

## **#22. DANIEL**

**1. Daniel is a prophetic collection and biographical memoir of a young exile from Judah.**

In the year of his captivity (605BC) his name was changed to Belteshazzar, but we know him best by his Hebrew name Daniel.

**2. The author of the book is Daniel himself (7:1; 8:15; 9:2; 10:2, 7; 12:5).** Christ Himself gave confirmation to Daniel's authorship in Matthew 24:15. Daniel is also mentioned by Ezekiel (Ezekiel 14:14, 29; 28:3).

- Daniel had been deported from Jerusalem as a promising young member of nobility in the society of Judah. He served the governments of Babylon (chapters 1-8) and Persia (chapters 6-12) for over 70 years during the reigns of Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius and Cyrus.
  
- Daniel's name means *God is my judge*.
  
- Daniel's life is of particular importance for the following reasons:
  - He remained faithful to God and his Hebrew upbringing though he suffered great trauma and a complete cultural shift.
  
  - His example of wisdom and steadfastness in facing persecution, cultural hostility, and personal enemies is phenomenal.
  
  - His prophetic insights provide a grid for understanding the ultimate restoration of Israel.
  
  - His revelations reveal that God is not only in control of Israel's destiny, but the destinies of all nations.
  
- In Daniel 2:24-45, we see the story of Nebuchadnezzar's dream that represented dominating world empires.
  - The head of gold represented the kingdom of Babylon - 606B. until 539BC.
  
  - The arms and chest of silver represented an inferior kingdom known as Medo-Persia

- 539BC until 331BC.

- The belly and thighs of bronze represented the Grecian Empire - 331BC until 146BC.
- The legs and feet of iron and clay represented the Roman Empire - 146BC until 476AD.
- In the days of what many believe will be some sort of renewed Roman Empire (2:33, 41-43; 7:7, 8, 11, 24, 25; 8:9-12, 23-26; 11:36-45), the Kingdom of God will be established on earth and no human empire will remain. Other scholars believe this passage was a prophetic declaration of the Church outlasting the Roman Empire, which certainly has happened.
- Though we know Daniel certainly spoke the infallible Word of God in His prophecies, there are many unresolved issues in the minds of some Christians.
  - Students of the Bible are divided over the question of the seven years of judgment (7:21, 22; 11:36-45; 12:1). I agree with many conservative scholars who identify this with Jesus' prediction of The Great Tribulation (Matthew 24).
  - There is also a question of whether 11:21-45 refers only to Antiochus Epiphanes (the *prototype* of antichrist) or whether there is also a forward look to the *end time antichrist* described by Paul (2 Thessalonians 2) and John the Apostle (Revelation 11, 13, 14, 17, 19 etc.). Those of us who believe there is a dual reference see 11:21-35 as dealing with Antiochus (175-164BC), while 11:36-45 deals with the Antichrist who is to come.
  - There is great difficulty associated with finding a clear, concise meaning to the *seventy sevens* revealed in 9:24-27. Generally, dispensationalists (and quite a few who are not of that persuasion) believe the first 69 weeks are a countdown to Messiah. There is a *time-out* of sorts and the countdown resumes at the onset of the Great Tribulation, resulting in the seven years of judgment described in Revelation.

**3. The Date of writing was probably between 536 (earliest date) and 530BC (latest date).**  
Daniel's account covers significant events that occurred between 605 and 536BC.

#### **4. Key Chapters**

- **Chapters 1-6** are primarily vignettes from Daniel's personal life mixed with powerful prophetic images and themes.

- **Chapters 7-12** are a collection of visions that gave hope to the Jewish captives and motivation to trust God for a future restoration of all they had lost. The path would not be easy, but it would be certain.

## 5. Key Verses

- **Daniel 2:21, 22 NASB** “It is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men and knowledge to men of understanding. <sup>22</sup>It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with Him.”
- **Daniel 3:16-18 NASB** Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. <sup>17</sup> If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. <sup>18</sup> But *even if He does not*, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”
- **Daniel 5:11,12 NASB** There is a man in your kingdom in whom is a spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of your father, illumination, insight and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods were found in him. And King Nebuchadnezzar, your father, your father the king, appointed him chief of the magicians, conjurers, Chaldeans *and* diviners. <sup>12</sup>*This was* because an extraordinary spirit, knowledge and insight, interpretation of dreams, explanation of enigmas and solving of difficult problems were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Beltshazzar. Let Daniel now be summoned and he will declare the interpretation.”
- **Daniel 6:25-28 NASB** Then Darius the king wrote to all the peoples, nations and *men of every* language who were living in all the land: “May your peace abound! <sup>26</sup> I make a decree that in all the dominion of my kingdom men are to fear and tremble before the God of Daniel; For He is the living God and enduring forever, and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed, And His dominion *will be* forever. <sup>27</sup>“He delivers and rescues and performs signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, Who has *also* delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.” <sup>28</sup> So this Daniel enjoyed success in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.
- **Daniel 9:20-23 NASB** Now while I was speaking and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God in behalf of the holy mountain of my God, <sup>21</sup> while I was still speaking in prayer, then the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision previously, came to me in *my* extreme weariness about the time of the evening offering. <sup>22</sup> He gave *me* instruction and talked with me and said, “O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you insight with understanding. <sup>23</sup> At the beginning of your supplications the command was issued, and I have come to tell *you*, for you are highly esteemed; so give heed to the message and

gain understanding of the vision.

