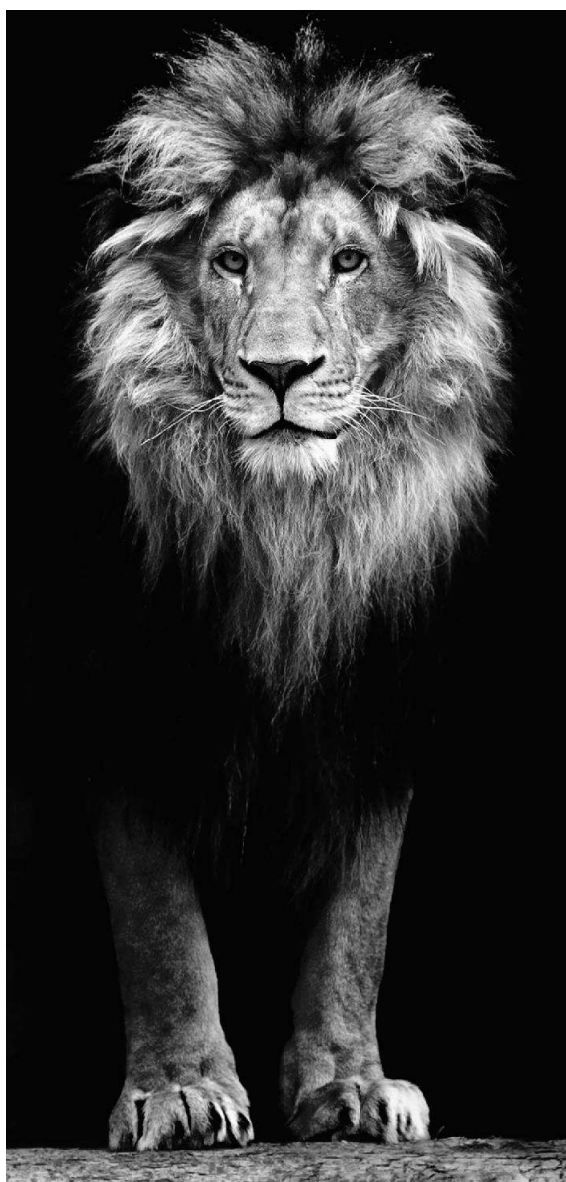


Journey to  
**Standing Strong**  
**in an Unstable World**



A STUDY OF DANIEL

by Jeremy C. Higle

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## Journey to Standing Strong in an Unstable World: A Study of Daniel (ESV® Edition)

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## PREFACE

Writing and publishing this book has taken twice as long as usual. This was partially due to the complexity of the book of Daniel. Though I completed nearly one hundred graduate credit hours in seminary, I did not have any course specifically on *Daniel* or end-times prophecy. Therefore, I had to spend much more time reading and studying to sufficiently understand the meaning of the text and the connections to other passages.

One of the challenges of teaching some of the prophecies in *Daniel* is the diverse opinions of scholars and teachers. The different opinions about the millennium in Revelation 20 directly affect views on *Daniel*. Each view has smart, godly proponents.

I took time to make sure I had a solid grasp of the three primary views: a-millennial, pre-millennial, and post-millennial. Then, I did my best to understand the implications of each view on Daniel's prophecies. This process enriched my understanding and increased my respect for each view. Without a doubt, each interpretation has strengths and weaknesses.

For the length and depth of this book, it is impossible to give explanations of all three views. Therefore, I decided to write from the pre-millennial viewpoint. This is the interpretation I personally prefer, but I readily admit the strengths of the other views.

If you are new to end-times prophecy, I would encourage you NOT to try and study all three interpretations at the same time. That would almost certainly confuse and discourage you. It is best to get a sound grasp on one of the interpretations and then study a second, followed by the third.

