



**So, I looked for someone ... who  
would stand in the gap before  
me on behalf of the land**

## **WEEK FOUR – DANIEL (His name means “God Is My Judge”)**

Most people know the story of Daniel in the lions’ den but on a very superficial level. There is so much to learn from the way he lived his life and I believe we can benefit from looking at how he fulfilled the meaning of his name.

### **Read Daniel 1**

Daniel was deported as a teenager in 605 B.C. to Babylon where he lived for over sixty years. All the indications are that he came from a wealthy, upper-class family and initially, served as a trainee in Nebuchadnezzar’s court. We shall be looking only at the first six chapters of the book.

### **Verses 1-8**

- What were the criteria that the King instructed his master of the eunuchs to use in deciding which young men should be chosen?
- Contrast this with I Samuel 16 when Samuel is told to anoint one of the sons of Jesse as the next King. The second part of verse 7 says: *“For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”* When you are struggling to see value in yourself, and most of us do at times, remember this verse. The natural sight sees something different from the spiritual sight. Always try to see ourselves as God sees us. From the meaning of his name, Daniel was aware of the importance of living his life according to God’s standards.
- We will all no doubt, remember the names of Daniel’s three companions, all of whom were from Judah: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. Daniel was given the name Belshazzar, though on most occasions he is referred to by his Hebrew. Notice what verse 8 says: Daniel did not want to defile himself with the king’s food or wine, this was because it went against the Jewish dietary laws.

### **Verses 9-21**

- Daniel and his three companions made a deal with the eunuchs who had been given the care of these young men. What does this teach us about living God's way?
- These young men had the courage to stand up to those in whose care they had been placed. It was not a trifling matter as indicated by the fear of the eunuchs, but the young men trusted God. Proverbs 3:5-6 tells us: **Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding: in all your ways acknowledge him and he shall direct your paths.**

## Read Daniel 2

As in the present day, the king and people of Babylon put great store by the magicians, sorcerers, and astrologers. Make no mistake, these practices go against the scriptures.

*Leviticus 19:31 "Do not defile yourselves by turning to mediums or to those who consult the spirits of the dead. I am the LORD your God."*

*Micah 5:12 "I will put an end to all witchcraft, and there will be no more fortune-tellers."*

*Galatians 5:19-23 "When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarrelling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God. But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!"*

- Notice in Galatians Paul doesn't just show the negatives, but the positives that we should demonstrate in our lives. Let's look at our lives and see if we are following this teaching.

It is interesting to see in this chapter that when Daniel is summoned to the king to explain his dream, Daniel asks for time. He also talks with his three companions in verse 18, ***that they would pray with him and ask the God of heaven to show them his mercy by telling them the secret, so they would not be executed along with the other wise men of Babylon.***

- This is an important lesson for us to learn. When we are struggling with spiritual matters, always pray and seek counsel from Christians whom we trust.

- The other lesson is in verses 20-23. When we receive an answer to our prayers, always give thanks to God.

The four young men were promoted.

Throughout these chapters in Daniel, we learn time and again to obey God's instructions, even if in the short term it seems we might suffer.

### Read Daniel 3

I remember when in Sunday School (a long time ago), singing the children's chorus: *"Three good men lived very long ago, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego. To an idol they would never bow ....."*. It is important to teach our children, perhaps by more modern means, the truths of the Bible so that God can remind them of his power in later life, even if they no longer walking in his ways. I always used to tell my pupils that you cannot remember something you haven't previously learned. This applies to us at all stages of our lives and is why it is so important to know and learn, what the Bible teaches.

- Hopefully we will never be in the position of being thrown into the furnace, or any similar trial, but would we be able to stand and say **"Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us"**. Let's pray that we have that confidence.

Note what verses 24-25 say: *"Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, "Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?" They replied, "Certainly, Your Majesty." He said, "Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods."* In some versions it says: *and the fourth looks like the son of man.*

- Jesus, sometimes called the son of man, is always with us, in all circumstances.

### Read Daniel 4 and 5

These two chapters contain further examples of how Daniel was able to stand for God and trust him to provide the answers to the dreams of the two kings. They show someone who has utmost trust in God and, of course, as in the first dream, Daniel was able to stand and declare the meaning of the further two dreams both of which played out exactly as declared.

### Read Daniel 6

Not surprisingly, people became jealous of Daniel and we read here of the plot against him. The plotters knew of his exemplary life (verse 4), so they had to devise a way of persuading the king to pass a decree which they knew Daniel would not be able to

obey. When Daniel heard that prayers could be made only to the king, he went home, opened his window to Jerusalem and prayed three times a day to his God. It was not to show people he wasn't afraid of the king but that he was making a stand for God, regardless of the consequences.

One can almost feel sorry for Darius the king when the realisation hit home that he had been duped by Daniel's enemies. Because the law could not be changed, Daniel was brought to the den of the lions.

- [Read verse 16](#) ***“So at last the king gave orders for Daniel to be arrested and thrown into the den of lions. The king said to him, ‘May your God, whom you serve so faithfully, rescue you.’”*** The implication here is that the king was extremely reluctant to punish Daniel, but what a testimony to the life of one who stood in the gap for God.
- [Read verses 18-23](#) Notice that Daniel gives all the praise to God for his wonderful deliverance. We should take note of this. When God brings us through difficult experiences, we should never think it is of our own doing. In 2 Thessalonians 3:3 we read: ***The Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one.***

It takes courage and strong conviction to stand for God in the face of evil. Hopefully, we will never have to face such extreme circumstances, but in our ordinary lives there are times when we go through difficulties.

**Prayer: Father God, give us the courage and confidence that we too will be able to stand in the gap for you, for our land, our church, and our families.**

