

The Book Of Daniel



**A Study Guide With Introductory Comments,
Summaries, And Review Questions**

Student Edition

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To God Be The Glory!

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The Book Of Daniel

Table Of Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	3
<i>Chapter One</i>	6
<i>Chapter Two</i>	7
<i>Chapter Three</i>	8
<i>Chapter Four</i>	9
<i>Chapter Five</i>	10
<i>Chapter Six</i>	11
<i>Chapter Seven</i>	12
<i>Chapter Eight</i>	13
<i>Chapter Nine</i>	14
<i>Chapter Ten</i>	15
<i>Chapter Eleven</i>	16
<i>Chapter Twelve</i>	17

Note: This study guide is not intended to be a detailed commentary on the book of Daniel, but a simple aid for an introductory study and review of this wonderful book. For a more detailed treatment, you are invited to look over my sermon outlines on Daniel here:

<http://executableoutlines.com/dan.htm>

This study guide was designed for adult Bible classes, though it might be suitable for junior and senior high classes as well. Some have used it for personal devotions, and others in small study groups.

- **Points to ponder** for each chapter are things I emphasize during the class.
- **Review questions** are intended to reinforce key thoughts in each chapter. There is a “teacher’s edition” available with answers included.

The Book Of Daniel

Introduction

One of the more fascinating books of the Bible is the book of Daniel...

- **The first six chapters** contain accounts of faith that inspire both young and old
- **The last six chapters** are filled with apocalyptic visions that challenge even the most advanced Bible students and scholars

It is a book that has often been attacked and abused...

- **Attacked** by liberals and skeptics who deny its inspiration
- **Abused** by many who have taken its visions out of context to support all kinds of wild theories concerning the second coming of Christ

But when properly read and understood, the book of Daniel can...

- **Inspire** us to greater faithfulness in our service to God
- **Strengthen** our faith in the inspiration of the Bible

Daniel And His Times

The name "Daniel" means "God is my judge" which provides a hint of one of the key themes in this book: God will judge the nations of men. Daniel was a person of deep and abiding faith...

- As a youth, he purposed not to defile himself - **Dan 1:8**
- When old, he persisted in serving God despite threats against his life - **Dan 6:10**

God blessed Daniel because of his faith...

- He rose to great heights in the kingdoms of Babylon and Persia - **Dan 2:48; 6:1-3**
- He served as a statesman, a counselor to kings, and a prophet of God

Daniel was contemporary with two other great prophets: Jeremiah and Ezekiel...

- **Jeremiah** prophesied in Jerusalem before and during the Babylonian exile (626-528 B.C.)
- **Ezekiel** prophesied in Babylon among the exiles (592-570 B.C.)
- **Daniel** prophesied in the capital of Babylon (605-586 B.C.)

Nothing is known of his personal life outside of the book. He descended from one of Judah's prominent families, if not from royal blood (**Dan 1:3**). At an early age (likely in his teens) Daniel along with others was taken from his family to be trained in the courts of Babylon (**Dan 1:3-4**). Whether he ever married is uncertain.

Some key dates and events will help appreciate the times in which Daniel lived...

- **612 B.C. - Fall of Nineveh, capital of Assyria** Assyria had ruled the world since the days of Tiglath-Pileser (845 B.C.). Nabopolassar came to the throne in Babylon and rebelled against the Assyrians in 625 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar, son of Nabopolassar, was the general who led the Babylonian army against Nineveh, defeating it in 612 B.C.
- **605 B.C. - Battle of Carchemish, establishing Babylonian domination** Pharaoh Necho of Egypt came to fight the Babylonians at Carchemish. Nebuchadnezzar defeated the Egyptians, chasing them south through Judah. At Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar heard of his father's death; he returned to assume the throne in Babylon. The first group of Jewish captives were taken, along with Daniel and his friends (**Dan 1:1-4**).
- **597 B.C. - A second remnant taken to Babylon** Jehoiachin (Jeconiah, Coniah) followed the reign of his father, Jehoiakim. He lasted just three months, when Nebuchadnezzar took him and 10,000 Jews to Babylon (**2Ki 24:8-16**). This second group of captives included Ezekiel (**Eze 1:1-3**).
- **586 B.C. - Fall of Jerusalem and the temple destroyed** Zedekiah was installed as king in Jerusalem, but was weak and vacillating. Eleven years later, Jerusalem was totally devastated by Babylonian forces (**2Ki 25:1-10**). A third group was taken into Babylonian captivity, but Jeremiah was among those who stayed behind (**2Ki 25:11-12,22; Jer 39:11-14; 40:1-6**).
- **536 B.C. - Babylon falls, and the first remnant returns to Jerusalem** Cyrus, king of Persia, sends the first remnant back under the leadership of Zerubbabel (**Ezr 1:1-5; 2:1-2**). The foundation of the temple was soon started, but the temple was not completed until 516 B.C. (**Ezr 3:8-13; 6:14-16**).
- **457 B.C. - A second remnant returns to Jerusalem** Ezra the priest returns with this group (**Ezr 7:1-8:36**). He leads a much-needed revival (**Ezr 9:1-10:44**).
- **444 B.C. - A third remnant returns to Jerusalem** This group is led by Nehemiah (**Neh 1:1-2:20**). Under his leadership, the walls of Jerusalem are rebuilt (**Neh 3:1-7:73**). Together with Ezra, they restore much of the religion (**Neh 8:1-13:31**).