In the final lesson, I try to “boil it all down” to truths that Christians of the differing views would agree on. My thought is that no one in heaven will be bragging about how they were “right” about prophecy and others were “wrong.” God's ways are far above what we could have imagined. We will in one accord say “Amen.”

As always, these studies are a team effort. Thank you Pamela, Virginia, Martha, Carolyn, Ashly, Joseph, and Titus. Each of your fingerprints are on this book that will be used in homes and churches all over the world.

Peace and hope,



Jeremy Hogle

# SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUR JOURNEY

## I. HELPFUL MATERIALS

1. A good study Bible and reliable Bible dictionary (Ask your pastor or teacher for help in this area.)
2. A lead pencil. Don't use ink because you may want to change your answers.

## II. HINTS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

1. Pray for God's guidance before each session, that your mind and heart will be receptive to God's message for you.
2. Don't worry about scriptures you do not understand. Simply concentrate on what God reveals to you in His Word for now, and trust Him to make the vague things clearer as you continue to study.
3. Mark the Bible verses that really speak to you.
4. Read each lesson at least three times each week.

## III. HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR CLASS TIME

1. Attend every class period.
2. Arrive at least 10 minutes early to look over the lesson, so you will have an idea of what will be covered during that session.
3. Write down things you want to remember, or you will probably forget them. You increase your retention by 300% if you take notes.
4. Pray for your teacher every day.

## IV. HOW TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONS IN THE LESSONS

1. Look up the scripture reference in your Bible. Usually the answer is very simple and clear in that reference. However, sometimes there are questions that require thought, so you must meditate over the verse or passage to find its meaning. Answering the questions will become easier as the Bible comes to life to you during the study.
2. Don't simply quote the scripture. Write it in your own words as briefly as possible.
3. Whenever possible, personalize the scripture by using pronouns such as "I," "me," "my," "mine," etc.

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# SPIRITUAL PREPARATION FOR YOUR JOURNEY

To get the most from this “journey,” you must be spiritually prepared. The basic preparation is knowing Jesus Christ as Lord (boss) and Savior, so He can be your spiritual Guide on the journey. If you have never received Him, or if you are not sure, there are four things you must understand . . .

## 1. God loves you and wants you to have eternal life.

The Bible says, *For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life* (John 3:16\*). The Bible also says, *But God commendeth [proved] his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us* (Romans 5:8\*).

## 2. You are sinful, and your sin separates you from God.

The Bible says, *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God* (Romans 3:23\*). Sin separates us from God, for the Bible says, *But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you . . .* (Isaiah 59:2\*).

## 3. Only in Jesus Christ can forgiveness of sin and salvation be yours.

Jesus said, *I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me* (John 14:6\*). You must believe God loved us so much He sent His Son Jesus Christ to die on the cross to provide the way of salvation and that on the third day, God raised Jesus from the dead (Rom. 10:9)

Right now you may be thinking, “I already believe these things.” Well, the Bible teaches it is not a matter of just believing, for *the devils also believe, and tremble* (James 2:19b\*). Simply believing Adolf Hitler lived and died doesn’t make you a Nazi, and believing Jesus Christ lived and died doesn’t make you a Christian. You must act upon what you believe.

## 4. You must repent and receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

It is not enough to agree that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, who died on the cross for your sins and rose again. You must repent of your sins. Jesus said to be saved you must *repent* and *believe the gospel* (Mark 1:15\*). *Repent* means to turn away from your selfishness and sin and turn control of your life over to Jesus Christ. If you sense your need to repent of your sins and be saved, that is the Holy Spirit drawing you to Christ. Jesus said no one can come to Him unless the Father draws him (John 6:44\*).

If you will pray the following prayer right now, or pray in your own words, telling God you are repenting of your sins and inviting Jesus Christ into your heart, you can receive Him today as your Lord and Savior. The words are not as important as what you mean in your heart. Jesus said a man at the temple simply prayed, *God be merciful to me a sinner* and went to his house *justified*, or saved (Luke 18:13-14\*).

