

The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 24: Daniel In Exile



Session Snapshot

Narrative Passage: Daniel 1; Daniel 6

Gospel Focus: Colossians 1:11-14

Student Takeaways:

- Students will understand what the Exile was, and how God provided for Daniel even in the midst of it.
- Students will understand how perfect, lasting deliverance comes through Christ's death on the cross.
- Students will consider what it means to live in the "Kingdom of the Son" as those who been brought from dark to light.



Overview

You've more than likely heard the story of Daniel and the lion's den a number of times. It's an amazing story of God miraculously saving Daniel from the mouths of some pretty scary lions. While it's pretty awesome that God chose to save Daniel from the lions, the truth is that He doesn't choose to save everyone from all the scary situations that are out there. So, we have to consider what this story is pointing us toward. As we dig into the truths of this story and look forward to the New Testament, our lesson is going to go beyond God's incredible ability to do things like shut the mouths of lions, and look to His ability to save us from the most important enemy we'll face.



Teacher Prep Video

Each *Thread* lesson comes with a Teacher Prep Video. These are short videos designed to help you grasp the main point of the lesson as you prepare to teach.

To access your *Thread* lesson 24 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 24, and click on the "Background" tab. You'll notice the Teacher Prep Video near the top of the Lesson Manager window.



Bible Background

The Bible Background is designed to help you provide the basic context for the passages you'll be studying.

- **What do we mean by "context"?** In every ym360 Bible study lesson we encourage teachers to help students know who wrote a particular book, when it was written, and why it was written.
- **Why teach context?** Grasping the big-picture view of God's story of redemption is difficult for teenagers without understanding the context of the books and passages they're studying.

Daniel

Author: Daniel, a young man that was a part of a noble or royal family, who was exiled from Judah to Babylon.

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Time frame: Scholars who believe Daniel wrote the book date it's writing during the events that occur between the reigns of Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus (605 BC – 536 BC). However, there are some who believe it must have been written later than that because of its prophecies of events that happened in the second century BC. They believe it was written after the events in the second century actually took place.

Purpose: The book of Daniel serves two primary purposes. Chapters 1-6 show us how God's people are to live in the midst of a world that is not concerned with the Lord and His ways. The remainder of the book is full of visions about the end-times. It reassures us that no matter what goes on here on earth, God will prevail and His people will be redeemed.

Colossians

Author: The Apostle Paul identified himself as the author of Colossians.

Time frame: Most people believe Colossians was written sometime between A.D. 61 and 63, during Paul's first imprisonment in Rome (Acts 28:17-31).

Purpose: Ultimately, this letter's purpose is to emphasize the supremacy of Christ over everything. Paul was writing to combat the spread of false teachings among the church at Colossae. The exact heresy being refuted is not certain and may have been a blend of multiple influences. The legalism, mysticism, and asceticism corrupting the pure faith in Colossae were moving attention away from Christ, placing it instead on self-discipline and the awe of other spiritual things.



Lesson Plan

The Lesson Plan contains four elements:

- An introductory activity called Getting Started designed to prepare teenagers to engage with God and the truth of His Word.
- A section entitled The Story featuring a narrative from Scripture that helps teenagers know God better through learning the story of the Bible.
- A special emphasis entitled The Thread where teenagers discover the Gospel thread coursing throughout the story of the Bible.
- An application-focused segment called Wrapping Up helping teenagers ask the question, "How am I impacted by what I learned today"?

Getting Started

- **Goal:** For students to begin thinking about the concept of deliverance and what it means to be truly rescued once and for all.
- **Set-Up:** You'll need a way to show the following YouTube clip:
 - <https://youtu.be/3rsvgkyJv5w>
 - **You may also want a dry erase board to jot down some answers if possible.**

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FIRST, begin by telling students that today you're going to talk a lot about finding yourself in a really rough set of circumstances, and what it means to be truly rescued and delivered from what's surrounding you.

THEN, ask students if they've ever found themselves in a dangerous situation where they had to rely on someone else to help get them out. If anyone says they have been in a situation like this, ask them to share what happened.