Daniel lived through much of these times (605-534 B.C.). He was among the first group of captives taken to Babylon (**Dan 1:1-4**). He continued there over the entire 70 years of captivity (**Dan 1:21; 10:1; cf. Dan 9:1-2; Jer 25:11; 29:10**). Daniel was certainly a remarkable man. His greatness was recognized by his contemporary, Ezekiel (**Eze 14:14,20; 28:3**).

Theme

From a number of passages (**Dan 2:21; 4:17,25,32,34-35; 5:21**) we can deduce the main theme of the book of Daniel:

God Rules In The Kingdoms Of Men

In this book, we see the rule of God is...

- **Manifested** in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius, and Cyrus, kings of the Babylonians, Medes, and Persians
- **Foretold** to occur in the days of the Persians, Greeks, and Romans

In this book, we learn that the rule of God would be especially manifested...

- With the establishment of God's kingdom - **Dan 2:44**
- With the vindication of the cause of His saints - **Dan 7:27**

Outline

Here is a brief outline of the book of Daniel...

- 1. God's Providence In History - Dan 1:1-6:28**
 - a. Daniel and his determination to be pure - **1:1-21**
 - b. Nebuchadnezzar's dream and Daniel's promotion - **2:1-49**
 - c. Faith in the face of fire by Daniel's friends - **3:1-30**
 - d. Nebuchadnezzar's second dream and temporary insanity - **4:1-37**
 - e. The writing on the wall and fall of Belshazzar - **5:1-31**
 - f. Darius and his den of lions - **6:1-28**
- 2. God's Purpose In History - Dan 7:1-12:13**
 - a. Daniel's dream of the four beasts - **7:1-28**
 - b. Daniel's dream of the ram and the goat - **8:1-27**
 - c. Daniel's prayer, and the vision of the seventy weeks - **9:1-27**
 - d. Daniel's vision of the time of the end - **10:1-12:13**

Conclusion

As with all Scripture, the book of Daniel is profitable for our study (**2Ti 3:16-17**). From Daniel and his friends, we will learn the power of faith and commitment. By studying this book, we can better understand our Lord's references to it (cf. **Mk 1:14-15; Mt 24:15-16**).

Despite some of its more difficult and challenging passages, we can benefit from them as well, as long as we interpret them...

- In the context of the book itself
- Consistent with all else the Bible may say on the subject
- With the humility and openness that is incumbent upon all who would study and teach God's word (cf. **2Ti 2:24-25**)

Review Questions

- 1) During what periods of Israel's history did Daniel live and prophesy?**
- 2) What two prophets were contemporary with Daniel?**
- 3) What is suggested as the theme of Daniel? (Dan 2:21; 4:17,25,32,34-35; 5:21)**
- 4) What are the two main sections of the book?**

The Book Of Daniel

Chapter One

The book opens with the first deportation of Jews to Babylonian captivity (605 B.C.), and the selection of Daniel and his three friends for special training (1-7). Daniel's commitment to remain undefiled is blessed by God, and he along with his friends are given wisdom that is acknowledged and rewarded by the king of Babylon (8-21).