Dear Lord,

I know I have sinned. Right now, I repent of my sins and ask for Your forgiveness. I ask Jesus to be my Lord, to control my life, and to help me become the person You want me to be. Thank You, Jesus, for dying on the cross so I could be forgiven. Amen.

**Now, share your decision with your pastor or teacher.**

\*Scriptures from KJV

## LESSON 1: Grasping God’s Work in the World (1:1)



**A**s Christians practice the spiritual discipline of Bible study, we become wise and educated people. We learn about history, diverse cultures, different languages, geography, poetry, music, personal finance, philosophy, etc. In addition to these “school” topics, we learn theology, relationship principles, and spiritual realities. Our “journey” through the book of Daniel will teach us many of these things. What is the purpose of Christian education, according to Romans 12:2a-b?

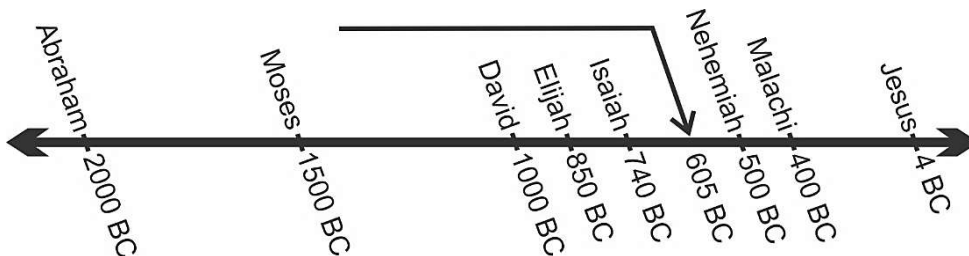
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*Standing strong* in this *unstable world* requires us to continually deepen our understanding of God’s unchanging truth. In this introductory lesson of our study of *Daniel*, we will see **three** foundational truths for **grasping God’s work in the world**. First...

### God reigns supreme in worldly affairs.

Write Daniel’s name on the empty line below.



Historians tell us Daniel was likely born during a spiritual revival under the righteous King Josiah (2 Chron. 34:33). Josiah reigned nearly 400 years after King David. Before Josiah, the nation had fallen into open idolatry and corruption. Therefore, God made this promise (fill in the blanks):

*Because they [the people of Judah] have \_\_\_\_\_ me and have made offerings to other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the \_\_\_\_\_ of their hands, therefore my \_\_\_\_\_ will be kindled against this place, and it will not be quenched (2 Kgs. 22:17, explanation added).*

After decades of spiritual decay under ungodly kings, King Josiah promised to rule God’s people according to God’s Word (2 Kgs. 23:3). This repentance delayed God’s judgment, leading to Daniel’s generation being reared under God’s truth (2 Kgs. 22:20).

Though Daniel was born into a time of revival, that renewal ended with a great collapse when he was around sixteen years old (Dan. 1:1). After King Josiah died, the dire predictions of the prophets were quickly fulfilled.

According to the prophet Isaiah, what does God promise will happen during Daniel's lifetime (Isaiah 39:6)?

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The Israelites refused to believe God would allow pagan armies to destroy Jerusalem and the Holy Temple. They ignored the warnings of Isaiah and the other prophets. Who "raised up" the Chaldeans to destroy Jerusalem and carry away God's people, according to Habakkuk 1:6?

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From the very beginning, God called the people of Israel to bring light to the pagan nations. Instead, they are bringing shame to God's name. They have ignored His prophets. Many have left the faith and are hopeless. Yet, a minority of Israelites during Daniel's generation are staying faithful to God. However, God's judgment of Israel will fall both on the righteous and unrighteous.

In the New Testament, Jesus connects the events of Daniel's generation with the final days before His Second Coming. He says earthly nations will be at war; many false spiritual leaders will rise to power; His true followers will be hated and even put to death; people will leave the faith and their love will grow cold (Mt 24:12). Yet, just as in the days of Daniel, a remnant of people will be faithful and endure to the end.

