

A Study of the Book of Daniel

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Introduction to the book of Daniel

Introduction: Tonight, we begin a new study into a book that I am sure we will find to be very interesting. The book is Daniel and before we step into chapter 1, we need to consider some facts concerning the writing.

➤ Overview and Purpose of the Book

The book of Daniel can be divided into two main sections.

1. The prophet. - Daniel 1-6
2. The prophecies - Daniel 7-12

When it comes to the purpose/theme of the book there are actually 5 points to consider.

1. **Daniel's personal dedication to God. We will call this "Living Godly in a corrupt environment."**

Daniel will teach us not just how to survive but also how to thrive in the midst of an ungodly society.

2. **The sovereignty of God over the Gentile nations.**

Daniel 2:20-21

²⁰ Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his:

²¹ And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:

Daniel 4:35

³⁵ And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

As our nation rushes headlong toward the kingdom of the Anti-Christ the church can become overwhelmed at times. In an understanding of the book of Daniel it will help us to have peace in the midst of our day in knowing that God is in full control of all that is happening around us.

Daniel teaches like no other book in Scripture. Daniel is different from other Old Testament prophets which call the people to repent and lead a new life. Daniel is a prophet more in the sense of "forth telling" or predicting events before they come to pass. If you want to understand history and what's happening in our world today, you need to understand Daniel.

3. The book outlines and helps us to understand "The Times of the Gentiles."

Luke 21:24

²⁴ And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

In the book of Daniel we will come to understand the Time of the Gentiles. It is a time period that started with the Babylonian captivity and will end at the end of the Great Tribulation. It is a time period when the Jews are being disciplined by the Gentile nations. In the book of Daniel, we will see the Gentile nations and their order which God will use to discipline His people.

4. The book will also reveal Israel's future deliverance and the blessings she will enjoy in the coming Millennial Kingdom.

Even though the nation will be disciplined because of her disobedience she will be brought to repentance and restoration.

5. This book will show us the faithfulness of God to His covenant people.

God had made an unconditional covenant with Abraham in which He promised land, seed, and blessings. In the book of Daniel, we shall see that God is faithful to fulfill His covenant and is working the events of the world to do just that very thing.

Jeremiah 31:35-37

³⁵ Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name:

³⁶ If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever.

³⁷ Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD.

Israel will never cease to exist as a nation and in the book of Daniel we shall watch as God works to bring His people to the place of repentance and restoration. Let us keep in mind that the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and the Millennial Kingdom are both promised to Israel therefore to see these events fulfilled Israel MUST exist.

➤ Daniel and the other Major Prophets

How does Daniel fit in with the other major prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel?

Isaiah - He ministered more than 100 years before the Babylonian captivity.

Jeremiah - He came on the scene sometime after Isaiah and he ministered during the last five kings of Judah's history. Jeremiah witnessed the Babylonian invasion into Jerusalem and was given the choice to be deported to Babylon or stay in his homeland and he made the choice to stay. Jeremiah wrote the book of Lamentations which tells what life was like after the invasion.

Ezekiel - He was taken in the Babylonian captivity, and his ministry was to the Jews who were in the Babylonian captivity. His ministry lasted 22 years. Ezekiel and Daniel ministered at the same time in the same Babylon, but they were each given different groups to minister to. Ezekiel ministered to the common people in captivity and Daniel's ministry was in the palace. Ezekiel's message was one of hope as he presented to glories of the Millennial Kingdom.

Daniel - Daniel ministered during the captivity but not among the Jews. Daniel had a prominent position as a Jew in the midst of the Babylonian and Medo-Persia empires. Daniel would have been God's man among the elites.

➤ The Critics of David

The book of David was written in the 6th century BC. This has caused the critics to come out against the book of Daniel in full force. Why? Because of the accuracy of Daniel's prophecies, the critics say there is no way that David wrote these words in the 6th century. Critics claim the book was written between 50 - 165 AD. Notice the words of Criswell.

"There is not a liberal theologian in the world, past or present, who accepts the authenticity of the book of Daniel. They all deny its integrity declaring the book to be a blatant, patent forgery. They define its contents as pure unadulterated fiction,"

Daniel will foretell of the Gentile nations who God would use to chasten His people and Daniel's writings will be perfectly accurate. He will tell of the Babylonians, the Medes and the Persians, the Grecians, the Roman Empire, and the revised Roman Empire in which the Anti-Christ will rule.