Points To Ponder

- Young Daniel's commitment to God in pagan environment
- How Daniel was able to keep both his faith to God and service to the king

Review Questions

- 1) **What are the main points of this chapter?**
- 2) **When did Nebuchadnezzar besiege Jerusalem, and who gave him victory? (1-2)**
- 3) **Who were to be taught the language and literature of the Chaldeans? (3-4)**
- 4) **How long was their training to last? What did it include? (5)**
- 5) **What four young men were selected? What names were they given? (6-7)**
- 6) **What did Daniel purpose in his heart? (8)**
- 7) **How was Daniel able to keep his commitment? (8-16)**
- 8) **What did God give the four young men? (17)**
- 9) **How did Nebuchadnezzar find these four young men after their training? (18-20)**

The Book Of Daniel

Chapter Two

Nebuchadnezzar has a dream, challenging his would-be interpreters to first tell him the contents of the dream (1-13). God reveals the dream to Daniel (14-23) who then interprets it for the king (24-45). Impressed, the king promotes Daniel, and in turn, his three friends (46-49).

Points To Ponder

- The kingdoms represented by the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream
- The kingdom which shall never be destroyed: its identity and establishment

Review Questions

- 1) **What are the main points of this chapter?**
- 2) **How does Nebuchadnezzar determine who can really interpret his dream? (1-13)**
- 3) **How was Daniel able to reveal the dream and its interpretation? (17-23)**
- 4) **What are the key elements of Nebuchadnezzar's dream? (31-35)**
- 5) **What was the interpretation of the dream? (36-45)**
- 6) **What do the four kingdoms of this dream likely represent?**
- 7) **What indestructible kingdom does the stone represent? (44-45)**

The Book Of Daniel

Chapter Three

Nebuchadnezzar builds a large image of gold, demanding all to worship it (1-7). Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego refuse, and are thrown into a fiery furnace. Yet they are saved by God (8-25), prompting King Nebuchadnezzar to praise their God as the Most High (26-30).

Points To Ponder

- Faith in the face of fire
- The fourth person in the fiery furnace (angel or Christ?)

Review Questions

- 1) What are the main points of this chapter?
- 2) What did Nebuchadnezzar set up in the plain of Dura? (1)
- 3) What punishment did he threaten if people did not worship it? (6)
- 4) Who was accused of not worshipping the gold image? (12)
- 5) When threatened to be cast in the fiery furnace, what did they respond? (17-18)
- 6) As the three men were being cast into the fiery furnace, what happened? (20-22)
- 7) What did Nebuchadnezzar see as he looked into the fiery furnace? (24-25)
- 8) Who might have been that fourth man in the furnace? (25,28)
- 9) When the three men came out of the furnace, what was their condition? (27)
- 10) What conclusion did the king draw? What did he do for the three men? (29-30)

The Book Of Daniel

Chapter Four

Nebuchadnezzar has another dream, this one of a great tree that fills the earth and then is cut down but its trunk left intact, followed by a man whose heart is changed and becomes like an animal (1-18). Daniel interprets the dream as applying to the king, that he might know that God rules in the kingdoms of men (19-27). A year later the dream is fulfilled, and Nebuchadnezzar praises, blesses and honors the Most High God, King of heaven (28-37).

Points To Ponder

- The Most High rules in the kingdoms of men
- He sets over the kingdoms of men the lowest of men, or whomever He chooses

Review Questions

- 1) What are the main points of this chapter?
- 2) List three key elements of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. (10-17)
- 3) Who does Daniel say the dream applies to? (22)
- 4) What statements reveal the lesson of the dream and its fulfillment? (17,25,35)
- 5) What was Nebuchadnezzar doing when the dream's fulfillment occurred? (28-31)
- 6) Describe the king's behavior and appearance when he lost his kingdom. (33)
- 7) What did the king do when his understanding returned? (34)
- 8) What was restored to the king when his reason returned to him? (36)

The Book Of Daniel

Chapter Five

This chapter fast forwards to 539 B.C. and the last night of Babylonian rule. King Belshazzar (grandson of Nebuchadnezzar) throws a drunken, idolatrous feast that is interrupted by a hand writing on the wall (1-12). Daniel is brought in, and explains that it proclaims the judgment of Belshazzar and the fall of Babylon into the hands of the Medes and Persians (13-29) which occurs that very night (30-31).

