

DANIEL 1–6

Introduction

The following “Witnessing Christ from the Old Testament” study covers Daniel 1–6.

[You can find the LDS outline of the study and resources here.](#)

LDS Study Focus

LDS study material will focus on the theme “*There Is No Other God That Can Deliver.*”

Most likely no one will ever threaten to throw you into a fiery furnace or a den of lions because of your faith in Jesus Christ. But none of us get through this life without a trial of faith. We can all benefit from the example of people like Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who were taken captive as young men by the mighty Babylonian Empire (see 2 Kings 24:10–16). These young people were surrounded by an unfamiliar culture with different values, and they faced great temptations to abandon their beliefs and righteous traditions. Yet they remained true to their covenants. Like Joseph in Egypt and Esther in Persia, Daniel and his friends in Babylon kept their faith in God, and God worked miracles that still inspire believers to this day.

How did they find the strength to remain so faithful? They did those small and simple things that God has asked all of us to do—praying, fasting, choosing good friends, trusting in God, and being a light to others. As we are strengthened by doing these same small and simple things, we can face the lions and fiery furnaces in our own lives with faith.

Biblical Focus

The book of Daniel takes place during the Babylonian captivity. The book highlights the themes of arrogant kings and kingdoms who rebel against God and set themselves up over him. The visions of the book show the rise, rebellion, and fall of many empires throughout history, depicting them as beasts.

God’s people lived in the midst of these rebellious nations. Four young Jewish men, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, and Daniel, demonstrated faithfulness to God because they trusted in his promise to be faithful and looked forward to the greater kingdom to come.

The rescues and visions teach that one day, God would confront the “Beast” and rescue his world and people by bringing his kingdom over all.

DANIEL 1

Chapter 1 sets the stage showing what life was like for believers in Babylon. Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, and Daniel had been taken captive and conscripted into the service of the arrogant heathen king, Nebuchadnezzar. Babylon thrust a new identity upon them, giving them new Babylonian names, immersing them in studying Babylonian culture and religion, and prescribing a heathen diet.

Eating from the king's table not only meant that they would consume unclean foods (**Leviticus 11**) but also participate in idol worship. These meals were festival meals meant to honor the Babylonian gods. LDS resources use this to encourage following the Word of Wisdom. You'll probably be tempted to roll your eyes, but it may be best to hold your tongue.

Consider a theme broader than eating habits. *In these difficult circumstances, why were these men able to trust God?*

Conversation Starters:

- Many commentators compare believers to Daniel, saying we, too, are foreigners living in modern Babylon. What do you think is meant by this comparison? Do you agree or disagree?
- What *unconditional* covenant had God also made with his people? How would this affect their captivity? (**Jeremiah 29:10–14**)
- How do you think this trial prepared these believing men for future trials?

DANIEL 2

Nebuchadnezzar's dream in chapter 2 and the visions and dreams in the second half of the book predict patterns and God's promises. One can easily get bogged down in the details wondering which messages apply to which kingdoms throughout history. Sometimes it is clear which nations are referred to; sometimes, it is not. So instead, focus on the big picture and observe the predicted patterns and promises from God.

Again and again, nations would rise, rebel against God, and fall. Kings will come, and kings will go. At first, the message is discouraging. Humanity will never get it right. But God promises to one day rescue his world and his people, establishing his kingdom over all.

Today, Christians living in "modern Babylon" take comfort as they look forward to the final day when God will execute his justice upon the rebellious nations, and we will be ruled by the true King, Jesus.

Conversation Starters:

- Does this dream (and those later in **Daniel 7–12**) change your expectations for world governments? How so?
- In whom do the dreams and visions found in Daniel teach believers to place their hope?
- From your knowledge of the Bible, describe what God's kingdom is like.

DANIEL 3

Fiery Furnace

After experiencing God's help and blessings in small ways, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had the opportunity to trust God in even more dire circumstances.

King Nebuchadnezzar is characterized as a prideful, arrogant king. This statue was not just an idol but a monument to himself and his absolute power over his conquered people. The refusal to worship this image was a declaration against Nebuchadnezzar's supremacy. These three men believed their God was supreme to their king. Because they had absolute trust in the faithfulness of the Lord, the threat of death had no power over them.

In **Daniel 3:16–18**, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did not know if God would rescue them from the furnace. They had not received such a promise. Nevertheless, their faith trusted that God would do what was best in this situation. Their job was to rest in the security of the Lord's faithfulness.

The faithful God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego stood beside them in the flames and rescued them from the condemnation of Nebuchadnezzar. God used the faith of these men to bring glory to himself and to declare his name before the nation of Babylon.

Conversation Starters:

- What idols in your culture try to declare themselves to be superior to God?
- How are we tempted to be like Nebuchadnezzar and glorify ourselves?
- Why do you think God didn't allow even the smoke to penetrate their clothing?
- From what flames did Jesus rescue you?

DANIEL 4–5

God's Judgment

It had been about fifty years since the Israelites were taken into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar. God allowed this king great success, power, and accomplishment. Yet, Nebuchadnezzar was arrogant and refused to give credit to God. Therefore, God humbled him until Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged God's sovereignty over all.

Belshazzar was the new king of Babylon. Although the Medo-Persian army was camped outside the city walls, about to conquer Babylon, Belshazzar hosted a great feast for thousands of his nobles. During this feast, he worshiped various idols and foolishly decided to mock the real God who had previously humbled the great King Nebuchadnezzar.

