

Daniel: A 12-Week Study

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Week 1: Overview

Getting Acquainted

The book of Daniel is a favorite for Sunday school teachers and students alike. And for good reason. It has all the makings a great story—memorable characters, cliff-hanger drama, and science fiction–like visions. It’s like *Harry Potter* meets *Lord of the Rings* with a dash of *Star Wars* thrown in!

Yet therein lies a potential danger. Because the human actors and events are so fascinating, we are tempted when studying this book to fix our gaze on the human plane. But when this happens we can inadvertently lose sight of the fact that this book is ultimately not about Daniel or his three friends, but about God and his victory in the world.

Sure, the book of Daniel tells Daniel’s story—and a fascinating and instructive story it is. But the main purpose of Daniel is to reveal to us who God is—his character, his purposes, his way of working in the world for the good of his people. The main lesson of Daniel, then, is not, as is often assumed (and taught!), *Dare to be a Daniel!* Rather, the main point is this: *Dare to trust in Daniel’s God!*

The story of Daniel is about the story of God and his victory in the world. For God is the sovereign Lord of history, the one who establishes kingdoms and brings them down. From the opening chapter and the story of Daniel’s exile to Babylon, to the closing chapter and its vision of the future, we see how God achieves his victory in the world.

Definition: Exile

Several relocations of large groups of Israelites/Jews have occurred throughout history, but “the exile” typically refers to the Babylonian exile, that is, Nebuchadnezzar’s relocation of residents of the southern kingdom of Judah to Babylon in 586 BC. (Residents of the northern kingdom of Israel had been resettled by Assyria in 722 BC.) After Babylon came under Persian rule, several waves of Jewish exiles returned and repopulated Judah.

Placing It in the Larger Story

The book of Daniel, named after and written by Daniel in the sixth century BC, records the events of Daniel’s life and the visions he saw from the time of his exile in 605 (1:1) until the third year of King Cyrus in 536 (10:1). Sweeping in scope, the book deals with the rise and fall of various world empires. But these historical events are seen through the lens of God’s sovereign control of things, and thus serve a pastoral purpose to encourage the Jewish people during a critical time in their history. The Jews were in exile, suffering at the hand of pagan rulers who cared little for God or his people. They had every reason, then, to wonder whether God was in control, and whether he would deal with the situation—for his own glory and the good of his covenant people.

Definition: BC

Abbreviation for “before Christ” in calendars. It immediately precedes the era designated AD (Anno Domini, meaning “in the year of our Lord”) and, counting backwards, refers to the number of years before Jesus Christ was born.

Key Verse

“I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed” (7:13–14).

Date and Historical Background

While some scholars have placed the writing of Daniel in the second century BC, there is good reason to believe that Daniel himself is the author of this book and that it was composed in the sixth century BC. This was a tumultuous time in the ancient Near East, and a crucial moment in the life of God’s people. The book of Daniel opens against the backdrop of the rise of the Babylonian empire, which had recently toppled the mighty Assyrian empire. The book closes some seventy years later, with the overthrow of the Babylonians by the Persian empire under Cyrus. It was the strategy of the Babylonians to bring to Babylon the “cream of the crop” of the peoples they conquered; the Persians reversed this process by returning the exiles to their homeland. The events of the book of Daniel take place between these two major world-changing events: the rise of the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar and the displacement of the Babylonians by the Persians under Cyrus roughly seventy years later.

Outline

- I. Daniel and the Three Friends at the Babylonian Court (Dan. 1:1–6:28)
 - A. Prologue (Dan. 1:1–21)
 - 1. Daniel and his friends taken into exile (Dan. 1:1–7)
 - 2. Daniel and his friends remain undefiled (Dan. 1:8–16)
 - 3. Daniel and his friends promoted and preserved (Dan. 1:17–21)
 - B. Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of a great statue (Dan. 2:1–49)
 - 1. The dream and Nebuchadnezzar’s threat (Dan. 2:1–13)
 - 2. Daniel’s response and prayer (Dan. 2:14–24)
 - 3. Daniel interprets the dream (Dan. 2:25–45)
 - 4. Nebuchadnezzar promotes Daniel (Dan. 2:46–49)
 - C. Nebuchadnezzar builds a great statue (Dan. 3:1–30)
 - 1. The nations worship Nebuchadnezzar’s statue (Dan. 3:1–7)
 - 2. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego preserved in the fiery furnace (Dan. 3:8–29)
 - 3. Nebuchadnezzar promotes Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Dan. 3:30)
 - D. Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of a toppled tree (Dan. 4:1–37)
 - 1. Nebuchadnezzar’s dream and its interpretation (Dan. 4:1–27)
 - 2. Nebuchadnezzar’s humbling (Dan. 4:28–33)
 - 3. Nebuchadnezzar’s exaltation (Dan. 4:34–37)
 - E. Belshazzar’s feast (Dan. 5:1–31)
 - 1. An idolatrous feast (Dan. 5:1–4)

