOW

DANIEL 1-6



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LETTER

Dear Church,

Many around the world are experiencing growing concerns about the future due to things like strained family relations, increasing cost of living, cracking societal cohesion, and heated political friction. This feeling of worry naturally finds its way into Christians, into us here at WBC. However, when it comes to facing the unknown, the standout difference between those who know God and those who don't is *assurance*. We know our God is sovereign. We know he is in control.

Like our world today, there are two types of characters in the first six chapters of Daniel: those who know God, and those who don't. Without fail, Daniel and his friends respond to their dire circumstances with absolute confidence in God, while the kings vary between hubris, contempt and blind hope. But what we see again and again across in these chapters is that God is in control.

Our hope and prayer for this series is that we'll all receive a consistent and healthy reminder of God's sovereignty. That we'll know that through all the worry, pain, distress and uncertainty in our world, God is bringing all things to their resolution in Christ according to his providence.

Your brother in Christ,

Michael Parker

"FOR HE IS THE LIVING GOD
AND HE ENDURES FOREVER;
HIS KINGDOM WILL NOT BE
DESTROYED, HIS DOMINION WILL
NEVER END. HE RESCUES AND
SAVES; HE PERFORMS SIGNS
AND WONDERS IN THE
HEAVENS AND ON THE EARTH."

DANIEL 6:26B-27A

KEY DATES FOR TERM 2

Monday 5th May - The Gospel Coalition public event

Tuesday 13th May - Prayer and Praise Night

Saturday 17th May - Men's Breakfast

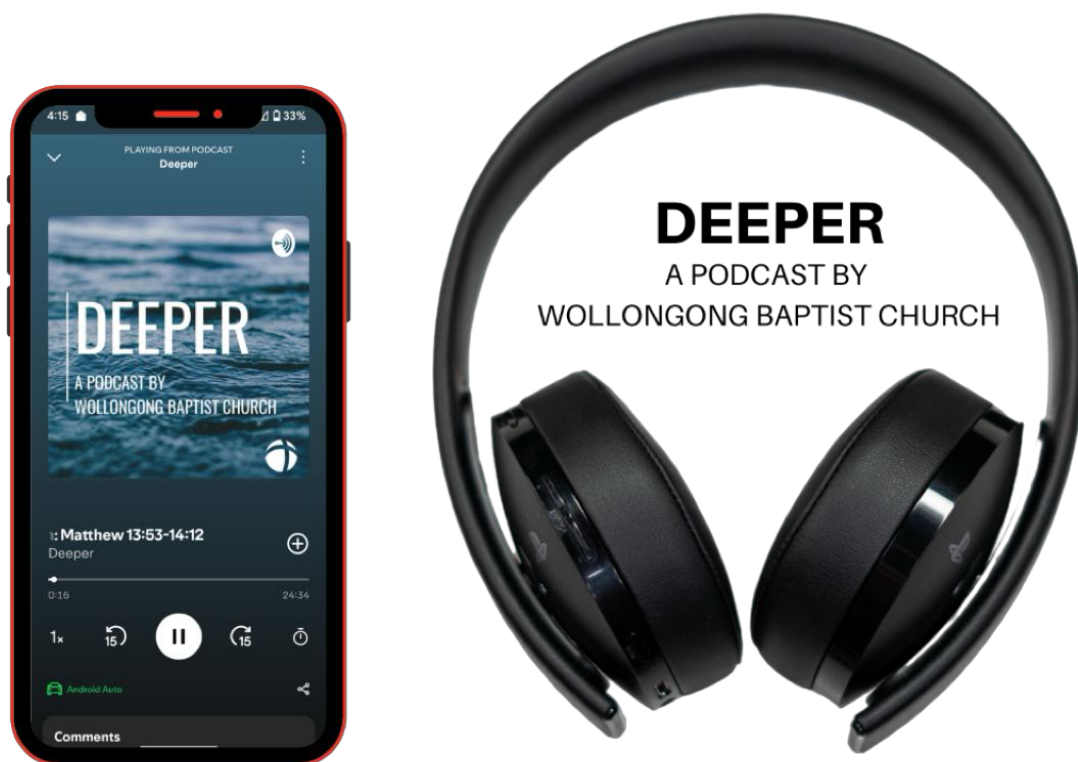
Saturday 24th May – Wollongong Women's

Conference

Tuesday 27th May – WBC Quarterly Church Meeting

Saturday 21st June – Women's Breakfast

Saturday 5th July – Budgeting Workshop



Have you listened to the Deeper podcast? Each week we dive deeper into the Bible as our pastors are interviewed about the Bible passage preached on Sunday. Deeper gives us space for follow-up questions. The book of Daniel can feel difficult to navigate, so tune in this term as we dive deeper into this rich part of God's Word.

