
Daniel

The book of Daniel is the last of the five books of the Major Prophets. Daniel is the Old Testament companion to the book of Revelation. Of all the Old Testament books, Daniel has the most sharply defined kingdom perspective.

Book Background and History

The Babylonian kings lived in luxury enjoying elaborate, rich meals that violated Jewish dietary laws. These kings fed their attendants from their table which meant Daniel and his friends were offered this food.

At this time in history, the Jews who were separated from their homeland established a custom of praying toward Jerusalem for that was the location of the temple of the Lord.

Identity of Daniel

Daniel was a boy of high rank who had spent his life in the luxurious royal court of his homeland. When he was 16, the Babylonians captured him and took him to Babylon in the first wave of exiles. Because of his clear leadership potential, his captors decided to educate him in their royal court.

While Daniel was in Babylon, God used him as a witness. Daniel spent 69 years in their vile court yet consistently maintained a blameless life [[Dan 10:11-19](#), [Eze 14:14-20](#), [Eze 28:3](#)]. Daniel serves as an example of how young people can remain faithful to God in the face of strong temptation and overt threats.

Daniel saw the fall of the Babylonian kingdoms and the rise of the Medo-Persian empire. He held high positions under King Nebuchadnezzar, King Darius, the king of Persia, and King Cyrus.

Key Verse

Daniel 4:3 How great are His signs, And how mighty His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And His dominion is from generation to generation. (NKJV)

Theme

The theme of Daniel is that the living (all nations) may know that the most High rules.

Daniel's Prophecies

Daniel recorded many prophecies about the future of empires (Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome). His prophecies were so accurate that scholars who deny the supernatural are forced to claim that someone wrote the book well after the events happened. Many of Daniel's prophecies have not yet happened.

Jesus Quoted Daniel

Jesus quoted Daniel many times including the abomination of desolation ([Mat 24:15](#), [Dan 9:27](#), [Dan 12:11](#)); His second coming as "Son of Man" ([Mat 10:23](#), [Mat 16:27-28](#), [Dan 7:13-14](#)); and the resurrection ([John 5:28-29](#), [Mat 13:43](#), [Dan 12:2-3](#)).

Book Outline

Daniel 1-6 is mostly historical:	
Dan 1	God as Keeper
Dan 2	God as Revealer of Secrets
Dan 3	God the Deliverer
Dan 4	God the King
Dan 5	God the Judge
Dan 6	God the All Powerful
Daniel 7-12 is mostly prophetic:	
Dan 7	vision of the beasts from the sea
Dan 8	vision of the ram and goat
Dan 9	anticipating everlasting righteousness
Dan 10-11	angel revealing future
Dan 12	prophecy about the resurrection

The Visions		
<i>Daniel 2</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	<i>Daniel 7 & 8</i>
head of gold	Babylon	lion
breast and arms of silver	Media-Persia	bear, ram
belly and thighs of brass	Greece, Egypt, Syria	leopard, goat
legs of iron; feet of clay	Rome	dreadful beast
stone mountain	God's eternal kingdom	Son of Man



Personal Reflection and Application

Read [Daniel 1:1-15](#). Notice how Daniel went to great lengths to stay right with God. It's difficult to eat nothing but vegetables and drink water for 10 days. How much effort do you put into staying right with God?

"Each believer is either a CONFORMER or a TRANSFORMER. We either let the world squeeze us into its mold or we transform things in the world where God has placed us."

-Warren Wiersbe

How did this principle play out in the lives of Daniel and his friends in [Daniel 1](#)?

Pray, thanking God for your place in His family. Ask Him for guidance on how to be an effective TRANSFORMER in your daily life.

Read [Daniel 4](#) aloud. Write each passage that shows our God is God Most High.

Take this "Am I Like Daniel?" self-assessment.

	never<.....>always
I serve God continually (Dan 6:16-20).	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
I am innocent before God and men (Dan 6:21-22).	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
I believe in God and trust Him (Dan 6:23).	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5

Small Group Conversation Guide

Daniel and his companions were part of the faithful remnant. Not everyone who professes faith in Christ is truly a child of God ([Dan 1:3-4](#), [Mat 7:21-27](#)). Discuss what it means to truly be a child of God.

Obedying God rather than men doesn't mean you have to be aggressive and disagreeable. What approach did Daniel use when the overseer wanted them to eat from the King's table ([Dan 1:8-16](#), [Col 4:5-6](#))? Discuss how living a simple life with the Lord is healthier than feasting on the delicacies of the world.

We are often fascinated with people's ability to "tell the future." Sometimes they do seem to be correct, though even a broken clock is correct twice a day.

- ▶ When the King threatened to kill all the wise men, including Daniel and his friends, how did Daniel react ([Dan 2:16-18](#), [Jas 5:16](#))? How does this apply to our lives today?
- ▶ When God gave Daniel the interpretation of the dream, what did Daniel do ([Dan 2:19-23](#))? How is Daniel's reaction an example of how we should react when God answers our prayers?
- ▶ Who is in charge of all nations ([Dan 2:21](#))? If God is in charge of all nations, as believers, what is our responsibility to national leaders?
- ▶ Who alone can predict the future ([Dan 2:22](#), [Isa 41:20-24](#))?

Faith means obeying God regardless of our fears ([Dan 3:12](#), [Isa 43:1-2](#), [Exo 20:3](#)). Though we may not have someone in power insist that we bow down to a 90' tall golden image, we do have challenges to our faith. Discuss some fears that challenge our faith.