NEXT, once students have had a chance to share, tell them that you're going to watch a short YouTube clip about some people that were rescued at sea. Play the video clip. Then, lead students in a brief discussion. Ask:

- **This was a dad and his son (and their friends) whose boat had capsized 12 miles off the coast of one of the Hawaiian islands. What are some of the words you would use to describe the video clip?**
 - o Answers will vary.
- **The group was stranded for several hours. What emotions do you think must have been going through the young teens' minds as they were waiting to be rescued?**
 - o Answers will vary.
- **When the Coast Guard finally arrived, what do you think the group must have felt like?**
 - o Answers will vary.

FINALLY, as you make the transition to The Story, say something like:

- **As we continue our yearlong look at the big-picture story of the Bible, today we're going to read the story of someone who finds himself in a tough set of circumstances that only get scarier. It's the story of Daniel, and he finds himself in a situation where he's in desperate need of rescue. But this story will help point us forward to what we all ultimately need: an eternal rescue.**

Transition to The Story.

The Story

- **Goal:** That students will understand what the Exile was, and how God provided for Daniel even in the midst of it.
- **Set-Up:** None.

FIRST explain that in this lesson you'll be looking at Daniel. If you'd like, use the "Connecting The Dots" section below to do a little review and/or fill in the gaps from your last lesson and this one.

Connecting The Dots

As you teach The Thread, there will naturally be some gaps in the story. This is an optional way for you to fill in some of the gaps between the last lesson you taught and this one. Use it as a way to review and/or to connect the dots to the events surrounding the passage.

- **The prophets had been passionately telling the people that judgment was immanent if they didn't turn back and obey the Lord.**
- **The people persisted in their disobedience, and the judgment the Lord promised came. First, the northern kingdom of Israel was captured by Assyria in the mid 700s BC. The southern kingdom of Judah was captured less than 200 years later, culminating in the burning of the temple in 586 BC.**
- **A significant portion of the Jewish population found themselves exiled to Babylon.**

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THEN, inform the students that you're going to a few verses from Leviticus to provide some more context for the passage and lesson. While they're finding Leviticus, explain to them that these verses from Leviticus tell us that the Lord had made it very plain to Israel that if they disobeyed Him, and did not uphold their end of the covenant, that He would scatter them to other nations.

Read or have a student read Leviticus 26:27-33 and 26:39. Ask something like:

- **What do we know about Israel after they made it to the Promised Land? Did they uphold what the Lord called them to do? Explain your answer and give some examples you remember from some of our previous lessons.**
 - o Answer: No, they didn't obey the Lord. Think back to our lesson from Judges. It was repeatedly said that the people did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. They gave in to the culture around them, and repeatedly bowed down to other gods. They trusted their own skill and military might rather than trusting the Lord. The kingdom was eventually divided because of pride and selfishness, and more and more idolatry ensued.

NEXT, read or have a student read Daniel 1:1-7. Ask something like:

- **So, what do you think is happening in verses 1-2?**
 - o Answer: What is happening in Daniel 1:1-2 is part of the fulfillment of the promise the Lord made to Israel in the Leviticus passage we just read. This is the beginning of the Babylonian exile.
- **After listening to that passage, what was the king up to? What was his goal here?**
 - o Answer: He had them taught a new culture, he changed their diet, and he changed their names. He was stripping them of their identity as God's people, and assimilating them into a pagan culture.
- **What do you think was significant about the name changes?**
 - o Answer: This is another instance of the king assimilating them into pagan culture; he gave them names that identified with pagan gods. What we don't know from a surface reading is that all the new names had meanings associated with pagan gods.

THEN, read or have a student read Daniel 1:8-21. Ask:

- **So, what were Daniel and the other three up to? Did they just want to get some good abs for the summer? Or was there a bigger picture they were looking at when it came to what they were going to eat? Explain.**
 - o Answer: Daniel and his friends were looking at the bigger picture of not being completely assimilated into Babylonian culture. Part of the Babylonians' diet included pork, which was prohibited for Israelites to eat. They were attempting to keep themselves distinct and set apart from the Babylonians while they were in exile. They wanted to be identified as people that trusted and followed the Lord.