The writing on the wall sent the king and his party into confusion and panic. The divine but uninterpretable message caused Belshazzar to eventually find Daniel, the servant of the God he had mocked. First, Daniel explained that Belshazzar was without excuse. Even though Belshazzar knew how God humbled Nebuchadnezzar, he still proudly refused to honor God. On the scale of God's judgment, Belshazzar did not measure up.

Picture being weighed on a balance scale with God's law on one side. Only perfection can stabilize the teetering bar. Knowing how far from perfect we are, we find ourselves deserving judgment, just like Belshazzar. Thankfully, there is a substitute, Jesus, who takes our place on the scale! Discussing this scale with your LDS friends will likely cause disagreements since they don't understand the depth and seriousness of even a single sin (**James 2:10**). Use this opportunity to explain why you deserve judgment but are not afraid of it.

Conversation Starters:

- Why does God hate arrogance and pride?
- Could God say these same words from **Daniel 5:27** to you? **"You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting."** Could they be said to Christ?
- What does it mean to believe in Jesus as your substitute?

DANIEL 6

Daniel's Response to Persecution (Daniel 6:10)

The Medes and Persians' law here and in the book of Esther was considered irrevocable. To change the law would be to admit that they had made a mistake. Mistakes were something that the "gods" did not do.

It would have been tempting for Daniel to change his prayer habit from public to secret. He could have rationalized it by thinking, *"I need to live through this so that I can continue to be a leader for God's people."* Instead, Daniel responded to the king's edict by simply *not* responding. He did not change his habits. Daniel had always been open about his faith. If he had decided to hide his prayers out of fear, it would have been the same as denying God. Daniel believed in a God that was bigger than his fear and more powerful than kings.

There are significant similarities between Christ's story and Daniel's. Daniel, although blameless, was sentenced to death and put in what was to be his grave. A stone was placed over the entrance, and it was sealed shut. Miraculously, Daniel was set free from death to the glory of God.

Even as Darius sent Daniel into the den, the king wanted to believe in Daniel's God (**Daniel 6:16**) but did not know him. Through his miraculous power, God rescued Daniel from certain death bringing glory to his name.

Conversation Starters:

- What parallels between this story and Christ's death and resurrection do you notice?
- Why did Daniel trust God?
- Of what did Daniel's prayers consist (**Daniel 6:10–11**)?
- How did this miracle affect the king and the community (**Daniel 6:25–28**)? Who was glorified?
- What stories from Israel's history do you think could have given Daniel the courage to trust God?

Sharing Personally

The Glory of Man and the Glory of God

The Book of Daniel powerfully presents the war between human glory and God's glory in the rise and fall of kings and kingdoms. From the beginning of time, human beings have been self-aggrandizing. So, for example, as you read Daniel, you may wonder at all the nitty-gritty details of the story of Nebuchadnezzar. Why all those details? Because there's a lot of Nebuchadnezzar in us. Don't turn away from the story when you see yourself. Instead, acknowledge your own self-aggrandizing and turn to God.

The Sovereignty of God

One of the themes that stands out in the Book of Daniel is the sovereignty of God over all things! No matter what, God will continue to advance his story until that story is complete. Nations will rise, and nations will fall; kingdoms will come; kings will live; kings will die; nothing will thwart God's story. God rules, and he will advance his work until that work has completed its work. In that, there is hope! Daniel gives us a Lord of glory.

After King Darius observed the power and glory of God on display in his rescue of Daniel from the lion's mouth, he proclaimed.

"I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel. For he is the living God and he endures forever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end" (Daniel 6:26).

Ancient of Days

In the book of Daniel, God is called the "Ancient of Days."

"In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed." (Daniel 7:13–14).

What does this title mean for us? Listen to the song [Ancient of Days](#) by CityAlight and think about what it means that God is the Ancient of Days.

What convicts you in this song? What comforts you?

Ancient of Days

Though the nations rage, kingdoms rise and fall
There is still one King reigning over all

So I will not fear for this truth remains
That my God is, the Ancient of Days

None above Him, none before Him
All of time in His hands
For His throne it shall remain and ever stand
All the power, all the glory
I will trust in His name
For my God is, the Ancient of Days

Though the dread of night overwhelms my soul
He is here with me, I am not alone
O His love is sure, and He knows my name
For my God is, the Ancient of Days

None above Him, none before Him
All of time in His hands
For His throne it shall remain and ever stand
All the power, all the glory
I will trust in His name
For my God is, the Ancient of Days

Though I may not see what the future brings
I will watch and wait for the Saviour King
Then my joy complete, standing face to face
In the presence of the Ancient of Days

None above Him, none before Him
All of time in His hands
For His throne it shall remain and ever stand
All the power, all the glory
I will trust in His name
For my God is, the Ancient of Days
For my God is, the Ancient of Days

Prayer:

Ancient of Days, we read of your great works and miraculous provisions throughout the generations. Remembering the days of old is a glimpse of your sovereignty as you led your people out of captivity through famine and flood, wars and mighty storms. We are not self-sufficient, but our sufficiency is reliant on you, the Ancient of Days! You are the same yesterday, today, and forever. Even as you brought your people through in the days of old, you will see us through to the other side of eternity! We thank you for Jesus, our solid Rock and mighty fortress. In him will I trust, and through him will I persevere. Amen.