

## DANIEL (Teacher's Edition)

### Part One: The Personal History of Daniel (1:1-21)

- I. Daniel Carried Away to Babylon 1:1-7
- II. The Faithfulness of Daniel in Babylon 1:8-16
- III. Daniel's Reputation in Babylon 1:17-21

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

- I. Nebuchadnezzar's First Dream 2
  - A. Nebuchadnezzar Conceals His Dream 2:1-13
  - B. God Reveals the Dream 2:14-23
  - C. Daniel Interprets the Dream 2:24-45
  - D. Nebuchadnezzar Promotes Daniel 2:46-49
- II. Nebuchadnezzar's Image of Gold 3
  - A. Nebuchadnezzar's Image is Set Up 3:1-7
  - B. Daniel's Friends Refuse to Worship 3:8-12
  - C. Daniel's Friends Trust God 3:13-18
  - D. Daniel's Friends Are Protected in the Furnace 3:19-25
  - E. Daniel's Friends Are Promoted 3:26-30
- III. Nebuchadnezzar's Vision of a Great Tree 4
  - A. Nebuchadnezzar's Proclamation 4:1-3
  - B. Nebuchadnezzar's Vision 4:4-18
  - C. Daniel's Interpretation of the Vision 4:19-27
  - D. Nebuchadnezzar's Humiliation 4:28-33
  - E. Nebuchadnezzar's Restoration 4:34-37
- IV. Belshazzar and the Handwriting on the Wall 5
  - A. Belshazzar Defiles the Temple Vessels 5:1-4
  - B. Belshazzar Sees the Handwriting 5:5-9
  - C. Daniel Interprets the Handwriting 5:10-29
  - D. Belshazzar Is Killed 5:30-31
- V. Darius' Foolish Decree 6
  - A. Daniel Is Promoted 6:1-3
  - B. Darius Signs the Foolish Decree 6:4-9
  - C. Daniel Prays Faithfully 6:10-15
  - D. Daniel in the Lion's Den 6:16-17
  - E. Daniel Is Saved from the Lions 6:18-24
  - F. Darius' Wise Decree 6:25-28
- VI. Daniel's Vision of the Four Beasts 7
  - A. The Revelation of the Vision 7:1-14
  - B. The Interpretation of the Vision 7:15-28

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

- I. Daniel's Vision of the Ram and Male Goat 8
  - A. The Revelation of the Vision 8:1-12
  - B. The Length of the Vision 8:13-14
  - C. The Interpretation of the Vision 8:15-27
- II. Daniel's Vision of the Seventy Weeks 9
  - A. The Understanding of Daniel 9:1-2
  - B. The Intercession of Daniel 9:3-19
  - C. The Intervention of Gabriel 9:20-23
  - D. The Revelation of the Seventy Weeks 9:24-27
- III. Daniel's Vision of Israel's Future 10:1--12:13
  - A. The Preparation of Daniel 10

B. The Revelation of the Sixty-Nine Weeks	11:1-35
C. The Revelation of the Seventieth Week	11:36--12:3
D. The Conclusion of the Visions of Daniel	12:4-13

### **AUTHOR-**

The author of this great book was most probably Daniel himself, and his name means, "God is My Judge". He was taken captive in one of the Babylonian raids against Judah to Babylon where he lived for over 50 years. According to the opening chapter, he was most likely from an upper class family. Daniel and his three friends, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, intelligent and promising, were placed in special training as servants in the court of King Nebuchadnezzar; then their names and diets were changed to reflect Babylonian culture in an attempt to take away their Jewish identity. But Daniel and his friends rose to the challenge, and did not defile themselves. The young men increased in wisdom and knowledge, gaining favor in the king's court.

### **WHEN THE BOOK WAS WRITTEN-**

Although the siege and carrying away of captives into Babylon lasted several years, the mighty men of valor, the skilled, and the educated were taken from Jerusalem early in the war (2 Kings 24:14). The date usually given for Daniel's captivity is 605 B.C. His prophecy covers the span of his life in Babylon and Persia.

### **ABOUT THE BOOK-**

To start with, this book is not intended to give an account of the life of Daniel. Nor is it meant to give a record of the history of Israel neither during the exile, nor even of the captivity in Babylon. Really, its purpose is to show how by God's providential guidance, His miraculous interventions, His foreknowledge and almighty power, the God of heaven controls and directs the forces of nature and the history of nations, the lives of Hebrew captives and of the mightiest of the kings of the earth, for the accomplishment of His Divine and beneficent plans for His servants and people.

The first chapter sets the stage for the rest of the book by introducing Daniel and his three friends, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. In the second major section of the book (chaps. 2-7), Daniel and his friends met several additional tests to prove that although a pagan people was holding them captive, the God whom they worshiped was still in control.

