

Introduction to Daniel

3/24/21

The author of this book is Daniel. The name, in the original text, means "God is my Judge". One of the lessons that must be gained from this book is the fact that Daniel is faithful to God despite the external difficulties that he encounters. The reader of his life will be hard pressed to find any lack of service to His Lord which is not the same with other folk found in the Bible. The reputation of Daniel was so great, even in his lifetime, that it became a proverb, "The art wiser than Daniel", said Ezekiel ironically to the king of Tyre (Ezek. 28:3), and by the same prophet God ranks him among the most holy and exemplary of men, when He declares, speaking relative to Jerusalem, which had been condemned to destruction, "Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, they should deliver but their own lives by righteousness." (Ezek. 14:14, 20).

Jesus makes reference to the work God allowed Daniel to do in Mat. 24:15. Jesus refers to him as the prophet (meaning of course of God) and the deep and accurate prophecies written in great detail about God's plan for Israel and for gentiles.

The date of this book is 536 B. C. recording events that occurred from about 605-536 B. C.

In this book we find that Daniel is taken captive and deported to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar in 605 B. C. There he served in the government for about 70 years during the reigns of Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius, and Cyrus. He was brought there when he was 15.

The key verse is found in 2:22 "He (God) revealeth the deep and secret things: He knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with Him."

Daniel's apocalyptic visions (chapters 7-12) give a glimpse of God's plan for the ages, including a direct prediction of the Messiah.

Daniel's story line should encourage us to be faithful to God in all things. He and his people were captives in a strange land. Despite the cruel masters over him and the culture full of idolatry he had been thrust into Daniel remained true to His God and would not allow discouragement to overwhelm him. Daniel understood that despite the circumstances God was sovereign and was working out His plan for nations, and individuals. This book centers on the truth of the sovereignty of God.

A proper understanding of Daniel assists in a proper interpretation of the book of Revelation, for many of the same symbols and parallel prophecies are used in both books. The image God gave to King Nebuchadnezzar is instrumental in understanding the plans for the "times of the Gentiles". This prophecy details world events from Daniel's day (605 B.C.) until the kingdom of Antichrist is displaced at the second coming of Christ.

Daniel does not mention the Church Age, but does allude to the "one week" (seven years) yet to come, called elsewhere the "Tribulation" (Dan. 9:27) or the "time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7), ending with the second coming of Christ and "the end of the world" (Mat. 13:40).

Fifty-eight separate prophecies appear in the book of Daniel, involving 162 of the total 357 verses, or 45 %.

We will discover Daniel's life characterized by purpose, prayer, and prophecy.

Dan. 2:44 "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."

Dr. G. Campbell Morgan: "Persistent Government of God in the Government of the World." Prophecy is interwoven with history to show that God is overruling the idolatry, blasphemy, self-will, and intolerance of the Gentiles.

While the book of Daniel treats the "Times of the Gentiles", it does not give an outline of all the Gentile nations, but only of those which were successively to have sway over the territory of the "Prophetic Earth" or that part of the earth covered by the Old Roman Empire. Bible prophecy has nothing to say about the nations as such in their relation to one another, but only in their relation to Israel and the Holy Land.

Deut. 32:8 "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam (at Babel), He set the bounds of the people 'according to the number of the children of Israel'".

The key to all prophecy is the Jew. If the Jewish nation had not forsaken God and neglected His Sabbaths, there would have been no "Times of the Gentiles". The "Time of the Gentiles" began when God transferred earthly rule from the Kings of Israel to the Gentile king Nebuchadnezzar, and they will continue until Israel again becomes the "Head of the Nations". Daniel is distinctly the Prophet of the "Times of the Gentiles". His vision sweeps the whole course of Gentile World Rule until the setting up of the Messianic or Millennial Kingdom of Christ. Daniel was not a prophet in the same sense that Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Minor Prophets were prophets. Their mission was to go to the people and proclaim the Word of the Lord, while Daniel's mission was to record what was revealed to him through visions. While he did not have the "Prophetic Office", he had the "Prophetic Gift". The Book of Daniel is the Apocalypse of the Old Testament, as the Book of Revelation is the Apocalypse of the New Testament, and one cannot be understood without the other, and it is worthy of note that as Daniel is thrice called the man "greatly beloved", the Apostle John is called the "beloved disciple". To these two men was accorded the privilege of seeing in vision the whole "course of time" from B. C. 605, on down to the Second Coming of Christ.

Christ is the Great Stone who will crush the kingdoms of this world (2:34; 35; 44), the Son of Man who is given dominion by the Ancient of Days (7:13, 14), and the coming Messiah who will be cut off (9:25, 26). We need to study closely the vision Daniel is given in 10:5-9 of whom is in the appearance and compare it to Rev. 1:12-16.

The vision of the 69 weeks in 9:25-26 pinpoints the coming Messiah. The decree of 9:25 took place on March 4, 444 B. C. (Neh. 2:1-8).