2. An unreadable message ([Dan. 5:5-9](#))
 3. A forgotten interpreter ([Dan. 5:10-12](#))
 4. A message of judgment ([Dan. 5:13-31](#))
- F. The lions' den ([Dan. 6:1-28](#))
1. Daniel promoted ([Dan. 6:1-3](#))
 2. The administrators plot to remove Daniel ([Dan. 6:4-15](#))
 3. Daniel preserved in the lions' den ([Dan. 6:16-24](#))
 4. Darius acknowledges the power of Daniel's God ([Dan. 6:25-27](#))
 5. Daniel preserved until the end of the exile ([Dan. 6:28](#))
- II. The Visions of Daniel ([Dan. 7:1-12:13](#))
- A. The vision of four great beasts and the heavenly court ([Dan. 7:1-28](#))
1. The four great beasts ([Dan. 7:1-8](#))
 2. The Ancient of Days judges the beast ([Dan. 7:9-12](#))
 3. The coming of the Son of Man ([Dan. 7:13-14](#))
 4. The interpretation of the vision ([Dan. 7:15-27](#))
 5. Daniel's response ([Dan. 7:28](#))
- B. The vision of the ram, the goat, and the little horn ([Dan. 8:1-27](#))
1. The vision of the ram and the goat ([Dan. 8:1-14](#))
 2. The interpretation of the vision ([Dan. 8:15-26](#))
 3. Daniel's response ([Dan. 8:27](#))
- C. Daniel's prayer and its answer ([Dan. 9:1-27](#))
1. Daniel's prayer concerning the 70 years ([Dan. 9:1-19](#))
 2. Gabriel's answer: 70 sevens before the promised redemption ([Dan. 9:20-27](#))
- D. Daniel's vision of the final conflict ([Dan. 10:1-12:13](#))
1. A heavenly messenger brings news of heavenly conflict ([Dan. 10:1-11:1](#))
 2. A detailed vision of future earthly conflicts among nations ([Dan. 11:2-45](#))
 3. The promise of resurrection to glory or shame ([Dan. 12:1-4](#))
 4. How long until the end? ([Dan. 12:5-13](#))

As You Get Started

What is your current understanding of how Daniel helps us to grasp the whole storyline of the Bible? Do you have an idea of how aspects of Daniel's message are fulfilled in the New Testament? What is your current understanding of what Daniel contributes to Christian theology? How does his book clarify our understanding of God, Jesus Christ, sin, salvation, the end times, or any other doctrine? What aspects of the visions of Daniel have confused you? Are there any specific questions that you hope to have answered through this study?

Definition: End Times

The time associated with events prophesied in Scripture to occur at the end of the world and the second coming of Christ—also known as “the last days.” Because the early church expected the return of Christ at any time, the end times can refer to any and every point during the period from Pentecost until Christ returns.

As You Finish This Unit . . .

Take a few minutes to ask God to bless you with increased understanding and a transformed heart and life as you begin this study of Daniel.

Week 2: Prologue (1:1–21)

The Place of the Passage

This first chapter introduces the book as a whole by describing how Daniel and his three friends were deported to Babylon, where they were educated in Babylonian culture ([Dan. 1:1–7](#)). Daniel's faith is put to the test, and the chapter ends with Daniel and his three friends being promoted into the service of King Nebuchadnezzar.

The Big Picture

[Daniel 1:1–21](#) shows us how a sovereign God accomplishes his purposes and achieves his victory by sending Daniel and his three friends into exile in Babylon.

Reflection and Discussion

Read through the complete passage for this study, [Daniel 1:1–21](#). Then review the questions below and write your notes on them concerning this introductory section to the book of Daniel.

1. Daniel and His Friends Taken into Exile (1:1–7)

The opening verse sets the stage for Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of Jerusalem (v. 1). But what comes next is a bit of a shocker: "And *the Lord gave* Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand . . ." (v. 2). Why would Daniel ascribe ultimate responsibility for the capture of Jerusalem to the Lord? What does this teach us about Daniel's view of God? And what does this imply about human agency?

Verse 2 draws considerable attention to "the vessels of the house of God," mentioning that they were seized by Nebuchadnezzar and carried off to Babylon. Take a close look at this verse. Given all the things that could have been mentioned, why draw attention to the fate of the temple vessels? Note as well where they end up—in the house of Nebuchadnezzar's god, "the treasury of his god" (v. 2). What is the significance of this?

