

THE BRONZE BOW STUDY GUIDE

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FOR THE NOVEL BY
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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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Setting:

1. The story is set in the area on the north side of the Sea of Gallilee in the nation of Israel.
2. The story is set during the earthly ministry of Jesus. The time frame is A.D. 27–30. In A.D. 26 or 27 the Roman Emperor Tiberius retired to the island of Capri (Italy). Rome is left under the tyranny of the prefect of the Praetorian guard Sejanus.
3. Answers will vary.

Questions:

1. Simon comes to tell Daniel that Amalek is dead and that Daniel is free to return to the village.
2. The “same end” is the removal of the Romans from their land. Simon thinks it is wrong for Rosh to be stealing food. He thinks Rosh should earn his keep like everyone else.
3. Daniel is immediately drawn to Jesus and thinks that Jesus might be the leader he is hoping for. Later, Daniel is disappointed because Jesus calls for repentance instead of calling the people to arms against the Romans.
4. Two Roman soldiers appear and because of his hate for them, Daniel will not stay and hear Jesus speak.
5. Daniel does not like the fact that it was built with tax money collected by the Romans. He feels it is no better than the Roman stadium.
6. Hezron says the Law is stronger than all the power of Rome. The Law is still with us, but the Roman Empire is long gone.

Thinking About the Story:

7. Answers will vary, but may mention that Daniel felt that if he had to leave the mountain to care for Leah, he would have to give up his vow of vengeance.
8. Answers will vary, but may mention the following: Daniel has come to think of the mountain as home. His work and Rosh are far away. It is hot and oppressive in town.
9. Answers will vary. Thacia may realize why Daniel has come: to convince Joel to leave his studies and his family and join Rosh’s band.

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.