

27 – Daniel: Apocalypse of the Old Testament

- Daniel is an “**apocalyptic**” book (to uncover something hidden). Revelation is the only “apocalyptic” book in the New Testament. In addition to Daniel in the OT, The book of Zechariah is also apocalyptic, as well as portions of several other books. Daniel’s prophecies regarding end times are often explained by other books in the Bible (especially Revelation). Daniel and Revelation are like bookends of prophecy. Daniel provides the skeleton of end time prophecy, and Revelation gives the flesh.
- **SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT:** God has given us His Word to provide his plan to use and show us the way to salvation through His Son. There are many other books out there that claim to do the same. **How does God authenticate His book – His Word to His creation?** By prophecy – by telling us things that will happen BEFORE they happen – and doing it with amazing detail. GOD IS NOT SUBJECT TO TIME! Scriptures tell us: Isaiah 57:15: “*For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy...*” and Isaiah 46:10, “*...Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, ...*”
- Revelation differs from Daniel in one very basic way: most of the prophecy contained in **Revelation is about the FUTURE** – what is still yet to come. Daniel is different. **Most of the prophecies contained in Daniel have already been fulfilled.** (Most, not all. There are many here yet to be fulfilled, end times)
- Daniel contains some of the **most amazing and demonstrable proofs that the Bible is what it says it is** – the infallible inspired Word of God. Shows clearly that the bible is an “integrated message system” that has been divinely engineered.
- Some things in Daniel are “**sealed**” (hidden away, but perhaps they are becoming “unsealed” in our time). This book is protected by God, and not everything in it will be understood until the end times. Many believe it is being unsealed today, for our understanding (the times of the signs).
- Daniel does not deal with the Church (the Bride of Christ). The **main focus is Gentile history** in general (which includes all of us!), and God’s master plan for the Jews.
- “Holy” (*Kadosh*) is perhaps the bottom line of the study of the book of Daniel – **God is indeed holy, there is no one above Him – all of history is in his hands**
- Most of the Bible deals with history through the “lens” of Israel. That is, we see most of God’s plan for man’s redemption through His plan for the Jews, His chosen people. However, there is one very conspicuous exception: The Book of Daniel. Here there is an intense focus on Gentile history. We are able to look backwards to what Daniel looked forward to – fulfilled prophecy regarding the Gentile nations who have dominance in God’s plan at this moment.
- It is vital to know what Daniel says in order to understand the rest of Scripture, and Jesus himself makes this clear (He references Daniel 3 times, especially Daniel 9)
- **WHEN WAS DANIEL WRITTEN?** Some might think this is an unimportant question, and for many books of the Bible that is true. However, for the book of Daniel, it is a vital and important question. Because of the startling prophecies, and subsequent fulfillments validated by secular history, many “scholars” have tried to discredit this book (it is the most attacked book in the Bible!). One way they attempt this is by saying that it was not written when it was. That way, they don’t have to deal with the astonishing and faith-challenging fulfillments of prophecy. [Many Bibles even will introduce this book as having been written about 165 BC (usually noted as 2nd century BC), or AFTER the reign of Antiochus Ephanes, about whom many of these prophecies relate (and after the fall of Babylon, the rise and fall of Persia, and the Greek empire, all of which are prophesied in Daniel)]. The **ONLY** reason they do this is because they can’t accept the fact that God is beyond our time line, and sees it all, and gave the vision to Daniel.