Why does Nebuchadnezzar go to all the trouble of deporting some of the Jews to Babylon? What strategy might he have in deporting members of "the royal family and nobility" in particular (v. 3), and then training them in the culture and customs of the Babylonians (v. 4), as well as providing for them materially (v. 5)?

2. Daniel and His Friends Remain undefiled (1:8–16)

Notice how verse 8 begins with a sharp contrast: "*But* Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's food" (v. 8). Why did Daniel believe eating the king's food or drinking his wine would defile him?

Verse 9 tells us that God gave Daniel "favor and compassion." How does the Lord's favor and compassion manifest itself in Daniel's life in these verses? What concrete evidence could we point to?

3. Daniel and His Friends Promoted and Preserved (1:17–21)

This first chapter climaxes when King Nebuchadnezzar tests Daniel and his three friends in their learning. And the text isn't bashful about telling us they pass the test with flying colors; in fact, it says they were "ten times better" than anyone else. Why, though, do you think this point is emphasized?

Verse 21 looks, at first glance, to be an incidental historical detail tacked onto the end of the story: "And Daniel was there [in the court of the King of Babylon] until the first year of King Cyrus." Who is King Cyrus? And why do you think this is mentioned? What does it say about Daniel? What does it say about God?

Read through the following three sections on Gospel Glimpses, Whole-Bible Connections, and Theological Soundings. Then take time to consider the Personal Implications these sections may have for you.

Gospel Glimpses

GOD GAVE. A simple subject-verb combination is used three times in the opening chapter of Daniel: "the Lord gave . . ." (1:2), "God gave . . ." (v. 9), and "God gave . . ." (v. 17). Arguably, these three "God-gives" shape the flow of this chapter and the division of its paragraphs (vv. 1–7, 8–16, 17–21). But more importantly, this simple expression captures the good news about what God has done in Christ: "For God so loved the world, that *he gave* his only Son" ([John 3:16](#)). What a wonderfully succinct way to express the heart of the gospel, the meaning of grace, and the story of Scripture—*God gave!* And yet, surprisingly perhaps, we find this glorious theme right here in the opening chapter of the book of Daniel.

DEFEAT AS THE PATH TO VICTORY. We're taken aback when we read in verse 2 that the Lord is the one who ultimately gave Jerusalem into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar. In a book designed to show the victory of God, this is a counterintuitive way to begin. And yet this is the gospel story—defeat is the path to victory. Before Jesus wears the crown, he bears the cross. The Son of God, the Davidic Messiah, is first the Son of Man, the suffering servant who must tread the lonely path of humility and suffering and even death. "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" ([John 12:24](#)). So, too, this is the way of the gospel in our lives: we share in Christ's suffering, "becoming like him in his death," before we "attain the resurrection from the dead" ([Phil. 3:10–11](#)).

Definition: Messiah

Transliteration of a Hebrew word meaning "anointed one," the equivalent of the Greek word Christ. Originally applied to anyone specially designated for a particular role, such as king or priest. Jesus himself affirmed that he was the Messiah sent from God ([Matt. 16:16–17](#)).

Whole-Bible Connections

EXILE AS COVENANTAL CURSE. We will miss the full import of the opening chapter of Daniel if we fail to see the exile of the Jews to Babylon in light of the covenant curses threatened for failing to keep the stipulations of the Sinai covenant. Both Leviticus (26:14–45) and Deuteronomy (28:15–68) provide an extensive list of the curses that will come upon Israel if they fail to abide by the terms of the covenant.

Note that the climactic curse of the covenant is the *exile* of the nation itself (Lev. 26:33; Deut. 28:64)—viewed as a death sentence for a capital offense (i.e., apostasy/idolatry). We are therefore to understand the dramatic events of Daniel 1 as the fulfillment of the curses threatened centuries earlier (cf. Jer. 25:1–14).

BLESSING TO THE NATIONS. The book of Daniel envisions the Jews living in exile among the nations. Jeremiah prophesied of this situation, and his counsel to the exiles was clear: “seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare” (Jer. 29:7). Even though exile is an expression of God’s judgment upon the nation, the Jews are nevertheless to seek to bless the people among whom they dwell. Daniel and his friends, among others, are hauled off to Babylon, yet we see them embody this commitment to bless Babylon. The story of Daniel’s life can thus be seen as a partial fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham: that his offspring would be a blessing to the nations (Gen. 12:3).

Definition: Covenant

A binding agreement between two parties, typically involving a formal statement of their relationship, a list of stipulations and obligations for both parties, a list of witnesses to the agreement, and a list of curses for unfaithfulness and blessings for faithfulness to the agreement. The Old Testament is more properly understood as the old covenant, meaning the agreement established between God and his people prior to the coming of Jesus Christ and the introducing of the new covenant (New Testament).