Daniel's skill as an interpreter of dreams is also well established in the second section of his book. He interpreted several visions and dreams for King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and his successor Belshazzar. As he revealed the meaning of the mysterious "handwriting on the wall," he made it plain that the Medes and the Persians would defeat the Babylonian Empire. This happened exactly as Daniel predicted (5:13-31), and he continued as a servant in the court of the conquering Persian king.

The final section of Daniel's book (chaps. 8-12) consists of a series of visions about succeeding kingdoms and the end of time. These visions came to the prophet during his years in captivity. Standing by the Tigris River in one of these visions, he saw a goat attack a ram. The goat symbolized the Persians, who would defeat the Babylonians. This goat had several different horns, representing the Greek Empire that would rise after the decline of the Persians and the subsequent division of the Greek Empire among the four generals of Alexander the Great.

Daniel had another unusual look into the future known as the SEVENTY WEEKS OF YEARS. In this vision, the angel Gabriel revealed to Daniel that the nation of

Israel would be restored to its homeland after their period of captivity. This would be followed many years later by the coming of the Messiah and then, finally, the final judgment and the end of time.

Daniel's spectacular book closes with a vision of the final judgment, when the righteous will receive everlasting life and the wicked will receive God's condemnation. But not even Daniel was blessed with perfect understanding of this mystery of the ages. "My Lord, what shall be the end of these things?" (12:8), he asked. To this God replied, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end" (12:9).

Obviously, one of the major contributions of the Book of Daniel arises from its nature as apocalyptic prophecy. The vision of the SEVENTY WEEKS OF YEARS is considered a pivotal prophecy to most Bible interpreters. It is of such importance, that I feel we should deal with it here. However, there are various schools of interpretation on how to look at prophecy, and just let me note that prophetic Scripture interpretation is not a place for committed believers to be divisive. The view I am presenting is one of two that most today adhere to.

As Daniel sought the Lord to find out how long the Babylonian captivity would last, God showed him that the original prophecy of Jeremiah regarding seventy years of captivity would be extended to "seventy sevens," or 490 years. This revelation covers the history of Jerusalem and the Jews from the time that Artaxerxes decreed they should rebuild the city of Jerusalem (Neh. 2:1-10) to the time of the Great Tribulation (Matt. 24:15-31).

This whole time period is called the "times of the Gentiles" because Gentile political authority will be the major force until the final destruction of all Israel's enemies at the end of the Great Tribulation. This will culminate in the Battle of Armageddon and the Second Coming. He will at that time destroy all the armies that have come against Jerusalem.

The "seventy sevens" are divided into three sections: seven weeks, sixty-two weeks, and one week. Each week represents seven years. The decree of Artaxerxes was in 446-445 B.C. (Neh. 2:1). The first two sections of weeks total 69 weeks or 483 years. This period ended in A.D. 32 when the Messiah was "cut off", or when Jesus was crucified on Calvary. [In fact, 9:26 suggests that the Messiah would die violently, without any faithful followers and would die alone! This is one of the most remarkable, precise, predictive prophecies ever given!] The Abomination of Desolation, which Daniel prophesied would be a part of the Seventieth week, was clearly dated by Jesus as being part of the great Tribulation or end-time period (Matt 24:15).

Two thousand years have passed and the Seventieth Week has not yet happened. We are living in the Times of the Gentiles that precede that final prophetic "week". From this perspective of interpretation, the Book of Daniel unveils a march of events in God's relationship with His people and the world political system. Here are some basic facts distilled from the book presenting some upcoming events:

- 1) The Messiah will return before the millennial period (2:31-37, 44-45; 7:13-14).
- 2) God's kingdom will literally be established on the earth with the Messiah-King as ruler (2:44-45; 7:26-27).
- 3) The four metals of Nebuchadnezzar's dream image symbolize four empires: Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Macedonian-Greek, and Roman (2:37-40).
- 4) The fourth kingdom, Rome, will enjoy a last day revival in the form of a united confederacy of Europe. Out of this system the Antichrist will emerge (7:8, 20-21; 8:23).

- 5) The False Prophet and the Antichrist are persons, not merely a system (7:7-8, 20-26; 9:27; 11:36-45).
- 6) God will continue to deal with the nation of Israel (9:20-27).
- 7) National Israel is the prophetic time clock for last day events (9:24).
- 8) The False Prophet and the Antichrist will dominate the last portion of the last week of Daniel's Seventy Weeks of Years. At the end of the "week," after the Great Tribulation, Jesus the Messiah will return to establish the kingdom of God, which will resolve all the prophecies of Daniel (9:24, 27).

### **BASIC THEMES OF DANIEL -**

There are so many awesome themes in this book. One is the emphasis on separation to God, with Daniel as the ultimate example. From their decisions not to eat the king's food to not bowing to the idol, Daniel and his friends demonstrated that an uncompromising spirit opens incredible doors for God's miracle powers and glory to be manifested. This generation needs to consider their courageous commitment!

