

# Kingdom of Dreams

**Daniel**



**9 INTERACTIVE BIBLE STUDIES FOR  
SMALL GROUPS & INDIVIDUALS**

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**Daniel**

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*Kingdom of Dreams*

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# *How to make the most of these studies*

## **1. What is an Interactive Bible Study?**

These ‘interactive’ Bible studies are a bit like a guided tour of a famous city. The studies will take you through Daniel, pointing out things along the way, filling in background details, and suggesting avenues for further exploration. But there is also time for you to do some sight-seeing of your own—to wander off, have a good look for yourself, and form your own conclusions.

In other words, we have designed these studies to fall half-way between a sermon and a set of unadorned Bible study questions. We want to provide stimulation and input and point you in the right direction, while leaving you to do a lot of the exploration and discovery yourself.

We hope that these studies will stimulate lots of ‘interaction’—interaction with the Bible, with the things we’ve written, with your own current thoughts and attitudes, with other people as you discuss them, and with God as you talk to him about it all.

## **2. The format**

Each study contains sections of text to introduce, summarize, suggest and provoke. We’ve left plenty of room in the margins for you to jot comments and questions as you read.

Interspersed throughout the text are three types of ‘interaction’, each with their own symbol:



### **For starters**

Questions to break the ice and get you thinking.



### **Investigate**

Questions to help you investigate key parts of the Bible.



### **Think it through**

Questions to help you think through the implications of your discoveries and write down your own thoughts and reactions.

When you come to one of these symbols, you'll know that it's time to do some work of your own.

## **3. Suggestions for individual study**

- Before you begin, pray that God would open your eyes to what he is saying in Daniel and give you the spiritual strength to do something about it. You may be spurred to pray again at the end of the study.
- Work through the study, following the directions as you go. Write in the spaces provided.
- Resist the temptation to skip over the *Think it through* sections. It is important to think about the sections of text (rather than just accepting them as true) and to ponder the implications for your life. Writing these things down is a very valuable way to get your thoughts working.
- Take what opportunities you can to talk to others about what you've learnt.

## 4. Suggestions for group study

- Much of the above applies to group study as well. The studies are suitable for structured Bible study or cell groups, as well as for more informal pairs and threesomes. Get together with a friend/s and work through them at your own pace; use them as the basis for regular Bible study with your spouse. You don't need the formal structure of a 'group' to gain maximum benefit.
- It is *vital* that group members work through the study themselves *before* the group meets. The group discussion can take place comfortably in an hour (depending on how side-tracked you get!), but only if all the members have done the work and are familiar with the material.
- Spend most of the group time discussing the 'interactive' sections—*For starters*, *Investigate* and *Think it through*. Reading all the text together will take too long and should be unnecessary if the group members have done their preparation. You may wish to underline and read aloud particular paragraphs or sections of text that you think are important.
- The role of the group leader is to direct the course of the discussion and to try to draw the threads together at the end. This will mean a little extra preparation—underlining important sections of text to emphasize, working out which questions are worth concentrating on, and being sure of the main thrust of the study. Leaders will also probably want to work out approximately how long they'd like to spend on each part.
- We haven't included an 'answer guide' to the questions in the studies. This is a deliberate move. We want to give you a guided tour of Daniel, not a lecture. There is more than enough in the text we have written and the questions we have asked to point you in what we think is the right direction. The rest is up to you.

## 5. Bible translation

Previous editions of this Interactive Bible Study have assumed that most readers would be using the New International Version of the

Bible. However, since the release of the English Standard Version in 2001, many have switched to the ESV for study purposes. For this reason, we have decided to quote from and refer to the ESV text, which we recommend.

## **Before you begin**

We recommend that before you start on Study 1, you take the time to read right through Daniel in one sitting. This will give you a feel for the direction and purpose of the whole book and help you greatly in looking at each passage in its context.