Theological Soundings

SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD. The God of Daniel is sovereign over men and nations. Indeed, from the start we are confronted with the Lord’s sovereignty over the events of history and human circumstances. Daniel is clear that it was the Lord who ultimately orchestrated the fall of Jerusalem (Dan. 1:2). So too we learn in chapter 1 that God works in and through the most seemingly mundane details and decisions of life: the Lord is responsible for the favorable reception Daniel receives from the chief of the eunuchs (v. 9), the nourishment the four young men receive from only a vegetable diet (v. 15), and the acquisition of knowledge and insight through their study of Babylonian culture (v. 17). There is a compatibility between divine sovereignty and human agency; these are not to be set in opposition but understood as different perspectives on the same unfolding events.

CHRIST AND CULTURE. Perhaps no book in the Old Testament presents more material for thinking about the Christian presence in the world, or what has classically been referred to as the relationship between Christ and culture. Daniel and his three friends display a readiness to engage in the culture and customs of the Babylonians, and yet this clearly has limits. Daniel does not simply accommodate to the host culture of the Babylonians. At the same time, he does show a high degree of acculturation: acquiring both learning and skill in “all literature and wisdom” of the Babylonians (v. 17). This provides a good case study for thinking about the challenge of being in the world, but not of the world (John 17:15–16).

Definition: Sovereignty

Supreme and independent power and authority. Sovereignty over all things is a distinctive attribute of God (1 Tim. 6:15–16). He directs all things in order to carry out his purposes (Rom. 8:28–29).

Personal Implications

Take time to reflect on the implications of Daniel 1:1–21 for your own life today. Consider what you have learned that might lead you to praise God, repent of sin, and trust in his gracious promises. Make notes below on the personal implications for your walk with the Lord of the (1) Gospel Glimpses, (2) Whole-Bible Connections, (3) Theological Soundings, and (4) this passage as a whole.

1. Gospel Glimpses
2. Whole-Bible Connections
3. Theological Soundings
4. Daniel 1:1–21

As You Finish This Unit . . .

Take a moment now to ask for the Lord's blessing and help as you continue in this study of Daniel. And take a moment also to look back through this unit of study, to reflect on some key things that the Lord may be teaching you—and perhaps to highlight and underline these things to review again in the future.

Week 3: Nebuchadnezzar's Dream of a Great Statue (2:1-49)

The Place of the Passage

This chapter provides our first dramatic look at Daniel as an interpreter of dreams, and God as a revealer of mysteries. The story is self-contained, though its themes will reappear in later chapters of the book of Daniel. Especially significant is the division of history into earthly empires represented by Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a great statue and its interpretation. It is worth noting that this chapter introduces the portion of Daniel that was originally written in Aramaic. The chapter ends with Daniel and his three friends being promoted, which prepares the way for the events to follow in chapter 3.

Definition: Aramaic

A language related to Hebrew, spoken throughout much of the ancient Near East. It was the everyday language of most Israelites after their exile to Babylon, and it continued to be spoken by many Jews (including Jesus) living in Palestine during the Roman era. Portions of the books of Ezra and Daniel were written in Aramaic.

The Big Picture

In [Daniel 2:1-49](#), we see that God is the God of gods and Lord of kings because he is the revealer of mysteries.

Reflection and Discussion

Read through the entire text for this study, [Daniel 2:1-49](#). Then interact with the following questions and record your notes on them concerning this section of Daniel's prophecy.

1. The Dream and Nebuchadnezzar's Threat (2:1-13)

Verse 1 tells us that Nebuchadnezzar was deeply troubled by his dreams. Why do you suppose that was? In the ancient world, dreams were viewed as communication from the gods and thus thought to anticipate the future. How does understanding this shed light on Nebuchadnezzar's response?

Nebuchadnezzar called together a group of people who were trained to interpret dreams: "the magicians, the enchanters, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans" (v. 2). What was unusual about Nebuchadnezzar's request? How did the Chaldeans respond?

2. Daniel's Response and Prayer (2:14-24)

Daniel requests an audience with Nebuchadnezzar to interpret his dream. Why, in the flow of events in this passage, is this such a bold and faith-filled thing for Daniel to do?

After God reveals the dream to Daniel, he praises God as the one “to whom belong wisdom and might” (v. 20). But he also goes on to praise God for giving him this same “wisdom and might” (v. 23). In this context, what does it mean for God to have wisdom and might and then give it to Daniel?

3. Daniel Interprets the Dream (2:25–45)

In what ways does Daniel ensure that God alone gets the credit for being the revealer of mysteries?

In verses 36–43 Daniel describes the content of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. The parts of the statue represent four kingdoms, beginning with the “head of gold” (v. 38), which is Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian empire. Compare how these four kingdoms are described. What is the significance of each of these descriptions?

