



# **Against the Tide.**

LESSONS IN HOPE AND PERSEVERANCE  
FROM THE BOOK OF DANIEL

**Leaders Notes.**



## Study 1: Is God even here?

1. Read **Daniel 1:1-7**. In these verses how do we see Nebuchadnezzar stamping his authority?

*Nebuchadnezzar takes people of Judah into exile as well as things from the temple to show his dominance over all aspects of life, including their worship. Also takes some of the brightest and best to work in his palace in the king's service. The conqueror bringing into service the best of the conquered. It is a show of strength.*

2. Who is in control of what is happening in these verses? From where do you get this in the text?

*God is in control. Verse 2 makes it clear the Lord hands them over to the Babylonians. Perhaps also while it appears Daniel and his friends are being used in the service of Nebuchadnezzar, it also provides a means for God to exert his control as we will see as the story unfolds.*

3. Read **Daniel 1:8-21**. In verses 4-8 Daniel and his friends are being taught many things. What are they being taught? What do think is the desired outcome of such learning?

*This seems to be an attempt to give them a new identity or at least break what they see as their current identity.*

## Study 2: What looks mighty will turn to dust

2. How does God show that he is in control in this chapter? What is said that there is a need for a God that is bigger than any human?

*God both gives dreams and allows their interpretations. Verses 10-11 and verses 27-28 gives answer to second half of the question.*

### Going Deeper.

8. How does this dream line up with other parts of Scripture, for example, Psalm 2? Can you think of any others? *Idea here is to encourage people that dreams line up with Scripture and ought to be tested.*

## Study 3: Faithful in the furnace

3. Read **Daniel 3:8-30**. What choice are Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego left with? Was there really an option at all? If not, why not?

*These men had already decided to follow and worship the God of Israel. In some sense the choice they faced had already been made without this incident. Perhaps you could ask the people in your group how they go with this. Do we make decisions on the basis of the fact that we are children of God and our desire is to please him first?*

4. In **verses 16-18** what two things do Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego know about God in this situation and what do they not know?

*They know that God can save them but they do not know whether he will save them. Perhaps you can ask how do people in your group go reconciling this?*

### Going Deeper.

8. In this story we see that God saved them *in* the fire not *from* the fire. What does this story teach us about suffering?

*Do not miss the idea that the suffering comes as a result of their disobedience to the authorities and faithfulness to God.*

## Study 4: How the mighty will fall

2. Read **Daniel 4:4-37**. Nebuchadnezzar thinks of himself as a great king, even a god. What limitations does he display in this story?

*Interpreting his own dreams. Verses 28-33, that is, God making him live like a beast. This puts Nebuchadnezzar in his place.*

3. What attitude showed Nebuchadnezzar needed to be humbled, that his perspective showed he was living in darkness ? *Verse 30 should give clues to this.*

4. In **verses 32-33** what image is created of Nebuchadnezzar? Why is this significant to the book of Daniel?  
*The image is of a beast or one who lives like a beasts. Nebuchadnezzar is reduced to that part of creation that humans are to rule over. In chapter 6 Daniel is at the mercy of beasts and God shuts their mouths. In later chapters there are descriptions of beasts that too are not out of God's control.*

## Study 5: The writing is on the wall

2. What lesson did Belshazzar not learn from his fathers' example? *See verses 22-24.*

3. Read **Daniel 5:10-13**. Why do you think Daniel never seems to be front and centre when something strange happens or there is a dream? Someone usually sends for him or he finds out later in the case of Ch. 3.

*It is because Daniel is God's man and not whoever the king is. To be God's people we may not always be called upon for help or advice or even an opinion. Perhaps you could ask what should we be doing even when not asked for help our advice?*

4. Why does God act so quickly to overthrow Belsahazzar when he has given Nebuchadnezzar a few opportunities?

*Perhaps because the son should have learned from the father. How often do we see generations not learning from the ones who go before?*