Points To Ponder

- The character of King Belshazzar contrasted with that of Daniel
- The meaning of the writing on the wall as explained by Daniel

Review Questions

- 1) **What are the main points of this chapter?**
- 2) **What is the setting leading to the hand writing on the wall? (1-4)**
- 3) **What reaction did the king have to the hand writing on the wall? (6)**
- 4) **Who was unable to tell the king the interpretation of the writing? (7-8)**
- 5) **Who counseled the king to call for Daniel to interpret the writing? (10-12)**
- 6) **Before interpreting the writing, what did Daniel tell King Belshazzar? (17-24)**
- 7) **What was the inscription written on the wall, and the interpretation? (24-28)**
- 8) **What happened that very night? (30-31)**

The Book Of Daniel

Chapter Six

Daniel's character, conviction and courage are seen once more in this well known account of "Daniel in the lion's den". Despite his age (nearing ninety), Daniel serves his king with an excellent spirit and his God with unwavering faith. A plot by enemies is set to destroy him (1-9) and he is cast into a den of lions (10-17). God sends an angel to deliver him (18-23), prompting King Darius of the Medes to praise the living God of Daniel (24-28).

Points To Ponder

- The excellent character and faith of Daniel, the man of God
- Daniel as a role model for young and old, statesmen and administrators

Review Questions

- 1) **What are the main points of this chapter?**

- 2) **What position did King Darius give Daniel in his kingdom? What was the king planning to do with Daniel? Why? (1-3)**

- 3) **Why did Daniel's enemies have difficulty finding any charge against him? What trap was set against Daniel? (4-9)**

- 4) **What did Daniel do when he learned the decree had been signed? (10)**

- 5) **What was the king forced to do when he heard of Daniel's prayers? Was the king pleased? (11-17)**

- 6) **How was Daniel protected from the lions? (21-23)**

- 7) **What did the king do to Daniel's enemies? What did the king do next? (24-28)**

The Book Of Daniel

Chapter Seven

In the first year of Belshazzar (552 B.C.), Daniel receives two visions. The first is of four beasts from the sea (1-8). The second involves a judgment by the Ancient of Days, and the coronation of the Son of Man (9-14). The interpretation describes persecution by elements of the fourth beast (kingdom), with ultimate victory by the saints of the Most High (15-28).

Points To Ponder

- The identity of the four kingdoms represented by the four beasts
- The identity of the Son of Man and the timing of His coronation
- The conflict between the fourth kingdom and the saints of the Most High

Review Questions

- 1) **What are the main points of this chapter?**

- 2) **What four world empires do the four beasts likely represent? (1-8)**

- 3) **In the second vision, what two scenes appear before Daniel? (9-14)**

- 4) **What takes place between the two scenes? (11-12)**

- 5) **What is Daniel told is the meaning of the two visions? (15-18)**

- 6) **What is Daniel told when he inquires about the fourth beast? (19-27)**

The Book Of Daniel

Chapter Eight

In the third year of King Belshazzar (550 B.C.) Daniel has another vision: a swift goat defeating a mighty ram. The goat's large horn is then broken into four horns, followed by a little horn that brings desolation to the sanctuary and the host of heaven (1-14). The angel Gabriel interprets the vision which foretells the rise of a fierce and mighty king (Antiochus IV Epiphanes, 175-164 B.C.) that would bring desolation against the holy people (15-27).

Points To Ponder

- The interpretation of Daniel's vision in this chapter
- The meaning of the expression, "the time of the end"

Review Questions

- 1) **What are the main points of this chapter?**
- 2) **Describe the ram and the goat in Daniel's vision. (3-8)**
- 3) **List the actions of the little horn that arises from the four horns. (9-12)**
- 4) **How long would the desolation against the sacrifices and sanctuary last? (13-14)**
- 5) **According to Gabriel, to when did the vision pertain? (15-19)**
- 6) **What did the ram and goat represent? (20-22)**
- 7) **How is the king who shall rise (the little horn) described? (23-25)**
- 8) **What was Daniel told to do with the vision? Why? (26)**

The Book Of Daniel

Chapter Nine

In the first year of Darius (539 B.C.), understanding that Jeremiah's prophecy of 70 years of captivity has been fulfilled (Jer 25:11), Daniel confesses his nation's sins and prays that God will restore them (1-19). In response, Gabriel is sent to give Daniel understanding of key events that will take place in a time period of 70 "weeks" (lit., "sevens"), one of the most challenging prophecies in the Bible (20-27).