Daniel sees that a stone shall strike the image, destroying it (v. 35). In light of verses 44–45, what is this stone? How does this relate to what Jesus says about his own life and ministry?

4. Nebuchadnezzar Promotes Daniel (2:46–49)

Nebuchadnezzar is amazed at what Daniel was able to reveal to him. He falls down prostrate and pays homage. But to whom? And yet how does that relate to what Nebuchadnezzar says in verse 47? Daniel graciously asks the king to appoint his three friends to important positions in the empire, while Daniel stays in the court of the king (v. 49). How does this prepare for the situation in chapter 3? Read through the following three sections on Gospel Glimpses, Whole-Bible Connections, and Theological Soundings. Then take time to consider the Personal Implications these sections may have for you.

Gospel Glimpses

SEEK MERCY. When Daniel is confronted with a truly desperate situation, the prospect of death, he doesn’t despair. Instead, he calls upon his three friends “to seek mercy from the God of heaven” (v. 18). This is a gospel-laced response to crisis. It’s the kind of reaction Jesus invites from his followers, regardless of their circumstances or situation in life. “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened” (Matt. 7:7–8). Daniel found this promise of Jesus to be gloriously true. And the only right response was adoration: “To you, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise” (Dan. 2:23).

INCARNATION. When Nebuchadnezzar confronts his wise men with an impossible request, namely, to tell him not only the interpretation, but the content of his dream, they respond in a way that exposes the limits of human wisdom: “The thing that the king asks is difficult, and no one can show it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh” (Dan. 2:11). An honest confession, to be sure, but one that the gospel overturns: “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,” the opening chapter of John’s Gospel declares, “and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

Definition: Incarnation

Literally “(becoming) in flesh,” it refers to God becoming a human being in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

Whole-Bible Connections

AN EVERLASTING KINGDOM. When Jesus entered into public ministry, he came preaching the gospel of God, which was an announcement of the dawning of the kingdom of God in his own person and work (Mark 1:14–15). Many centuries before, Daniel got a glimpse of this good news, the coming of an everlasting kingdom (vv. 44–45). Indeed, he saw the stone the builders would reject—the stone that became the cornerstone (v. 35; Matt. 21:42). And he understood, as Jesus demonstrated, that the initiative to establish this kingdom rests, not with man, but with God (v. 44). Ultimately, this kingdom shall reach its consummation with the dawning of a new heaven and new earth (Rev. 21:1), at which point we will be able to say, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever” (Rev. 11:15).

MYSTERY. In Daniel 2, God stands forth as the “revealer of mysteries” (v. 47). In Daniel, as well as the rest of the Bible, the word “mystery” is not intended to refer to something cryptic or clandestine; rather, it refers to what God has yet to disclose about his purposes for the world. When God reveals to Daniel the mystery of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream (vv. 18–19), Daniel is thus given insight into how history is going to unfold according to God’s sovereign, saving plan. The apostle Paul speaks of this mystery in several of his letters (see Rom. 11:25; Eph. 3:1–10; Col. 1:25–26). This mystery “was kept secret for long ages but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith” (Rom. 16:25–26).

Definition: Kingdom of God

The sovereign rule of God. At the present time, the fallen, sinful world does not belong to the kingdom of God, since it does not submit to God’s rule. Instead, God’s kingdom can be found in heaven and among his people (Matt. 6:9–10; Luke 17:20–21). After Christ returns, however, the kingdoms of the world will become the kingdom of God (Rev. 11:15). Then all people will, either willingly or regretfully, acknowledge his sovereignty (Phil. 2:9–11). Even the natural world will be transformed to operate in perfect harmony with God (Rom. 8:19–23).

Theological Soundings

REVELATION. The Christian faith is rooted in the fact of divine revelation. Apart from God’s gracious self-disclosure, there would be no Christianity. Daniel 2, then, puts its finger on an important theological truth: divine revelation, or the fact that God “reveals deep and hidden things” (v. 22). But this chapter also reminds us of the goal of revelation: doxology, or the adoration and worship of God, which we see exemplified in both Daniel’s (vv. 20–23) and Nebuchadnezzar’s response to God’s revealing his mystery (vv. 46–47).

WISDOM. The book of Proverbs famously asserts that wisdom, or insight for right living, begins with the fear of the Lord (Prov. 1:7). Daniel 2 both illustrates and reinforces this theme. God is the one “to whom belong wisdom and might” (Dan. 2:20). And yet God gives this wisdom to those who seek it with reverent trust, as Daniel and his three friends did (vv. 18, 23). To glean such wisdom is to get to the heart of what theology is meant to be—rightly knowing who God is.