➤ **The Writer**

There is no doubt that Daniel is the writer. In the early part of the book Daniel refers to himself in the third person but when we get to chapter 7, he changes.

Notice Daniel 1:8-9

Daniel 7:15

¹⁵ **I Daniel** was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me.

Here we see that Daniel identifies himself. Jesus also confirms that Daniel is the writer.

Matthew 24:15

¹⁵ When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, **spoken of by Daniel** the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

Daniel's name is mentioned in the book 65 times.

Daniel's writing style is very unique in this book. He used two different languages in his writing. In Daniel 1:1-2:4 he wrote in the Hebrew language. In Daniel 2:4b-7:28 he writes in Aramaic. Then in Daniel 8-12 he goes back to Hebrew. Why does he use the two different languages?

The book of Daniel has two major emphases. In chapters 2:4b-7:28 he will focus upon God's plan for the Gentile nations therefore he writes in Aramaic which was the language of the Gentiles, and they could therefore read and understand.

The second major emphasis is on the nation of Israel and that emphasis is developed in 1:1-2:4 and is then picked back up in chapters 8-12 therefore Daniel writes in Hebrew which was the language of the Jews.

➤ The Captivity

When we step into the book, we will be entering at the beginning of the Babylonian captivity, and we need to understand why the captivity happened and what was the purpose. God had foretold to the nation of Israel through Moses that if they did not walk according to His Law that He would deliver them over to foreign nations.

Deuteronomy 28:47-53

⁴⁷ Because thou servedst not the LORD thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things;

⁴⁸ Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the LORD shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee.

⁴⁹ The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand;

⁵⁰ A nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young:

⁵¹ And he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy land, until thou be destroyed: which also shall not leave thee either corn, wine, or oil, or the increase of thy kine, or flocks of thy sheep, until he have destroyed thee.

⁵² And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land: and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout all thy land, which the LORD thy God hath given thee.

⁵³ And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the LORD thy God hath given thee, in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee:

After the death of Solomon, the kingdom of Israel divided. Both the northern and the southern kingdoms continued in sin. In 722 the Assyrians took the northern kingdom into captivity. This was a warning to the southern kingdom, but they ignored the warning. God showed great grace to the southern kingdom because from Judah would come the promised Messiah. God sent prophets to warn them of what He was going to do if they continued in their sin. But Satan raised up false prophets who denied the True Word of God.

Notice the message that Jeremiah delivered to the people of Judah.

Jeremiah 1:13-16

¹³ *And the word of the LORD came unto me the second time, saying, What seest thou? And I said, I see a seething pot; and the face thereof is toward the north.*

¹⁴ *Then the LORD said unto me, Out of the north an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land.*

¹⁵ *For, lo, I will call all the families of the kingdoms of the north, saith the LORD; and they shall come, and they shall set every one his throne at the entering of the gates of Jerusalem, and against all the walls thereof round about, and against all the cities of Judah.*

¹⁶ *And I will utter my judgments against them touching all their wickedness, who have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, and worshipped the works of their own hands.*

Jeremiah 8:9-12

⁹ *The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of the LORD; and what wisdom is in them?*

¹⁰ *Therefore will I give their wives unto others, and their fields to them that shall inherit them: for every one from the least even unto the greatest is given to covetousness, from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely.*

¹¹ **For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace.**

¹² *Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore shall they fall among them that fall: in the time of their visitation they shall be cast down, saith the LORD.*

¹³ *I will surely consume them, saith the LORD: there shall be no grapes on the vine, nor figs on the fig tree, and the leaf shall fade; and the things that I have given them shall pass away from them.*

God therefore allowed the captivity to come upon Judah as a discipline. They needed to forsake their sin, and they would not hear the warnings so they would experience the pain.

Satan was doing all he could to lead them deeper and deeper into apostasy so that God might destroy them. But that could not happen for they were His covenant people.

Conclusion:

When we return next week, we will step into Daniel 1 and follow as Daniel and his friends are carried off to Babylon and as we follow, we will learn how to live Godly in a corrupt society.