- **Some say it doesn't matter WHEN it was written, but it does. It matters a great deal.** Daniel was taken captive to Babylon during the first siege of Nebuchadnezzar in 606 BC. Daniel lived through two major world empires and was most likely in his 90's when he died. While we do not have exact dates he wrote, this book was obviously an eye witness account to many of the events related, and had to have been written at least 5 centuries before Christ. This is important because many of the prophecies the book contains happen during this time (but not all! Some are still in the future).
- The book of Daniel is the **most authenticated book in the Bible, and the most vindicated**, because there have been so many attempts to discredit it – none successfully. Daniel is part of the Old Testament – the Jewish Tenach. That fact alone silences many critics. Why? Because we have proof that it was included in the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament that took place between 285 and 270 BC (almost 3 centuries before Jesus) which means it could NOT have been written after Antiochus Epiphanes (164 BC)
- An interesting note found in secular history about the dating of this book. The historian Josephus tells us that during **Alexander the Great's** conquest of Jerusalem in 332 BC, a Priest named Jaddua showed him references in the book of Daniel to himself (Alexander). The references and prophecies were so clear and so startling that Alexander had no trouble recognizing himself, and therefore spared the city. This is also documented by secular history.
- The **ultimate authentication**, however, for everyone who believes Jesus, is Jesus himself. He quotes Daniel 3 times, and verifies him as the author (living in the 5th-6th centuries BC), and as a prophet. Daniel is, by the way, the only book of scripture that we are told to completely understand (Matthew 24, Mark 13, both important chapters on the end times) – perhaps the greatest reason for studying this book. *“Therefore, when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place – whoever reads, let him understand – then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.”* (Matthew 24:15) This is a reference to the authority of Daniel as a prophet, and the command to understand this book.
- **Nothing bad or evil is spoken about Daniel anywhere.** He is only one of two people in the entire Bible in this category (Jesus is the other). In addition to the incredible prophecies, we should also be paying attention to the life of Daniel, so we can see him as a role model. His character, courage, faith and humility are important qualities we NEED to see. They should not be overlooked for the more dramatic impacts of the prophetic nature of the book.
- Daniel contains the **only writings of a Gentile in the Jewish Tenach** (Old Testament). Chapter 4 is the proclamation of Nebuchadnezzar, a Gentile king, of the Most High God.
- **THE ORGANIZATION OF DANIEL:** Daniel is basically divided into two main sections: Chapters 1-6 are HISTORIC, relating actual events in Daniel's life. Many prophecies are contained in these chapters as well, but the greatest amount of prophecy is found in chapters 7-12, which are all visions. These chapters (7-12) are like appendices to the first 6 chapters.
- The layout and content of this book are an excellent reason to accept the concept of **DISPENSATIONALISM** – that is, that God has separate plans for the Church (the Body of Christ), and for Israel (and for other groups, Old Testament Saints, Body of Christ, Israel, Tribulation Saints, etc.). This is not a different plan of salvation, as all come to God through His Son. This means there is a different course of action, plan, for each group to be covered by God and be reunited with Him.

Highlights

Daniel 1: Jewish Captive's Obedience, God's Faithfulness

Daniel, most likely a young man (age 13-17) and probably of the royal family, is taken captive to Babylon after the 1st siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar in 606 BC. Daniel desired to be obedient to God's Laws, made a deal with the head eunuch, won favor in the king's court. Daniel and friends are being trained to be the king's advisers (“wise men”); they learn faster and fare better than all others. Come to the king's attention.

Daniel 2: Gentile History followed by Divine Government in a Dream

Nebuchadnezzar's troubling Dream, a 4-part metallic statue. None of king's advisors (astrologers, magicians, etc.) could interpret the dream, all are sentenced to die. Daniel asks for time to pray, receives the interpretation from God. Gives king the interpretation [kingdoms of Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, "revived" Rome, followed by the "Stone" not cut with human hands (divine)], and he and friends are advanced into high positions in kingdom of Babylon. Daniel becomes Nebuchadnezzar's "right hand" man.

Daniel 3: A Great Trial

Nebuchadnezzar builds huge gold statue to honor himself. People are commanded to bow down and worship it every time the music plays. Daniel's friends (*we know them as Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, but their Hebrew names are Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Daniel's Babylonian name was Belteshazzar*) are officials in the empire, and present when statue is unveiled. They refuse to bow down, are thrown into fiery furnace, but Jesus appears with them and spares them. Nebuchadnezzar is amazed and gives tribute to the God of these Hebrews, but still does not know Him personally....yet. Interesting note of this chapter is that Daniel seems absent, not involved in this incident. Many think this may have some prophetic implication about the end times and the non-presence of the Church.

Daniel 4: Gentile King Humbled (Ox King), Tribute to Most High God

Strange chapter, only one in Hebrew scriptures written by a Gentile. Nebuchadnezzar has another dream, Daniel interprets, but not good for the king. Evidence that Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar are friends. Nebuchadnezzar filled with pride, God humbles him by giving him a mental disorder for 7 years. Nebuchadnezzar actually believes he is an ox, and spends 7 years grazing outside (a vivid picture of his condition, long nails, long hair, etc. is provided). God restores his sanity and his kingdom, and he writes an amazing testimony (a proclamation to the entire kingdom) to the God of Daniel and Israel. NOW Nebuchadnezzar knows this God personally. It is a beautiful testimony to God.

Daniel 5: Babylon Judged (The Handwriting on the Wall)

Nebuchadnezzar's grandson (Belshazzar) on the throne (Neb dead, son abdicated the throne, so grandson is acting king), throws a huge decadent party, uses temple utensils to drink from, commits blasphemy. Suddenly a hand appears to write something on the wall. The party stops dead, Daniel is called to interpret. Not good news for this king or his kingdom. That night the Persian army breaks through the city walls (actually underneath them) and takes over Babylon without a fight. The Babylonian empire ends that night.