Personal Implications

Take time to reflect on the implications of Daniel 2:1–49 for your own life today. Consider what you have learned that might lead you to praise God, repent of sin, and trust in his gracious promises. Make notes below on the personal implications for your walk with the Lord of the (1) Gospel Glimpses, (2) Whole-Bible Connections, (3) Theological Soundings, and (4) this passage as a whole.

1. Gospel Glimpses
2. Whole-Bible Connections
3. Theological Soundings
4. Daniel 2:1–49

As You Finish This Unit . . .

Take a moment now to ask for the Lord’s blessing and help as you continue in this study of Daniel. And take a moment also to look back through this unit of study, to reflect on key things that the Lord may be teaching you—and perhaps to highlight and underline these things to review again in the future.

Week 4: Nebuchadnezzar Builds a Great Statue (3:1–30)

The Place of the Passage

In [Daniel 3:1–30](#), we see the faith of Daniel’s three friends put to the test. Nebuchadnezzar erects a great statue and commands all people to fall down and worship it. Daniel’s friends refuse and are thrown into a fiery furnace. But God delivers them from this peril and vindicates his own power in the eyes of Nebuchadnezzar, who responds (as we saw in [Daniel 2](#)) by ascribing praise to the God of Israel and honoring Daniel’s three friends.

The Big Picture

In this chapter we see God’s power at work, rescuing his people from a most perilous situation, which serves to confirm that “there is no other God who is able to rescue in this way” (3:29).

Reflection and Discussion

Read through the complete passage for this study, [Daniel 3:1–30](#). Then review the questions below and write your notes on them concerning these two cycles of judgment and grace for the nations.

1. The Nations Worship Nebuchadnezzar’s Statue (3:1–7)

The statue Nebuchadnezzar builds is different from the one he saw in his dreams. What is the difference? And what does this suggest about Nebuchadnezzar’s view of himself and his empire?

When describing the dedication of the great statue, these verses contain some seemingly unnecessary repetition: for example, the list of officials present (vv. 2–3) or the list of musical instruments used (vv. 5, 7). What effect is created by this repetition? Is it positive, or negative? And what does it say about the people involved?

2. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego Preserved in the Fiery Furnace (3:8–29)

Daniel’s three friends refuse to pay homage to the statue erected by Nebuchadnezzar, and are therefore to be thrown into the fiery furnace. Look closely at their response to Nebuchadnezzar in verses 16–18. How confident are they of being delivered from the fiery furnace? What other fate do they consider a possibility?

Much to his surprise, when Nebuchadnezzar looked into the fiery furnace he saw not only the three friends alive and well, but a fourth man with them, who looked “like a son of the gods” (v. 25). Who is this person? And what does his presence with the three friends, in the fiery furnace, teach us about God’s relationship to his people? You may find it helpful to read [Isaiah 43:2](#) before answering this question.

This passage is careful to describe how the three friends appeared after they came out of the fire: “The hair of their heads was not singed, their cloaks were not harmed, and no smell of fire had come upon them” ([Dan. 3:27](#)). What does this teach us about God’s ability to protect and care for his people?

3. Nebuchadnezzar Promotes Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (3:30)

Compare the endings of [Daniel 2](#) and 3. What common themes do you see? What larger message is this intended to convey about God's victory and the faithfulness of God's people?

Read through the following three sections on Gospel Glimpses, Whole-Bible Connections, and Theological Soundings. Then take time to consider the Personal Implications these sections may have for you.

Gospel Glimpses

DELIVERANCE. This chapter provides one of the most powerful examples of deliverance in all the Bible. Yes, the faith and courage of Daniel's three friends is truly remarkable (3:17–18). But even more so is the deliverance God achieves for them, so that not a whiff of smoke can be detected on them, even after having been in the fierce heat of the fire for some time (v. 27). It is hard to imagine a more complete deliverance than that one—that is, until you come to the New Testament, and consider the fiery furnace of hell, and the deliverance God accomplishes through his Son, on behalf of his people, to rescue them from “the wrath to come” ([1 Thess. 1:10](#)).

THE FOURTH IS LIKE A SON OF THE GODS. Having commissioned his people to take the gospel to the ends of the earth, Jesus assures them of his continual presence with them: “And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” ([Matt. 28:20](#)). The apostle Paul understood the reality of Christ's presence to sustain him in the midst of trying circumstances: “He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us” ([2 Cor. 1:10](#)). So, too, do Daniel's three friends, as they enjoy the manifest presence of the preincarnate Christ shielding them from an otherwise certain death in the fiery furnace. This fourth person in the furnace, whose appearance is “like a son of the gods” ([Dan. 3:25](#)), provides a wonderful glimpse into the way in which Jesus Christ, “the great shepherd of the sheep” ([Heb. 13:20](#)), walks with his people even “through the valley of the shadow of death” ([Ps. 23:4](#)).