Listen on the church website or also available at:



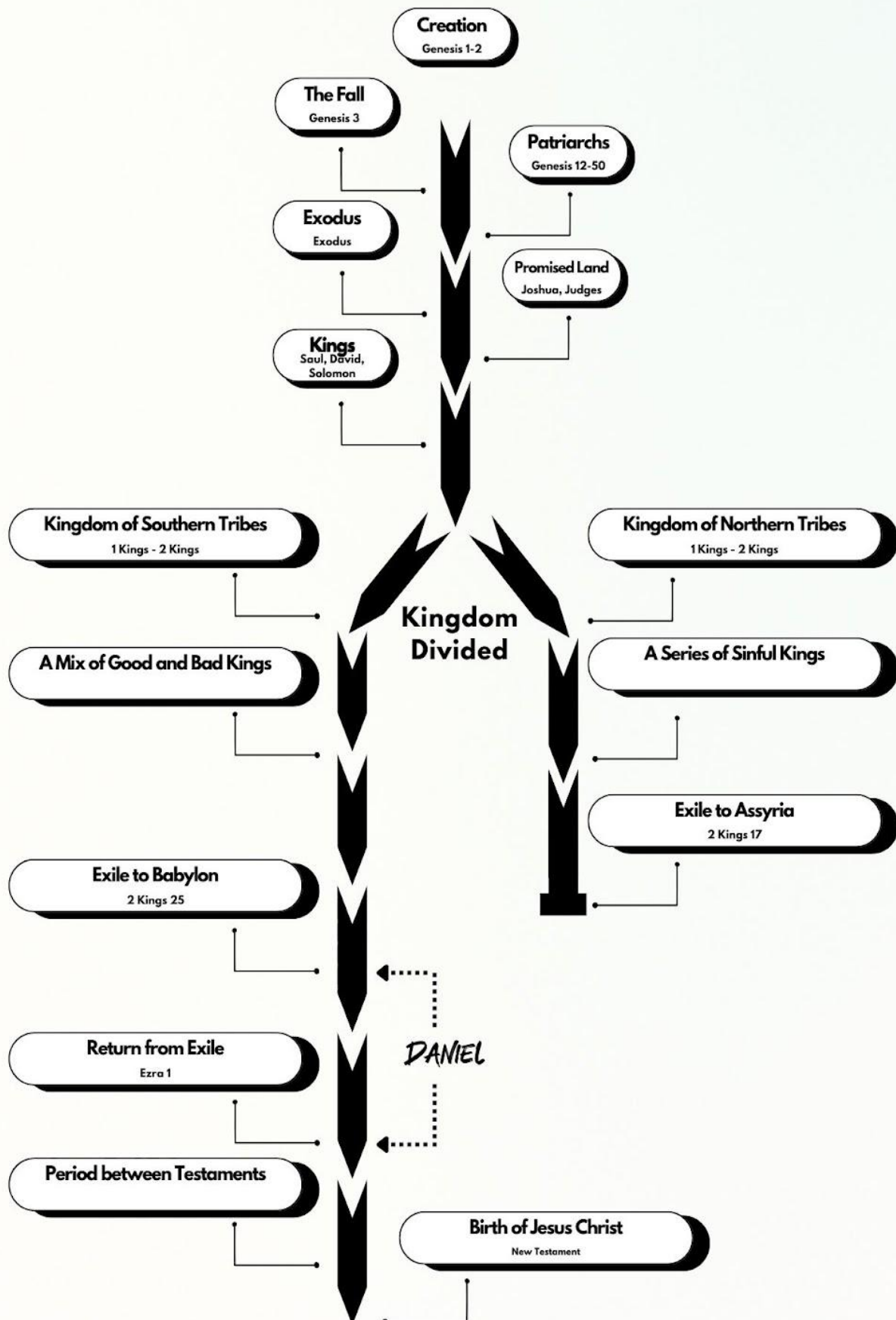
BACKGROUND TO DANIEL

The book of Daniel can sometimes seem quite different to the rest of the Old Testament. The location, names, and even the historical period feel a bit removed from the stories focused on the promised land, the tabernacle, the temple and Jerusalem. This is because Daniel takes place outside of geographical Israel and occurs during a period of national identity crisis for God's people - the Babylonian exile!