## **Suggestions for further reading**

Because the book of Daniel is quite complicated in places it may be helpful to read a bit more widely. Andrew Reid, one of the authors of these Bible studies, has written an easy to read commentary on Daniel which may be helpful. It is called *Kingdoms in Conflict: Reading Daniel Today* (Sydney: AIO, 1991).

## **Getting started**

The first study is deliberately short in order to allow you to get a feel for the context of the book of Daniel. The idea is that you read this introduction together and use the extra time to introduce yourselves, talk about how you will function as a group, spend some time praying, and so on.

# 1

Daniel 1:1-2

## Getting some perspective



### For starters

**If you are studying in a group**, start with a large piece of paper (butcher's paper would be ideal) and draw a straight line with creation at one end and Jesus at the other.

Creation

Jesus

On page 12 you will find a list of names, events and passages from the Old Testament. Tear out the page (or photocopy it) and then cut out the pieces. Hand them around the group so that each person has a mixture of the pieces.

Go around the group and ask each person that has a 'name' piece to place it on the line at the appropriate place and to share with the group anything they know about the person. This is a whole group experience, so everyone can help. The aim is simply to get the names in some sort of order.

Once the 'name' pieces are on the paper, link up the events and passages with them, explaining how they connect with each other.

**If you are studying on your own**, don't tear out the list of names, events and passages, but draw lines to connect people with the correct passages and events. When you've done this, look up the Bible references to see if they help you place the people and events.

When God called Abraham in Genesis 12 he promised him three great things: (1) a land; (2) that he would be a great nation; and (3) that he would bless him and cause him to be a blessing to all the world. By the beginning of the book of Exodus, Abraham's children have indeed become a large number, however they are in captivity in Egypt and far from the land of God's promise.

The books of Exodus through to Joshua tell how God rescues his people from Egypt, enters into covenant with them, and brings them into the land he promised Abraham. At first things go well and God rules his people directly through Spirit-filled leaders called 'judges' (cf. The book of Judges). However, the Israelites become unhappy with these sorts of leaders and ask God for a more steady sort of leadership such as a king would offer (1 Sam 8). Although God considers that such a request really amounts to a rejection of his kingship over them he allows them to have a king and even makes an eternal covenant with King David, promising him that his children will always rule over God's people (2 Sam 7).

Soon after David, kingship fails and Israel is split into two: ten tribes in the north ruled by a series of various kings, and two tribes in the south ruled by the descendants of David. The ten tribes in the north turn against God and are eventually punished by him using the kingdom of Assyria. The two tribes in the south don't act any better. Eventually God judges them as well. This time it is by means of King Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon. He overthrows them and carts them off into exile. It is these events that set the context for the book of Daniel.



### **Investigate**

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

1. Describe the events referred to in your own words.

2. Psalm 137 was written about the Israelite's experience of the exile. What does it tell you about the way the Israelites were feeling in exile? (If you wanted to do some more study on this you could also read the short book of Lamentations.)

3. Spend some time praying about the following studies on Daniel. Include these sorts of things in your prayers:

Pray for insight and understanding as to what the book means.

Pray for wisdom to know how to apply it to your situation.

If you are studying in a group, then pray for good working relationships with each other so that you can gain the most benefit from the studies and be supportive of each other.

Pray for opportunities to use what you learn in your conversations with other people.

<b>PEOPLE</b>	<b>PASSAGE</b>	<b>EVENTS</b>
DAVID	1 Kings 8	Promise of return from exile
ISAIAH	Genesis 32:22-32	God's covenant promise
JOSHUA	Jeremiah 31:31-33; 27:22	Entry into the promised land
SOLOMON	Daniel 1	Temple established
DANIEL	2 Samuel 7:1-17	Creation
JEREMIAH	Deuteronomy 34:4-9	
ADAM	Isaiah 39:1-8	God's promise of the exile
ABRAM	Genesis 12:1-3	Kingship
MOSES	Genesis 2:15-17	Living in exile
JACOB	Exodus 6:6-8	Exodus