Definition: Hell

A place of eternal torment for those who rebel against God and refuse to repent.

Whole-Bible Connections

IDOLATRY. [Daniel 3](#) provides a classic case of fallen humanity's tendency to worship idols. Ever since Adam and Eve inverted the creational order by heeding the words of the Serpent, rather than trusting in the provision of God ([Genesis 3](#)), humankind has had a built-in tendency to want to construct idols in the place of God. And while these have not always taken the form of statues, humanity has consistently and cleverly found ways to exchange the glory of God for “images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things” ([Rom. 1:23](#)). The Old Testament prophets combatted this issue constantly (see [Isaiah 40–48](#)), as did the earliest Christians, as they took the gospel into the cultural centers of first-century paganism (see [Acts 17:16–32](#)). God promises, however, to one day rid the world, and the human heart, of false gods: “and the Lord alone will be exalted in that day” ([Isa. 2:17](#)).

PERSECUTION. The persecution of Daniel's three friends has been the experience of God's people down through the ages. Ever since God put enmity between the Serpent and the Seed of the Woman in [Genesis 3](#), the people of God have encountered persecution from anti-God forces in the world. The antagonism between these two peoples, and the persecution that results, is a theme that runs through the pages of

Scripture—and, sadly, down through the pages of human history. The earliest Christians, of course, knew of the reality of persecution at the hands of both Jews and pagans; in fact, in [Galatians 4](#) the apostle Paul provides a fascinating redemptive-historical reading of the friction that existed between Abraham’s offspring ([Gal. 4:21–28](#)). He then adds this sober postscript: “But just as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, *so also it is now*” (v. 29).

Definition: Idolatry

In the Bible, this word usually refers to the worship of a physical object. Paul’s comments in [Colossians 3:5](#), however, suggest that idolatry can include covetousness, since greed is essentially equivalent to worshiping material things.

Theological Soundings

CHRISTOPHANY. Although God the Son did not make his dwelling among us in the flesh until the time of the incarnation, the Old Testament provides a number of suggestive anticipations of the incarnation, when a human figure suddenly appears on the scene in the service of God. Analogous to a theophany, scholars call these episodes Christophanies, literally, Christ-appearings. Perhaps the most intriguing is found in [Genesis 18](#), when the Lord appears to Abraham and talks to him ([Gen. 18:1–2](#); see also [Gen. 32:22–32](#)). Many students of the Bible believe we have another Christophany here in [Daniel 3](#), with the sudden appearance of this one who is like “a son of the gods” (v. 25) and rescues Daniel’s three friends.

CHURCH AND STATE. The New Testament is clear that Christians should submit to authorities ([Rom. 13:1](#)), showing proper deference and respect to political officials and governmental systems ([1 Pet. 2:13–17](#)). The followers of Jesus aren’t to be renegades or political rabble-rousers. And yet submission to authorities does have a limit; in this fallen world, governments can issue decrees that directly contradict the will of God. In such cases, the path of wisdom is to do as Daniel’s three friends did in the face of state-sponsored idolatry, and express your conscientious objection, while at the same time being willing to embrace the consequences of such a stand. We see Peter and the other apostles taking a similarly bold yet costly stand because they were motivated by the conviction that “We must obey God rather than men” ([Acts 5:29](#)).

Definition: Theophany

An appearance of God to a human being.

Personal Implications

Take time to reflect on the implications of [Daniel 3:1–30](#) for your own life today. Consider what you have learned that might lead you to praise God, repent of sin, and trust in his gracious promises. Make notes below on the personal implications for your walk with the Lord of the (1) Gospel Glimpses, (2) Whole-Bible Connections, (3) Theological Soundings, and (4) this passage as a whole.

1. Gospel Glimpses
2. Whole-Bible Connections
3. Theological Soundings

4. Daniel 3:1-30

As You Finish This Unit . . .

As You Finish This Unit . . .

Take a moment now to ask for the Lord's blessing and help as you continue in this study of Daniel. And take a moment also to look back through this unit of study, to reflect on some key things that the Lord may be teaching you—and perhaps to highlight and underline these things to review again in the future.

Week 5: Nebuchadnezzar's Dream of a Toppled Tree (4:1-37)

The Place of the Passage

This passage centers upon another of Nebuchadnezzar's dreams, this time of a toppled tree. Daniel, who did not make an appearance in the previous chapter, returns to the scene as the one to interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dream. The toppling of the tree is intended to teach Nebuchadnezzar about the preeminence of the God of Israel, a lesson he learns only by being humbled ([Dan. 4:33-37](#)). This chapter can be viewed as parallel with [Daniel 5](#), where Belshazzar is similarly confronted with his own pride, though the outcome is decidedly different.

