

Bible Studies for Life: September 10

*Staying True in a World Far From God: Pray with Passion •
Daniel 2:13-23, 27-28*

By Becky Brown



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I love to gently explain the timelines and main characters and map study locations and then spend time helping them put it together with new, fresh understanding. However, when someone says the Bible is boring, I totally realize that they have never genuinely interacted with it.

Possibly they got marooned on some of the chapters dealing with land division or bogged down with the genealogical “begats” or the holiness codes and sacrificial system in Leviticus.

Those chapters are vital (of course!), but understanding them comes with continued study over time. When we can see the “story” aspect of Scripture and personally meet the Author Himself, things get really interesting.

These beloved narrative sections of Scripture draw us in and give us graphics and show us a screen with moving parts and actual people and real time events in specific places. Thus, the first six chapters of Daniel are amazing.

As we continue to look at the life of Daniel and his three friends in Babylon, we can SEE this story played out in real time in the sixth century BC. Daniel is our go-to guy, standing for truth in a world that was far away from God.

Joseph, Moses, Esther, and others were used by God in the courts of pagan kings who reigned in their lifetimes. God was at work in their lives to accomplish His plan and purpose.

Daniel and his friends were probably still in their late teens. They were recent graduates from their three-year training period in preparation for service in the courts of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.

God was using these young men to make a counter-cultural statement. They took a bold stand for personal purity and loyalty to God and God alone. Their dietary strategy to avoid forbidden foods had worked, as recorded in Daniel chapter one. They were now fluent in the language of Babylon and had entered the king's personal service (see Daniel 1:19).

God had given Daniel a very unique gift to complement his wisdom, knowledge, understanding, and intelligence (Daniel 1:4). Daniel was equipped by GOD to understand visions and dreams (Daniel 1:17). God was about to use this gift to spare the lives of every wise man in Babylon, including the lives of Daniel and his three friends from Judah.

Nebuchadnezzar had dreams. Scripture says because of these dreams, his spirit was very deeply troubled. He could no longer sleep. He called for the "wise men" of his kingdom to be of assistance. However, none of them could help him.

His request was for them to tell him the *interpretation* of his dreams, but in order to test them the king also demanded that they tell him the *exact content* of his dreams as well! These magicians, conjurers, and sorcerers were completely stumped.

No one can do that, they said. Only the "gods" (note the little "g" there) could do such a thing. Their punishment was imminent destruction. Daniel and his friends were included in this verdict.

Daniel spoke to the executioner named Arioch and pled for a

temporary stay of this dreadful sentence. He even spoke with the King. His request for delay was accepted.

Daniel's next stop was to speak with his three friends and schedule an emergency prayer meeting with them to "request compassion" from The God of Heaven. Daniel was asking God to tell him the dream as well as the meaning of the dream. Daniel was pleading for their very lives to be spared, as well.

God answered their prayers and gave Daniel every detail of the dream as well as its interpretation. Daniel gave blessing and glory to God and to His Name. He acknowledged the wisdom, power, and sovereignty of God in all affairs. The One who separated light from darkness at Creation had revealed the message of Nebuchadnezzar's nighttime confusion.

When Daniel came into the presence of this earthly pagan king, He took absolutely NO credit for himself as to the Source of this revelation. He declared this amazing truth: "There is a God in heaven Who reveals all mysteries." Every wise man nationwide was spared.

In opposition to a pagan king, Pharaoh promoted Joseph. The Red Sea parted for Moses. The king of Persia called for Esther and the Jews were spared. Daniel stood for truth.

Brown is minister of missions at First Church, Richland.