Daniel encourages us to remain faithful to God, God's law, and to the scriptural traditions of God's people. War, danger, threat, heathen kings, temptation, greedy desire for luxury, prosperity, and position lead away from God's way. Daniel encouraged the faithful to stand firm in faithfulness to the spiritual heritage of Israel.

In six different situations Daniel or his friends faced extreme pressure to forsake God and tradition for personal safety and gain. In each case they resisted threats or danger of loss of life with no assurance of victory other than their faith.

Daniel 7:1-12:13 bring these truths to bear upon an extremely tense situation. Throughout the book there is a focus upon the "fourth kingdom," that of a tyrannical despot. As the Daniel and his friends remained faithful, so people facing the despot could double their resolve and experience victorious faith. They faced the choice: believe a ruthless foreign conqueror, or stay true to the faith of the fathers and the God of their history. These choices now come down to us!

Another theme in this book is the absolute superiority of God over the occult attempts to reveal or interpret spiritual mysteries. All the magicians, soothsayers, wise men and astrologers could not arrive at the truth- no matter how hard they tried (5:8). Spiritual counterfeits cannot stand before the wisdom and power of the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 10:3-6)!

One of the greatest themes in Daniel relates to the purity and passion of his walk with God. True Holy Spirit-filled lives are marked by a zeal for God's purposes, not only by an obedient submission to them. Daniel and His friends demonstrate this:

- I. They will not be shaped by the world's tastes or values (2). They were promised a privileged place if they conformed, but they refused- in spite of the fact they were, in effect, prisoners of war. They faced down the most powerful world ruler of their day and boldly offered to demonstrate the superiority of living by God's values. The end result was they retained their standards and gained a position to impact their culture.
- II. They demonstrate the practicality of living in the resources of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The amazing call in chapter 2 to GIVE and interpret the dream confounded all worldly means and spiritual counterfeits, but Daniel and his friends sought into the realm of the supernatural. Spiritual gifts and revelations are sought for the sake of ministry leading to the saving of souls, not for the purpose of entertainment.
- III. They are unbending before assault (3 & 6). Daniel and his three friends were tested by calculated efforts to discredit and destroy them- attempting to get them killed or compromised in faith. But they remained steadfast and

zealous. Their pure passion for God was testified to by one great statement: Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God."

One last point to bring up involves Daniel's prayer life. His intercession was motivated by his heartfelt belief **in the truth of God's prophetic word** (9:2). He also understood the importance of **fasting and praying** in gaining **spiritual breakthrough and insight** (10:1-3, 12-14).

#### **A POSSIBLE KEY WORD-**

My key word relates to a reason why Daniel was written. My key word is a phrase: **THE TIME OF THE END**. Daniel was ultimately written to encourage exiled Jews by revealing God's **sovereign program** for Israel during and after the period of Gentile domination. Though this "Time of the Gentiles" has gone on for many years, a time will come when God will establish the messianic kingdom that will last forever.

#### **KEY VERSE(S) AND CHAPTER(S)-**

In keeping with our discussion above, my key verse is: **Daniel 2:44**. It speaks to the key word and really God's ultimate purpose for Israel in the first place. As to key chapter, it should be no surprise: **Daniel 9**.

#### **JESUS REVEALED IN THE BOOK-**

- **Jesus is the fourth man in the fiery furnace**
- **The great description in Daniel 7:13, 14 of One like the Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven and receiving power & dominion is a reference to His second coming**
- **This may be a stretch because I always thought this was an angel, but I cannot escape the fact that the vision in 10:5,6 is almost identical to John's vision of Jesus in Revelation 1:13-16**
- **Daniel himself is a type of Jesus, as prophet and one who is tempted but refuses to sin against his God. Also his name speaks to Jesus, who is our judge**

#### **THE HOLY SPIRIT REVEALED IN THE BOOK-**

This book is a wonderful example where the Spirit is at work everywhere but not directly mentioned: **all the dreams came from Him, all the interpretations were from Him, the miraculous protection in the furnace and the lion's den were His work and His strength kept the Hebrew boys from denying their God. The office of prophet and all prophecies were a work of the Spirit as well. Also, the Holy Spirit gave them the wisdom that made them peerless.**

#### **SOME TRUTHS AND APPLICATIONS-**

##### **Daniel 1:8**

The greatest resolution you will ever make is to follow God's Word and Jesus' commands no matter the personal consequences or violations of culturally accepted values.

##### **Daniel 4**

**The great problem here was the king's pride. Daniel loved him and rebuked him with respect and warmth. Avoid pride; remember you are nothing in yourself.**

Repent of it. And learn how to rebuke someone- with love and kindness, pleading with them to avoid the judgment you don't want them to have!

**Daniel 12:3**

A truly wise person wins souls! The cure to the ailments of all humanity is salvation, and we must bring it to others. Proverbs 10:5: "He who gathers in summer is a son who acts wisely, but he who sleeps in harvest is a son who acts shamefully."