What do we discover about God's place in world affairs in Colossians 1:16?

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To grasp God's work in this world, we must first realize **God reigns supreme in worldly affairs**. Second...

### **God reserves the times and places for His people.**

Like many people, I once thought of God's will as something to search for—like a hidden treasure. I told myself, "If I just choose the right place, the right job, or the right community, then I would find God's will for my life." Modern culture taught me to focus on personal goals and plans. The Bible says something different: *The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD*



*establishes his steps* (Prov. 16:9). This means earthly goals are great if God is driving our daily disciplines. Christians should have goals and make plans. Then, we should work diligently toward those goals with integrity and a willingness to adjust as God leads. When we focus daily on HOW we do things and WHY we do things, we will end up right where God wants us.

Certainly, Daniel and his three friends (Dan. 1:6) had dreams and goals for their lives. However, by God's design they were kidnapped and had no choice about their location, occupation, education, or community. Yet, they were right where God wanted them. In Acts 17:26, we read that God determines where and when we all live. Then, what does verse 27 reveal about God's will for our lives?



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So, the Bible teaches God predestined the exact time and place Daniel was born. This means God **ordained** for Daniel to live his entire adult life in an ungodly, corrupt city filled with gossip and deadly politics. It would have been easy for Daniel to think his life was not important to God. However, Daniel's faithfulness in the place God planted him will have a positive impact far beyond his understanding.

Daniel's obedience in Babylon directly paves the way for Ezra, Esther, Nehemiah, and eventually the rebuilding of Jerusalem. Of course, Daniel did not see these things happen during his lifetime. Just like Daniel, you and I have no idea of the eternal effects of our faithfulness. However, when life seems unfair, we must remember what truth spoken by Joseph in Genesis 50:20?

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Not only does **God reign supreme in worldly affairs** and **reserve the times and places for His people**, but also . . .

### **God works on a scale beyond our comprehension.**

It is difficult to imagine what is going through the minds and hearts of Daniel's family during this invasion. The godless, cruel Babylonians are tearing down God's holy places and taking away God's holy people. If God is all knowing AND all powerful AND loves His people, then WHY does God not protect His children? Why are the faithful people being swept up in suffering because of the sins of other people?

In the early days of the church, people asked these same questions. Peter partially explains why God's people must endure suffering while waiting for God's delayed judgment: *But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day* (2 Pet. 3:8). Then, what does Peter go on to say in verse nine?

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So, God ordains that His people endure injustice in this sinful world so more people will have the opportunity to hear the Gospel and come to salvation. When Jesus returns, the opportunity for sinners to be saved will cease. Therefore, even today we must suffer temporarily so more people will hear the Gospel and come to eternal salvation.

A second reason we must suffer in this world is that God uses suffering to draw us closer to Him. We grow more intimate with God when our circumstances grow more impossible. In this "journey" through the book of Daniel, we will see God is most obviously working when things are most outwardly worsening. Daniel and his friends were never so close to God as they were in the furnace (Dan. 3) and in the lion's den (Dan. 6).

The final reason God allows His people to endure suffering in this sinful world is to glorify His Name. Who heard about the *Most High God* because of the fiery furnace miracle, according to Daniel 4:1-2?

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Jesus promises His followers will experience trouble during this age. However, when the time comes, this age will abruptly end. Those in Christ will receive grace and those not in Christ will receive justice. What does Jesus promise in the final words of the Bible (Rev. 22:20)?

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As we journey with Daniel and his friends in this study, we will gain a greater grasp on God's work in the world. In this lesson, we have discovered **God reigns supreme in worldly affairs, God reserves the times and places for His people, and God works on a scale beyond our comprehension.**

- What are some difficulties God has used in your life to draw you closer to Him?
- Has God used someone in your life as a positive influence, but he or she is unaware of it?