Explain to the students that you're going to fast-forward a little bit to chapter 6, a very well known story in the book of Daniel. Our look into chapter 1 helped give us some much needed background and context to what happens in this chapter. Read or have a student read Daniel 6:1-9. Ask:

- **At this point Daniel has served the empire for over 50 years. Does it seem like much has changed with Daniel's character? Does it seem like he's given in to the culture around him? Explain.**
 - o Answer: No, it looks like Daniel has remained steady. He's upstanding and wise and has found favor in the eyes of those in charge. No one could find fault with him. He hasn't given into the culture and lives and upright life.

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- **Why do you think some high officials and satraps wanted to find something wrong with Daniel?**

- o Answer: They were jealous of his position.

- **Why did they come up with this plan in verses 6-9? What was their goal?**

- o Answer: They wanted to put Daniel in a miserable situation. They knew he wasn't going to want to pray to King Darius. But they also knew that getting thrown in a lion's den wasn't exactly minor punishment. They wanted Daniel to make a choice. If he bowed down, they could criticize him for not staying true to his beliefs. If he didn't, they could have him killed.

NEXT, read or have student read Daniel 6:10-23. Ask:

- **So, did the new law faze Daniel? What happened next?**

- o Answer: Nope, he heard about it and still went to his house and prayed to the Lord in the same way he always had. The authorities that got the king to make the law gathered evidence against Daniel and took it to the king. They informed him that Daniel and been praying to the Lord as usual. The king wasn't happy about this. Not because he was mad at Daniel, but he realized their true motives. He didn't want to punish Daniel, but he couldn't look weak and go back on the law. So he had Daniel thrown in the lion's den.

- **Let's talk about Daniel for a second. What are some key components of his character? What stands out to you about him?**

- o Answer: Answers here will vary, but some noticeable things about Daniel are that he's faithful in the midst of adversity and he's consistent regardless of the circumstances.

- **Consider everything we've studied about Daniel today. Do you think he's more concerned with the eternal or the temporal? Explain?**

- o Answer: He's more concerned with the eternal. Most people look at what's right in front of them and make decisions based on that. In chapters 1 and 6, Daniel was more concerned with faithfulness and obedience to the Lord than he was with what happened to his life.

THEN, read or have a student read Daniel 6:25-28. Say something like:

- **King Darius obviously had respect for Daniel before the whole lion's den thing went down. But as he witnessed what happened to Daniel when he was thrown in with the lions, he was given a different perspective. This went beyond Daniel being a good guy and strong leader; he now started to see the power of Daniel's God. He recognized that Daniel's God was the true, living God.**

THEN, ask something like:

- **Is this story more about Daniel or about God?**

- o Answer: The story is more about God. There are definitely great human examples all throughout the Bible. But the stories of their faith aren't intended for us to just be impressed with them. They're intended to point us toward their amazing God, the one who delivers and rescues.

- **What if the lions had eaten Daniel? Would that change anything about God? Would it still have been right for Darius to say that God delivers and rescues?**

- o Answer: God would still be the same God if He had allowed Daniel to be eaten by the lions. The reason we can say that is because, while sometimes He does deliver and rescue people from physical harm on earth, His ultimate delivery and rescue is a spiritual one.

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Once you wrap up that discussion point, have the students to turn to Colossians 1:11-14 and let them know that you're going to dig into this idea of ultimate, lasting deliverance a little more.

If students don't have any questions, transition into The Thread and take a look at seeing where we discover the connection of the Gospel to the big-picture narrative of Scripture.

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FIRST, Read or have someone read Colossians 1:11-14. Ask something like:

- **So, what does this passage say that the Father has delivered us from? What did He deliver us to? What does that mean?**

- o Answer: This passage tells us that the Father has delivered us from "the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son." This means that He has taken us from our former life of enslavement to sin and death, and moved us into real and eternal life through Jesus.