Daniel 6: Another Gentile King proclaims the Living God (Lion's Den)

Daniel is high official also in Persian empire, but peers are jealous and set him up. Also set up King Darius to issue a decree where everyone must bow down to him and give him honor. Darius does not realize what he is doing here (law of Medes and Persians, cannot be revoked). Daniel refuses to bow down to the king, and only worships his God. Because of this law, Darius is forced to "kill" Daniel and throws him into the lion's den. Darius is troubled and saddened, realizes his pride caused this and is concerned about Daniel. But Daniel does fine, of course, as God spares him. Next morning Darius runs down to the pit, and Daniel greets him. Those who planned Daniel's execution are killed, and their families. Darius then also issues a mighty kingdom-wide decree proclaiming the God of Daniel.



Daniel 7: Nightmare of the Future

Daniel has a vision essentially the same as Nebuchadnezzar's in ch 2, about Gentile world empires. However, this dream is God's version of these empires – bloodthirsty, voracious animals. He dreams of four beasts that are four world kingdoms (winged lion=Babylon, bear with ribs in mouth=Persia, winged leopard=Greece, "terrible" beast=Rome). We then see the "Ancient of Days" and the Son of Man, books are opened and judgment court is held. Dominion given permanently to the Son of Man. The "little horn" (antichrist) appears as pompous, blaspheming loudmouth, makes war against the saints, will win for a little while, will intend to change the times and the law, a period of 3 ½ years, will lose dominion, be destroyed in end. Interpretation of the beasts is given. End times vision.



Daniel 8: The Rise of Persia and Greece, Final Ruler

Another vision of The Ram (Persia) and the Goat (Greece), prophecy of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, desecration of the temple, and beyond Antiochus (*a type for antichrist*) to a future ruler in latter days of Israel's history. Will have "fierce features," understand "sinister schemes" (KJV "dark sentences, literally convoluted parables, riddles, occult). Will achieve worldwide influence, power, but not by his own power. Will destroy "fearfully" including God's holy people. He will prosper and thrive, is a cunning deceitful liar, will exalt himself, will stand against the "Prince of Princes (King of Kings!)", but will be broken by divine hands.

Daniel 9: Repentance and Intercession, 70 Weeks of Israel, Jerusalem (v. 24-27)

Daniels reads Jeremiah and knows captivity ending soon. He prays for his people and the city of Jerusalem, very humble and sincere prayer of mercy. Archangel Daniel arrives to bring a message, a prophetic time clock for how things will go forward. Stunning prophecies of the "70 Weeks" (weeks of years, 7 years=1 week, 70 weeks of years = 490 years) tied to secular markers (decrees of Gentile kings, traceable) for bringing people back from captivity and walls being rebuilt in Jerusalem. Arrival of Messiah to Jerusalem can be traced to the day by these prophecies and their markers. Jews should have expected Jesus. Messiah to be "cut off" (killed) at end of the 69 weeks. A lot of time given to the 70th week, a period of 7 years at the end of time (tribulation). "Prince who is to come" is related somehow to the people who will destroy the sanctuary (Romans in 70 AD). This person (antichrist) will make a covenant with Israel for 7 years, which will most likely begin the tribulation period, or the 70th week. He will break the treaty at the mid-point (3 ½ years) and cause the abomination of desolation in the temple. We are currently living in "gap" between end of 69th week (crucifixion of the Messiah) and beginning of 70th week (tribulation).

Daniel 10: A Look Behind the Scenes: Spiritual Warfare

Daniel understood message of ch 9, mourned and fasted, is visited by a great angel to comfort him. Some think this is Jesus, but Jesus would not be delayed by "prince of the kingdom of Persia" (a demonic principality) for 3 weeks! Angel speaks encouraging words, then leaves to fight again with this "prince" but says next comes prince of Greece. Tells him Michael, "prince of your people," helps him fight. (*These world empires are controlled by spiritual forces, good and bad*). This is glimpse into world of spiritual warfare.

Daniel 11: Wars Between the Kings of the North and the Kings of the South

Difficult chapter to follow and understand, basically covers ongoing wars between kings of the North (Syria, Seleucus, Antiochus) and kings of the south (Egypt, Ptolemies). Very precise prophecies already precisely fulfilled in history. The information about a "willful" king who will exalt himself above all gods, blaspheme the true God, prosper for a time, and will not "regard the God his fathers" nor "the desire of woman" (can be interpreted many ways). This is a reference to the antichrist who will "honor the god of "forces" or fortresses, strongholds. End of chapter seems to describe final battles, end of the willful king.

Daniel 12: Terrible Times to Come

Wrap to this book, there will be a great time of trouble (time of Jacob's trouble) for Daniel's people and the whole world, another abomination of desolation (Antiochus did this the first time, antichrist will do it the last time), and a resurrection. Michael will fight for Israel. Daniel told to "go his way" and seal up the book. An interesting note about number of days involved in certain end time events that still puzzle scholars.