

A photograph of a dry, hilly landscape. In the foreground, a simple wooden cross stands on a dark, rocky outcrop. The background shows rolling hills and a valley with sparse, dry vegetation under a clear blue sky.

THE BRONZE BOW

STUDY GUIDE

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FOR THE NOVEL BY
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Table of Contents

Note to Instructor	4
Synopsis	5
About the Author	6
Background Information	7
Ideas for Pre-reading Activities	8
Chapters 1 & 2	10
Chapters 3–5	16
Chapters 6–8	23
Chapters 9–12	28
Chapters 13–15	33
Chapters 16–18	39
Chapters 19–21	45
Chapters 22–24	51
Summary	56
Additional Resources	59
Answer Key	60

Synopsis

Daniel's childhood came to an abrupt end when his father was condemned to death by Romans, his mother died of grief, and his sister went insane. He and his sister were cared for by his grandmother who tried to scrape together a living for herself and the children.

Blaming the Romans for all his problems, Daniel joins an outlaw band on the mountain overlooking his hometown. He believes he is fighting for his country and exercising vengeance on the Romans as he follows the outlaw leader, Rosh.

Daniel's life begins to change when he meets Joel and Malthace, two young people with a similar desire to see their land free of the Romans. The three of them make a pact to fight together for God's victory. But, Daniel finds he must leave the mountain to care for his sister, Leah. Daniel is torn between the responsibility he feels toward his sister and the vow of vengeance he has taken against the Romans.

Daniel takes over a blacksmith shop belonging to his friend Simon who has left town to follow a traveling teacher named Jesus. Daniel begins to wonder if Jesus is the leader they have all been hoping for; the one who will lead them against the Romans. But Jesus is teaching a very different message from the one Daniel wants to hear.

Trying to remain true to his vow, Daniel begins gathering together more young people to join with Rosh in the fight against the Romans. But circumstances soon cause Daniel to wonder if Rosh is really a worthy leader.

With nowhere to go and no one to turn to, Daniel has only his hate for the Romans to keep him going. In desperation he seeks out Jesus and learns that if he truly wishes to bring about God's victory he may need to give up his vow of vengeance. Though he feels trapped by both his vow and his responsibility to Leah, finding help for her leads him to an understanding of the power of love over hate.

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Characterization:

To make a story interesting, an author must portray the people in ways that make them seem real. They must have both good and bad features. This is called *characterization*. Answer the following questions about some of the characters introduced in the first two chapters.

1. Reread the first two paragraphs of the book. The first sentence of the book leads the reader to the questions, “Who is the boy? What is he like?” Write down everything you learn about Daniel found in these two paragraphs.
2. What questions do you have about Daniel that the author has not yet answered after two chapters of reading?
3. What do you learn about Joel and Malthace in the first chapter?
4. An author can make readers like or dislike a character by the words she uses to describe that character. Do you think the author wants her readers to like or dislike Rosh? Support your answer by listing five words, phrases, or sentences the author uses to describe Rosh.

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5. Describe the slave as he was when Rosh's band freed him.

Questions:

1. Why had Daniel run away to the hills?

2. What is Daniel ordered to do when the caravan approaches?

3. When Rosh asks Joel his reason for wanting to see him, what reason does Joel give? What is Rosh's response?

Thinking About the Story:

4. Why do you think Joel helps Daniel in the skirmish?

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5. What is Rosh's main requirement for those who wish to join his band? What is your opinion of this requirement?

6. What does the slave do when Daniel breaks his shackles? What do you think this gesture means?

7. To *compare* means to show how two things are alike. To *contrast* means to show how they are different. How does Malthace's opinion about the Roman occupation compare to Joel's and Daniel's view? How does her opinion contrast?

Dig Deeper:

8. Joel says,

“I used to think [the Messiah] would come with a great host of angels. Now I know it must be men, real men, trained and armed and ready—”

Many Old Testament scriptures predicted the coming of the Messiah. Read the four passages listed below. Would the descriptions found in these verses fit Joel's view of the Messiah? Put **Y** in the blank for yes, or **N** for no.

