

Introduction

The book of Daniel bridges the entire 70 years of the Babylonian captivity, beginning in 605 B.C. when Babylon conquered Jerusalem and exiled many Jews from Jerusalem including Daniel and his three friends. Daniel was God's mouthpiece to the Gentile and Jewish world, declaring God's current and future plans. Nine of the twelve chapters in Daniel relate revelation through dreams/visions. The key verses are 2:20–22 and 44.

Daniel was written to encourage the exiled Jews by revealing God's program for them, both during and after the time of Gentile power in the world. Prominent above every other theme in the book is God's sovereign control over the affairs of all rulers and nations, and their final replacement with the True King.

John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, pp. 1199–1200

Note: Be sure to use your Bible study notes or other commentaries to help you understand Daniel's narrative.

This year we are memorizing Isaiah 40. This week's verse is Isaiah 40:28...

Do you not know? Have you not heard?

The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth does not become weary or tired.

His understanding is inscrutable.

Day One

Read Daniel 1; **God's Sovereignty and the Faithfulness of Daniel and his Friends**

1. From 2 Kings 20:12–21 and Isaiah 39:1–8, what and why did Isaiah prophesy to King Hezekiah, a prophecy fulfilled in Daniel 1:1–3?
2. According to Daniel 1:3–8, where were Daniel and his friends, and how did they respond to their circumstances?
 - a. Identify at least two reasons why Daniel would determine not to eat the king's food. (See Leviticus 3:17 and 17:10–14, and Exodus 34:14–16.)
3. From verses 8–16, what characterized Daniel's attitude toward those in authority over him?
 - a. Use a dictionary to define the words "resolve" and "defile." (verse 8). How can you resolve, like Daniel and his friends, to live according to God's commands in an ungodly world? (See also Proverbs 4:23.)
4. Remembering God's instructions to the exiles in Jeremiah 29:4–14, how did Daniel's actions reflect his confidence in God's sovereignty? How does your own life reflect confidence in God's sovereign care for you? Be specific.

Day Two

Read Daniel 2–3; **Nebuchadnezzar's Dream and Image**

1. From Daniel 2: 1–13, summarize Nebuchadnezzar's problem and subsequent decree. How does this relate to Isaiah's laments for Babylon in Isaiah 47:10–14 and 48:3–11?
2. In verses 13–24, Daniel was summoned to be killed yet he responded in faith, not fear. What did Daniel do, and for what did he pray?
 - a. How can believers today develop the faith and confidence to face challenging situations? Name some specific things that *you* can do to help you respond in faith and not fear.

3. What is the theme of Daniel's prayer in 2:20–23, and which of God's attributes does Daniel praise specifically?
4. From Daniel 2:31–35, summarize Daniel's description of Nebuchadnezzar's dream.
 - a. Read Psalm 118:22–23, Isaiah 28:16, Matthew 21:42–44, and 1 Peter 2:4–10. What you learn about the "stone cut without hands" from these verses?
5. **Dig Deeper:** Daniel 2:44–45 foretold a future kingdom, led by the Messiah. How does this text connect with God's covenant promises Abraham in Genesis 17 and David in 2 Samuel 7:8–16?
6. From Daniel 3:1–17, how did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego respond to Nebuchadnezzar's exaltation of himself above God?

Day Three

Daniel 4–6; God Humbles the World's Rulers

1. From Daniel 4:17 and 25, what was God's message to Nebuchadnezzar in this dream?
2. From Daniel 4, briefly summarize Nebuchadnezzar's sin in verses 28–30, God's judgment in 31–33, and God's gracious restoration in 34–37.
3. Use a dictionary to define "blasphemy." How is that demonstrated in Daniel 5:1–4?
4. Remembering the familiar narrative in Daniel 5 about the handwriting on the wall, what judgment against Belshazzar, Nebuchadnezzar's son, was pronounced in verses 22–31?
5. Daniel 6 is a familiar narrative emphasizing the need to remain faithful to God even when oppressed. From this text, summarize briefly what took place, and what you find particularly encouraging.
 - a. From verses 26–27, how does Darius' decree testify of the greatness of Israel's God?
6. Connecting the lessons in Daniel with your own life today, what can you learn from his example in chapters 4–6? List two or three practical steps you can take this week to fight pride and grow in humility.

Day Four

Read Daniel 7–9; Daniel's Visions

Note: While Daniel 1–6 focus on Daniel's experiences as a man, chapters 7–12 focus on Daniel as God's messenger. These latter chapters consist of a series of visions given to Daniel—visions of the future of the Gentile nations and of the nation of Israel, future tribulation, and kingdom promises.

Although Daniel 7–12 is not an easy section of Scripture to understand, it is the Word of God and is therefore profitable for instruction and correction. This lesson is a broad overview and will not look in depth at these visions and prophecies, and it will be helpful for you to consult Bible study notes and commentaries to explain the meaning of these passages.

The four beasts in Daniel 7 represent the same empires as the individual parts of the image in chapter 2. The lion in verse 4 represents Babylon; the bear in verse 5 represents Medo-Persia; the leopard in verse 6 represents Greece; and the fourth creature is believed to represent the Roman Empire.

1. From Daniel 7:9–10, how is God described?
2. In verse 13, who is the “Son of Man” and what is he given? What connection do you see with God’s promises to His people in the Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7)?
3. The leader of the fourth kingdom is the anti-Christ. From verses 23–27, how is his kingdom different from the previous three?
4. From verses 15–26, summarize Gabriel’s interpretation of the vision Daniel saw in chapter 8. How does history confirm this vision?
5. From Daniel 9:2–3, what motivates Daniel’s prayer in chapter 9?
 - a. How would you characterize his intercession? How can you apply this to your prayer life?
6. What is the value of studying prophecy in Scripture, and how can it benefit your walk with the Lord?

Day Five

Read Daniel 10–12; Daniel’s Final Visions

1. These chapters are a reminder of the true nature of spiritual warfare. How can Ephesians 6:10–14 strengthen you as you face spiritual battles today?
2. From Daniel 11:35 and Romans 5:3–5, how can persecution be a refining tool in the life of a believer?
 - a. What can believers do to be better prepared to face persecution?
3. In Daniel 12:2 what happens to those who are “asleep,” and what do we learn about their future?
4. From 1 Corinthians 3:8, 2 Thessalonians 1:12, and 1 Peter 5:10, what is taught about eternal reward?
5. The main character in the book of Daniel is the sovereign God. In every circumstance and every crisis, Daniel points the reader to the God who controls human history and whose everlasting kingdom will ultimately triumph over evil. Read Daniel 2:44, 4:3, and 7:27, then use Daniel’s prayer in 2:20–23 as a model to thank God for His character and His work, both now and in the ages to come.



Women of Grace

• Lesson 23 • Overview of Daniel •

Twiss

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