Points To Ponder

- Daniel's prayer, confessing the sins of his people Israel
- The difficulty in interpreting the vision of seventy weeks

Review Questions

- 1) What are the main points of this chapter?
- 2) What prompted Daniel to pray with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes? (2-3)
- 3) List some of the sins mentioned by Daniel that Israel had committed (4-10)
- 4) What had come upon Israel for their sin? (11-14)
- 5) For what does Daniel pray God regarding Jerusalem and the sanctuary? (16-19)
- 6) Who was caused to fly swiftly to Daniel because of his supplications? (22-23)
- 7) List six things that were to happen within the period of seventy "weeks" (24)
- 8) What events would occur in the course of this prophecy's fulfillment? (25-27)

The Book Of Daniel

Chapter Ten

In the third year of Darius (ca. 535 B.C.) Daniel receives a vision that will affect his people (Israel) “in the latter days” (**Dan 10:14**), its words to be closed and sealed “till the time of the end” (Dan 12:9). “The Vision Of The Time Of The End” begins with an appearance of a “glorious man” to Daniel beside the Tigris River (**1-9**), with an explanation for his delay in coming (**10-21**). The prophecy of the vision continues in chapters eleven and twelve.

Points To Ponder

- The meaning of the phrase “in the latter days” as used in the vision
- The angelic conflict behind the scenes briefly described by the “glorious man”

Review Questions

- 1) **What are the main points of this chapter?**
- 2) **Describe the “glorious man” seen by Daniel by the Tigris river (4-6)**
- 3) **Describe the impact of seeing this “glorious man” on Daniel (8-9)**
- 4) **How does the “glorious man” address Daniel? (11)**
- 5) **Why had the “glorious man” delayed his coming to Daniel? (12-13)**
- 6) **Why was the “glorious man” sent to Daniel? When would the events occur? (14)**
- 7) **Speechless and overwhelmed, how was Daniel strengthened? (15-19)**
- 8) **What would the “glorious man” do after leaving Daniel? Who would help? (20-21)**

The Book Of Daniel

Chapter Eleven

After introductory comments in chapter ten, “The Vision Of The Time Of The End” begins in earnest. A brief prophecy of a Persian-Greek conflict (2-4) is followed by the description of a lengthy Egyptian-Syrian conflict (5-19), with focus on a vile king from the North who will bring blasphemies against Daniel’s people, but who will ultimately be defeated (20-45).

Points To Ponder

- The prophetic detail of the Persian-Greek and Egyptian-Syrian conflicts
- The identity of the vile king from the North

Review Questions

- 1) **What are the main points of this chapter?**
- 2) **In the Persian-Greek conflict, who was the mighty king that would rise? (3-4)**
- 3) **Who were the warring kings of the North and South? (5-20)**
- 4) **Based on history, who was likely the vile person introduced in verse 21?**
- 5) **How would he bring blasphemies against Israel? (30-32)**
- 6) **What is said of those who resist valiantly? (32-35)**
- 7) **In verses 36-45, what three opinions are given about the identity of the king?**

The Book Of Daniel

Chapter Twelve

“The Vision Of The Time Of The End” concludes with assurance of ultimate victory for Daniel’s people (Israel), in words suggestive of the final resurrection (1-3). Daniel is given instructions to seal the book because it pertains to things in the future. Asking when these things will be accomplished, he is given cryptic answers, but is reassured that he himself shall rest and rise to his inheritance at the end of the days (4-13).

Points To Ponder

- Identifying the “time of trouble” and “time of the end” in this chapter
- The instructions for Daniel to “shut up the words, and seal the book”

Review Questions

- 1) What are the main points of this chapter?
- 2) What events were to occur “at that time”? (1-3)
- 3) What suggests that this “time” is not the Last Day or end of time as we know it? (2)
- 4) What instructions was Daniel given, and why? (4,9)
- 5) What questions does Daniel ask of the man clothed in linen? (6,8)
- 6) What answers are given to Daniel? (7,11-12)
- 7) What words of comfort and assurance are given to Daniel? (10,13)