## 6. Key People

- **Daniel** - author of the book; a government servant in Babylon and Medo-Persia, a prophet with unusual spiritual visions, administrative skills, and interpretive abilities for those who dreamed.
- **Nebuchadnezzar** - King of Babylon
- **Belshazzar** - final king of Babylon; overthrown by the Persians
- **Darius** - King of Persia who greatly respected Daniel and like Nebuchadnezzar, acknowledged Jehovah as Lord of Lords.
- **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego** -Daniel's three friends who were also brought to Babylon as prisoners from Jerusalem. Their Hebrew names were Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. They are famous because of their spiritual stand in chapters 1 and 3.

## 7. Key Places

- **Babylon** was the capitol city of Judah's opposing force, Babylon. Scenes of Daniel's story are played out in Nebuchadnezzar's palace, the blast furnace, and in the lion's den.

## 8. Key Themes

- **Sovereignty** - God is always in control. He works His will in individuals and nations.
- **Persistence** - nothing can break the child of God.

"Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence.

Talent will not; nothing in the world is more common than unsuccessful men with talent.

Genius will not; unrewarded genius is a proverb.

Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts.

Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent."

*Calvin Coolidge (1872-1933), 30th President of the United States*

- **Faithfulness** - Daniel and his friends remained faithful men of integrity, even when it appeared there was no outward reason to do so.

## 9. The Contents of Daniel

- ***The Personal Background of Daniel and His Friends (1:1-21)***
  - The Siege and Conquest of Jerusalem (1:1, 2)
  - Jewish prisoners taken to Babylon (1:3-7)
  - The courage and persistence of the four Hebrews (1:8-16)
  - The promotion of Daniel and his friends (1:17-21)
- ***Stories and Prophetic Vignettes During Daniel's Life (2:1-7:28)***
  - Dreams and judgments involving Nebuchadnezzar (2:1-4:37)
  - The arrogance and judgment upon Belshazzar (5:1-31)
  - The deliverance of Daniel from the lions (6:1-28)
  - Daniel's prophetic dream (7:1-28)
- ***The Future of Restored Israel (8:1-12:13)***
  - The vision of the ram and the male goat - Medo-Persia and Greece (8:1-27)
  - The prophecy of the seventy weeks (9:1-27)
  - The prophecy concerning Israel's humiliation and eventual restoration (10:1-12:13)

### Worth noting

- Michael the Archangel appears in Daniel.

- He assists another angel in 10:13, 21.
- He will defend Israel during the Great Tribulation (12:1).
- In Jude 9, he contended with Satan over the body of Moses.
- He will fight against Satanic armies in the spiritual realm (Revelation 12).
- Daniel is an ancient book, but it gives modern insight on serving God in a hostile culture.
- We see that even kings are subject to The Lord's plan. Though David is a slave, he had more true freedom than any of the kings he served. His writings remind us that God is sovereign, and all the nations are under His complete control.
- Many have speculated that Daniel was a eunuch. The prediction to Hezekiah that many sons of Israel would become eunuchs in the palace of Babylon makes this a possibility (2 Kings 20:18; Isaiah 39:7). Many Rabbi's as well as Josephus described Daniel and his friends in this way. We see no reference to Daniel having a wife, but that is simply an argument from silence. It may also be generally true that eunuchs were identified as such (Acts 8:36) and no such designation is attached to Daniel. It is also true that the word translated eunuch (*saris*) is also used to designate a governmental administrator. For instance, the word used to describe Potiphar could also be translated *eunuch* instead of *official*, yet he had a wife. The word was used to describe a council of leaders in Judah, but the practice was forbidden in Israel. The bottom line is that we simply do not know if Daniel had been mutilated and made into a literal eunuch. It is a possibility, yet it is equally possible that such trauma did not occur. In fact, it has no bearing on the story except as it relates to the possible trauma inflicted on this great Man of God.

#### **When reading the Books of Daniel:**

- Remember that the last section of Daniel is highly apocalyptic and ties in with the books of Revelation and Zechariah.
- Though Daniel is placed in the section of the Bible known as *the Prophets*, in the Hebrew Bible he is **considered part of *the Writings* since it differs so much from typical prophetic oracles. It is a unique blend of biography and prophetic ecstasy that makes Daniel a unique addition to the Scriptures.**