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| a. ____ Isaiah 41:1–2 | c. ____ Isaiah 53:4–9 |
| b. ____ Isaiah 42:2 | d. ____ Jeremiah 50:33–40 |

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Optional Exercises:

Research Roman mines and galleys. What else did Romans use slaves for?
Where did Romans get their slaves?

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Dig Deeper:

10. The Bible says that Jesus walked right through the crowds and went on his way. Simon feels ashamed because he was among those in the crowd who wanted to kill Jesus.

11. Jesus said his followers would have to endure many false messiahs, wars and rumors of wars, famines, earthquakes, tribulation, killing, hate, and betrayal. Answers will vary. The verses from 2 Timothy promise that if we die with Jesus, we will also live with him, if we endure, we will reign with him, and if we are faithless, he will remain faithful.

12. The only living family members mentioned in the story are Daniel's grandmother and his frightened sister. His sister was five-years-old when she hid inside the house. A man questions Daniel about his father and warns he could bring the same curse down on all of them. Joel's father remembers Daniel's father and says he was a good man, but a rash one. Answers will vary.

Chapters 6–8

Vocabulary:

1. g; 2. k; 3. c; 4. j; 5. f; 6. m; 7. a; 8. h; 9. l; 10. b; 11. n; 12. d; 13. o; 14. i; 15. e.

Questions:

1. Daniel takes pity on the horse, which is tired from being overridden.

2. Joel reads prophecies from the book of Enoch. This book was among several Jewish manuscripts written during the last two centuries BC which religious leaders decided not to include in the Old Testament of the Bible.

3. Hezron believes God will establish his kingdom on earth when He is ready. Joel and Daniel believe that God waits for men to act and fight to establish the kingdom.

4. Daniel's uncle had been unable to pay his taxes and was jailed. Daniel's father raised enough money for the tax, but his uncle had tried to fight his way out and the soldiers would not let him go. He was sent to work in the quarries to work off his debt. At the urging of the uncle's wife, Daniel's father took four other men and tried to rescue the uncle. The attempt failed and all the men, including Daniel's father and his uncle, were crucified.

5. Daniel's mother died because she stood out by the crosses all day and night for two days. She became sick and lived only a few more weeks. His sister, Leah, was being cared for by a neighbor, but got away and ran out to where the crosses were. She was filled with terror by what she saw and refused to go out of the house after that.

6. Daniel wants to find Simon, a fellow blacksmith, to get the right tools to fix Rosh's dagger.

7. Simon was hoping to ask Jesus to join the Zealots. Now Simon hopes that Jesus will ask Simon to join him.

8. Joel thinks Jesus is not a true rabbi because he broke one of the laws of the Pharisees.

Thinking About the Story:

9. Daniel vowed that he would avenge his father's death. He would "hate the [Romans] and fight them and kill them." That is all he lives for. Answers will vary.

10. Answers may include the following: Thacia tells Daniel to leave Joel alone. She does not like Rosh because he is an outlaw. On the other hand, Thacia hides Daniel and dresses his wound. She brings him food and cares for him while he lies in the passage. She sympathizes with him about the fate of his parents. She makes a vow with Daniel and Joel to work together for God's victory. She promises to bring her harp to play for Daniel. Her vow to join together with Joel and Daniel to serve Israel is what finally convinces Daniel that she is on his side.

11. Answers will vary.

12. Jesus' eyes are welcoming, yet at the same time searching, disturbing, and demanding. Answers will vary.

Dig Deeper:

13. Answers will vary. For both Daniel and Joel it means a vow to fight against the Romans, but for Thacia, it is a vow to serve Israel in whatever way she can.

14. The impossible thing the three young people are hoping to do is to free Israel from the Romans.

15. Answers will vary. Based on the story so far, Joel and Daniel might have the following questions about Jesus: Who is Jesus? Is he the leader we are waiting for? How is it that he can heal people? Could he be the Messiah?

Chapters 9–12

Vocabulary:

1. noun; manner of walking

2. verb; urged onward