- **How is this different from the deliverance Daniel experienced in the lion's den?**

- o Answer: No doubt, God rescuing Daniel from the lion's was an amazing miracle. But it only spared Daniel's life here on earth for a period of time. Eventually, he, like everyone else, died. So, while the experience in the lion's den was awesome, it was small potatoes compared with the eternal deliverance that is being talked about in this passage. One was temporary; one is completely perfect and eternal.

- **Do you tend to value temporal deliverance more than eternal deliverance?**

- o Answers here will vary. It's so easy for us to value what is right in front of us, and lose sight of what is really going to last. We can tend to value deliverance from tough situations much more than we value what Christ has done for us. Probe into why the students responses of why they tend to do that.

Once that discussion ends, transition to the Wrapping Up section.

Wrapping Up

- **Goal:** For students to consider what it means to live in the "Kingdom of the Son" as those who been brought from dark to light.
- **Set-Up:** None.

FIRST ask the students to think back to the video clip you watched at the beginning of the lesson. Tell them to think about the way they answered what the people probably felt like as they were wondering if they'd be rescued. Say something like:

- **So, think about this for a minute. Let's say one of them got home that day, hugged his wife and kids, got cleaned up, had a great meal, and kicked back in his recliner all safe and cozy in his**

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house. And then he thought, “You know what, this isn’t that great. I’d rather be lost at sea.” And he got up and made his way back to the middle of the ocean alone with a life jacket and an inflatable raft. What would you think about that?

o Answer: Well, obviously, we would all think the guy was an idiot. I mean, who would do something so dumb? Who would value sitting in the middle of the ocean ready to drown alone, over being safe and sound in your own house with your family?! That’s just nuts.

• Isn’t that the same as us being transferred from darkness and into the kingdom of Jesus, but still living like we were never rescued and delivered from death? What’s the difference?

o Answer: Yes, it is the same. They’re both crazy when you step back and think about it. We’ve been given the greatest gift in the world, yet we take it for granted all the time and run back to things that are awful for us.

• So, why is deliverance through Jesus greater than rescue from a certain situation?

o Answer: The deliverance and rescue we experience through trusting Jesus is eternal. We might get saved from a scary, dangerous, or stressful situation. But we’ll experience them again. When we’re delivered from sin through Jesus, it’s done once and for all and seals our eternity with the Lord.

• What do you think it truly looks like to live as a member of “the Kingdom of the Son” that has been delivered from darkness to life once and for all?

o Answers here will vary, but there are some things that should be brought up and discussed. Living as a member of the Kingdom means that we have an eternal perspective. This doesn’t mean we don’t care about what God has put in front of us, it just means our perspective is different. We value love, hope, mercy, compassion, and treasuring Jesus more than we value stuff and reputation and status.

• Spiritual growth is a process. We aren’t going to all be super-mature Christians overnight. But how do we continue to grow in this area and value the things of the Kingdom more and more?

o Answer: We continue to seek God, follow Him, and learn to treasure Jesus above all else.

WRAP-UP by saying something like:

• We’re using words like Kingdom, treasure, darkness, light, and value. It would be a lot easier to just get a checklist of things to do or not to do. That’s easier than working on our heart’s desires. But there are practical steps to take. We know that God’s Word is living and active. Spending time in it stirs our heart’s love and affection for Him. We know we can communicate with Him through prayer. This helps tune our hearts to His. And we know that the things of this world continually let us down. Remembering what Jesus has done for us, being grateful for that, and reminding ourselves that He is the only thing that can satisfy our souls, helps turn us toward Him and away from darkness.

Unless the students have any more comments or questions, close your Bible study with a time of prayer.

• If you’ve purchased the *Tracing The Thread* devotional journal, remind students that they’ll be working through Week 24 this week. Encourage them to keep up with the daily devotions, and to give memo-

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izing this week's verse their best shot.

- **If you'll be utilizing the digital devotions included in the *Thread* curriculum, remind students how you'll be making them available, i.e., Instagram, Facebook, etc.**
- **Use the Social Media guide to stay in touch with students via text or Twitter, and to encourage them to follow through with reading their devotions.**

We Want To Hear From You . . .

- Do you have questions about a lesson?
- Something that worked particularly well you want to share?
- Something that didn't work you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns, at feedback@youthministry360.com.