Sometimes God does not perform the miracle you seek. What will you do if He says, “No”? Can you say, “But if not, I’ll still love Him. I’ll still trust Him. I’ll still serve Him.” (**Dan 3:17-18**, **Mat 26:39**, **1John 5:14**)?

Biblical convictions > Biblical confidence > Biblical comfort

Burge Troxel defines biblical comfort as the certain knowledge that Jesus will be with you in the midst of your “fiery furnace.”

- ▶ What can we do to grow increasingly firm in our Biblical convictions?
- ▶ What can we do to grow increasingly sure in our Biblical confidence?

Times of adversity can be times of opportunity. When you stay true to your faith in extreme trials, you affect those around you. In the case of Daniel’s three friends, Nebuchadnezzar was so astonished at their faith and how God responded that he publicly admitted to God’s greatness (**Dan 3:28-29**). Discuss how your demonstration of faith affects your family, your friends, your coworkers, and others who see how you behave.

One of the times that God does things to get our attention is when we begin to take credit for things that we shouldn’t (**Dan 4:30**). What things did Nebuchadnezzar credit to himself? What things do we credit to ourselves? When things are going well and we hear ourselves begin to take credit, what should we do (**Psa 105:1-3**)?

There’s an expression, “Your strength is your weakness.” One reason for this is that we sometimes overdo our strengths. Another reason is that we come to rely on our strengths and forget the source of our strengths. Things may go well for a time. God waited for Nebuchadnezzar to repent for a whole year, then BAM, He got his attention (**Dan 4:31-33**, **Ecc 8:11**). Discuss what we can do to avoid the BAM.

God wants us to know that He is God (**Dan 4:34-37**). Depending on how well we listen to Him, He may go to extreme measures to get our attention (**Pro 16:18**). Discuss what we can do to hear Him sooner rather than later (**1Pet 5:5-7**).

Belshazzar was indulgent, indifferent, and irreverent (**Dan 5:1-4**). While his city was under attack, he had a lavish party, ignored the danger, and was disrespectful of God. **Luke 13:3** tells us that unless we repent, we will perish. Repentance is turning away from idols and to God (**1The 1:9**). What are common idols in our culture? Discuss examples of indulgence, indifference, and irreverence.

The writing on the wall terrified Belshazzar (**Dan 5:5-12**). It was public and decisive (**Luke 12:1-3**, **1Cor 4:4-5**). We all face judgment. It will either come as condemnation (for those outside God’s family) or as correction (for those inside God’s family).

- ▶ What is the purpose of God’s correction (**Heb 12:5-11**)?
- ▶ What should our attitude be in times of correction (**1Pet 4:19**)?

When Daniel spoke to the king, he was respectful, but not afraid to tell the truth (**Dan 5:13-29**, **Titus 2:8**). God wants us to speak truth. In what circumstances is it difficult for you to maintain a respectful manner? In what circumstances is it difficult for you to speak truth? Discuss tips for respectfully speaking truth.

Think about why people get jealous of one another. What reasons could the other rulers have had to be jealous of Daniel (**Dan 6:1-4**)?

Since the other rulers could find no valid complaint against Daniel (**Dan 6:5**, **Php 2:15**), what area of his life did they decide to use against him? What reasons would some

people have to be unhappy with you for simply being a believer ([Luke 21:17](#))?

What are some current societal pressures that conflict with your faith ([Dan 6:6-9](#), [2Tim 3:12-13](#))?

- ▶ If we are ashamed of God, what will happen ([Mark 8:38](#))?
- ▶ Why do we sometimes worry more about what others think and less about what God thinks ([Eph 6:19-20](#))?
- ▶ What is more important, your current circumstances or your soul ([Mark 8:34-37](#))?

- ▶ Do you complement or contrast the behaviors of the world ([1Pet 2:11](#), [1The 5:22](#))?

Read [Daniel 6:10-24](#). Discuss what it would take to trust God as much as Daniel did.

God is sovereign in all lives. Do we pray just for those in our immediate circle or do we also pray for those in power around the world? Take a few minutes to pray for world leaders.

Leadership Principles from Daniel

Prayer Partners

Read [Daniel 2:16-19](#). Notice how Daniel calls on his prayer partners when things become difficult. Have you formed friendships with godly people who can partner with you in prayer? Are you helping those under your care learn the value of mutual prayer?

Writing on the Wall

Meditate on the meaning of the writing on the wall ([Dan 5:25-28](#)).

Mene, Mene	numbered and numbered again	Psa 90:12 Eph 5:16-17 John 9:4 Rom 13:11-14
Tekel	weighed in the balance and found deficient	Mat 25:28-29 Heb 9:27 2Cor 5:10
Upharsin (Peres)	divided and given to the Medes and Persians	Rom 6:23 Jas 1:14-15

There will come a time when God will weigh your character. Will He find you pleasing or deficient? Look back over your previous week to see if you want to make adjustments for the week ahead. Consider where you spent your time and how you represented Him.

Something to Find in Each Chapter

As you read through the book, it may help to have something to find in each chapter.
Try these:

01. Why Daniel did not want to eat the king's food	02. What impossible task was demanded of the wise men
03. How the three boys replied when telling the king "no"	04. Why God made Nebuchadnezzar live like an animal
05. What the handwriting on the wall meant to Belshazzar	06. Why Daniel survived his night in the lion's den
07. How Daniel describes the Son of Man (Jesus)	08. How Daniel predicted Greece's Alexander the Great
09. How Daniel predicted the Messiah would die for others	10. How much time elapsed between prayer and answer
11. How human kingdoms will use both flattery and force	12. What God revealed to Daniel about the resurrection