Following years of sin and rebellion against God, he sends his people into exile. Although their punishment is just, God, promises to restore those sent to Babylon after a period of 70 years (2 Kings 19:30-34, 25:1-21; Jeremiah 25:8-11, 33:6-9).

This 70-year period of exile coincides with the setting of the book of Daniel. He's a young man when he's deported from Jerusalem to King Nebuchadnezzar's palace (Daniel 1:6), and was still prominent in the empire by the time Cyrus (who initiated the return from exile) began his reign (Ezra 1; Daniel 1:21). While the prophet Jeremiah offers reassurance that the God of the Israelites has not abandoned them and would restore them in the future (Jeremiah 29:4-14), the book of Daniel serves as a series of stories to encourage God's exiled people to continue trusting him, even when all seems lost.

OLD TESTAMENT TIMELINE



HOME GROUP STUDY – DANIEL 1

1. Share about a time when your life seemed out of control. How did you respond?

Read 2 Kings 25:1-21 and Daniel 1:1-2

2. Describe the events recorded in these passages in your own words.

Read Psalm 137

3. This psalm was written about the Israelites' experience of the exile. What does it tell you about how they were feeling?

Read Daniel 1:3-7

4. How might Daniel have felt about the changes that were being forced upon him?

5. In what ways is Daniel's experience like our own?

Read Daniel 1:8-20

5. Why do you think Daniel refuses to eat the king's food?

6. Compare what the royal official expects to happen to Daniel (v10) with what actually happens (v15). What do you think is the lesson of this incident?

7. This chapter describes a time of utter calamity for God's people. What evidence do you see in this chapter that God is still in sovereign control? (see v2, 9, 17).

8. What are some areas of life in which you are tempted to compromise on your obedience to Jesus? In what way is this chapter a good encouragement to us?

SERMON NOTES – DANIEL 1

4TH OF MAY

HOME GROUP STUDY – DANIEL 2

1. Do you know anyone who you would describe as wise? What is it about them that makes them wise?

Read Daniel 2:14–18

2. How did Daniel and his friends respond to the king's decree? What does this teach us about seeking God in crisis?

Read Daniel 2:19–23

3. Which characteristics of God does Daniel highlight? How do these attributes prepare us to trust God with the unknown?

Read Daniel 2:34–35

4. What is the significance of the stone “cut out without hands” that strikes the statue's feet? How does this image contrast God's kingdom with the kingdoms of this world?

5. Daniel correctly interprets the king's dream, resulting in the saving of lives (v24) and is rewarded with a position of authority (v48). What other story in the Bible is this an echo of? What significance would this have had for the generation of Israelites in exile?
6. Look back over the chapter and notice how many times "wise men" or "wisdom" have been mentioned. What do you think this chapter is telling us about wisdom?
7. Nowhere does the Bible promise that God will communicate with us via dreams, nor are we promised the ability to interpret dreams. Rather, how has God promised to speak to us? (see Hebrews 1:1-2 and 2 Timothy 3:16-17). What does this mean for how we seek God's wisdom?
8. Pray together to ask God for his help in wisely leaning on his word and teaching.

SERMON NOTES – DANIEL 2

11TH OF MAY

HOME GROUP STUDY – DANIEL 3

1. What sorts of things do you love to talk about? Why?

Read Daniel 3:1-18

2. What has King Nebuchadnezzar done? What does he hope to achieve?

3. What do Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego do? Why? (Look back to Daniel 1:1-7, 19-20 if you need reminding of who they are).

Read Daniel 3:19-30

4. Nebuchadnezzar's fury at the three (v13) turns into praise of their God (v28). What stands out to you about how they are saved?

5. What do you think this passage teaches us about the nature of worship?
6. How does Jesus' rescue of sinners resonate with this passage? (see John 3:16; Eph 2:8-9; Titus 3:5). What about the way he protects those who follow him? (2 Cor 1:8-11; 2 Tim 4:18; 1 Peter 1:3-9).
7. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego see the danger of worshiping an idol. What sorts of idols might we be in danger of worshiping?
8. Pray together to ask God for help to direct our worship to him alone who has saved us.