The 69 weeks of seven years equals 483 years, or 173,880 days (using 360 day prophetic years). This leads to March 29, A.D. 33, the date of the Triumphal Entry. This is checked by noting that 444 B. C. to A. D. 33 is 476 years, and 476 times 365.24219 days per year equals 173,855 days. Adding twenty-five for the difference between March 4 and March 29 gives 173,880 days.

Daniel was written to encourage the exiled Jews by revealing God's sovereign program for Israel during and after the period of gentile domination. Daniel repeatedly emphasizes the sovereignty and power of God over human affairs.

Chapter 9 of Daniel provides the chronological frame for messianic prediction from the time of Daniel to the establishment of the kingdom on earth. The first 69 weeks were fulfilled at Christ's first coming. The 70th week will begin when the Bride of Christ is removed from this earth and found in heaven (Rev.4). This event, as we discovered from our Revelation studies will occur immediately upon the "catching away" of the Bride and will end 7 years later with Jesus coming down to set His 1,000 reign. (Rev. 19-20).

Outline of Daniel

Part one: the personal History of Daniel (1:1-21).

The deportation of Daniel to Babylon (1:1-7)

The faithfulness of Daniel in Babylon (1:8-16)

The reputation of Daniel in Babylon (1:17-21)

Part Two: The Prophetic plan for the Gentiles (2:1-7:28)

1) Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the great image. (2:1-49)

Nebuchadnezzar conceals his dream. (2:1-13)

God reveals the dream. (2:14-23)

Daniel interprets the dream. (2:24-45)

Nebuchadnezzar promotes Daniel. (2:46-49)

2) Nebuchadnezzar's image of gold. (3:1-30)

Nebuchadnezzar's image is erected. (3:1-7)

Daniel's friends refuse to worship. (3:8-12)

Daniel's friends trust God. (3:13-18)

Daniel's friends are protected. (3:19-25)

Daniel's friends are promoted. (3:26-30)

3) Nebuchadnezzar's vision of a great tree. (4:1-37)

Nebuchadnezzar's proclamation. (4:1-3)

Nebuchadnezzar's vision. (4:4-18)

Daniel's interpretation of the vision. (4:19-27)

Nebuchadnezzar's humiliation. (4:28-33)

Nebuchadnezzar's restoration. (4:34-37)

4) Belshazzar and the handwriting on the wall. (5:1-31)

Belshazzar defiles the temple vessels. (5:1-4)

Belshazzar sees the handwriting. (5:5-9)

Daniel interprets the handwriting. (5:10-29)

Belshazzar is killed. (5:30-31)

5) Darius' foolish decree. (6:1-28)

Daniel is promoted. (6:1-3)

Darius signs the foolish decree. (6:4-9)

Daniel prays faithfully. (6:10-15)

Daniel is saved in the Lions' den. (6:16-24)

Darius's wise decree. (6:25-28)

6) Daniel's vision of the four beasts (7:1-28)

The revelation of the vision. (7:1-14)

Four beasts. (7:1-8)

"Ancient of Days". (7:9-14)

The interpretation of the vision. (7:15-28)

Interpretation of the four beasts. (7:15-22)

Interpretation of the fourth beast. (7:23-28)

Part three: The Prophetic Plan for Israel (8:1-12:13)

1). The revelation of the vision. (8:1-27)

The Ram. (8:1-4)

The He goat. (8:5-8)

The Little Horn. (8:9-12)

2) The length of the vision. (8:13-14)

3) The interpretation of the vision. (8:15-27)

Interpretation of the vision. (8:15-19)

Interpretation of the Ram. (8:20)

Interpretation of the He Goat. (8:21-22)

Interpretation of the Little Horn (8:23-26)

Response of Daniel. (8:27)

Daniel's vision of the seventy weeks. (9:1-27)

The understanding of Daniel. (9:1-2)

The intercession of Daniel. (9:3-19)

The intervention of Gabriel. (9:20-23)

The revelation of the seventy weeks. (9:24-27)

Daniel's vision of Israel's future. (10:1-12:13)

The preparation of Daniel. (10:1-21)

Time of the vision. (10:1-4)

Vision of the heavenly messenger. (10:5-9)

Touch of the heavenly messenger. (10:10-17)

Strengthening by the heavenly messenger. (10:18-21)

The revelation of the sixty-nine weeks. (11:1-35)

The rule of Persia. (11:1-2)

The rule of Greece (11:3-35)

The Revelation of the seventieth week. (11:36-12:3)

Prophecy of the Willful King. (11:36-45)

Prophecy of the Great Time of Trouble. (12:1)

Prophecy of the Resurrections. (12:2-3)

The Conclusion of the Visions of Daniel. (12:4-13)

Sealing of the Book. (12:4)

Questions regarding the Great Time of Trouble. (12:5-13).