SERMON NOTES – DANIEL 3

18TH OF MAY

HOME GROUP STUDY – DANIEL 4

1. Discuss a time when you felt humbled. What happened? Has it changed the way you think, feel or act?

Read Daniel 4:4-27

2. This chapter of Daniel involves another dream and interpretation (1:17; 2:24-45). What's the dream this time, and what does it mean?
3. What problem does the dream reveal to Nebuchadnezzar? What, does Daniel suggest, is the solution?

Read Daniel 4:28-36

4. Nebuchadnezzar doesn't take Daniel's warning and so the dream comes to pass. What do you think this reveals about how God views human pride? Why?

5. Nebuchadnezzar finally honours God after being humbled and his sanity and kingdom are restored. What do you notice about the way he describes God in verses 34-35? Do you think about God in the same way? Why/why not?

6. Nebuchadnezzar's experience causes him to declare some *incredible* things about God (4:1-3). How does the gospel of Jesus reveal these declarations to be *even more* incredible than Nebuchadnezzar knew? (see Eph 1:18-23).

7. Compare what Nebuchadnezzar says in verse 30 to verse 37. Most of us aren't kings like him, but everyone needs to watch out for pride or risk being humbled like him. What are some things that tend to consume people with pride today?

8. Pray together and ask God to help us to stay humble, recognising that he has given us everything good in our lives and has blessed us with abundant riches in Jesus.

SERMON NOTES – DANIEL 4

25TH OF MAY

HOME GROUP STUDY – DANIEL 5

1. How important is it to learn from the mistakes of others? Can you remember a time when you did or did not learn from someone else's mistake? What happened?

Read Daniel 5:1-9

2. Chapter 5 introduces Belshazzar who was king of Babylon after Nebuchadnezzar. What stands out to you about the banquet he holds?
3. How would you compare Belshazzar to Nebuchadnezzar?

Read Daniel 5:10-31

4. Who do the queen and king attribute Daniel's skills in interpretation to? Why do you think they're asking for his help?

5. What lesson should Belshazzar have learned? How does God judge him? Do you think it was fair for God to judge him like that? Why/why not?
6. The Bible teaches that God evaluates all humanity and that we all, like Belshazzar, are “found wanting” (Rom 3:23). What hope does Jesus give us as we stand before the just judge? (2 Cor 5:21; 1 Pet 2:24-25).
7. In judgement, God counts Jesus’ righteousness to us who believe in him and the right response to this is to live according to the new life we’ve been blessed with (Rom 6:8-14). What attitudes or behaviours do you need to change to live according to righteousness we’ve been blessed with?
8. Pray together to ask God to help us to learn from his word and put into practice the life he asks us to live.

SERMON NOTES – DANIEL 5

1ST OF JUNE

HOME GROUP STUDY – DANIEL 6

1. Have your convictions ever got you in trouble? What happened?
How did you respond?

Read Daniel 6:1-12

2. The Medes have taken over control of the Babylonian empire (5:31) and Daniel distinguishes himself yet again. How do his peers react? Why do they do this?
3. What does Daniel do? Why do you think he does this? What can we learn from his response?

Read 6:13-28

4. Verse 14 says Darius was “greatly distressed” when he learned that Daniel had disobeyed the decree. What do you notice about how he refers to God? How does this compare to the previous kings’ attitude toward God?

5. What stands out to you about Daniel's rescue? What about the demise of those who accused Daniel? What does this reveal about how God saves and judges?
6. In verse 27 Darius says God "rescues and saves". How much more can we confess this truth post-cross? (Matt 1:21; Acts 4:12; 2 Tim 4:17-18).
7. Like Daniel, Jesus' enemies plotted against him. (Matt 26:3-4)
What are some other similarities and differences between Jesus and Daniel? How is Jesus like Daniel, but better?
8. Reflect back over the weeks we've spent in Daniel. Have you learned anything new, or been helpfully reminded of any truths you know you need to hold to? Pray together to thank God for his sovereignty over his creation and ask him to help us trust him.

SERMON NOTES – DANIEL 6

8TH OF JUNE OF JUNE



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