The Big Picture

[Daniel 4:1-37](#) teaches that God is able to humble those who walk in pride (v. 37).

Reflection and Discussion

Read through the complete passage for this study, [Daniel 4:1-37](#). Then review the questions below and write your notes on them concerning this section of Daniel's prophecy.

1. Nebuchadnezzar's Dream and Its Interpretation (4:1-27)

[Daniel 4:1-3](#) provides an introduction to the events recorded in this chapter. Nebuchadnezzar declares that he wants to show "the signs and wonders" that the Most High has done for him (v. 2). What specific "signs and wonders" does he have in mind? Why does he also affirm God's everlasting kingdom in this context (v. 3)?

Nebuchadnezzar's dream involves a giant tree being chopped down by "a watcher, a holy one," who came down from heaven (v. 13). But this angel, or heavenly messenger, is instructed "to leave the stump of its roots in the earth" (v. 15). What is the meaning of leaving the stump?

Daniel says that Nebuchadnezzar will experience this humbling until he acknowledges that "the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will" (v. 25). But what would it mean for Nebuchadnezzar to be humble? What would be the telltale signs (see v. 27)?

2. Nebuchadnezzar's Humbling (4:28-33)

Verse 29 tells us that a whole 12 months separated the initial warning Nebuchadnezzar received and the judgment against him to bring about his humbling. What does this imply about God's ways with us?

Nebuchadnezzar experiences a thorough humbling at the hand of the Lord: "He was driven from among men and ate grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair grew as long as eagles' feathers, and his nails were like birds' claws" (v. 33). Why is this a fitting punishment for the sin of pride?

3. Nebuchadnezzar's Exaltation (4:34–37)

What does Nebuchadnezzar mean when he says he “lifted his eyes to heaven” (v. 34)? What immediately follows as a result of his doing that?

Nebuchadnezzar experienced “still more greatness” after he was restored (v. 36). Clearly, he has learned that the humble will be exalted. But what is the main lesson he takes away from this experience (see v. 37)?

Read through the following three sections on Gospel Glimpses, Whole-Bible Connections, and Theological Soundings. Then take time to consider the Personal Implications these sections may have for you.

Definition: Angel

A supernatural messenger of God, often sent to carry out his will or to assist human beings in carrying out his will. Though angels are more powerful than humans and often instill awe, they are not to be worshiped (Col. 2:18; Rev. 22:8–9). The Bible does, however, note various appearances of an “Angel of the Lord,” apparently a physical manifestation of God himself.

Gospel Glimpses

DIVINE PATIENCE. We’re tempted to pass over quickly the fact that Nebuchadnezzar was given a whole year before God executed his judgment upon him for his pride (v. 29). This reminds us that God is exceedingly patient with us—even in our hard-heartedness, pride, and rebellion. Sadly, we’re prone to forget or even presume upon God’s “forbearance and patience” (see [Rom. 2:4](#)). Yet the gospel teaches us that God is indeed “slow to anger” ([Ex. 34:6](#)), and is therefore “patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance” ([2 Pet. 3:9](#)).

THE HUMBLE SHALL BE EXALTED. While the main lesson we are to take away from the example of Nebuchadnezzar is that those who exalt themselves shall be humbled ([Dan. 4:37](#)), we see the reverse in his story as well: namely, that the humble shall be exalted (v. 36). This was, of course, a recurring theme in the teaching of Jesus. In fact, this is one of the great gospel paradoxes, something Jesus himself embodied so beautifully through his sacrifice and service: “For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” ([Mark 10:45](#)). The gospel now calls believers to “humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you” ([1 Pet. 5:6](#)). A life of humble cross-bearing will lead to a life of sharing in the glory of God at the resurrection ([Phil. 3:10–11](#))!

Definition: Resurrection

The impartation of new, eternal life to a dead person at the end of time (or in the case of Jesus, on the third day after his death). This new life is not a mere resuscitation of the body (as in the case of Lazarus; [John 11:1–44](#)), but a transformation of the body to an eternal state ([1 Cor. 15:35–58](#)). Both the righteous and the wicked will be resurrected, the former to eternal life and the latter to retributive judgment ([John 5:29](#)).

Whole-Bible Connections

REACHING TO HEAVEN. Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of a great tree whose top “reached to heaven” ([Dan. 4:11](#)) is eerily reminiscent of another structure forged in the depths of man’s pride—the Tower of Babel, which was intended to have its “top in the heavens” ([Gen. 11:4](#)). Both of these episodes reveal the insidious and self-aggrandizing nature of pride; they also clearly reveal how God reacts to such displays of self-exaltation: the Lord of heaven cuts both down to size! Interestingly, ancient Babylon is the geographic setting for both. No wonder Babylon serves in Scripture as a symbol for all that is corrupt in the world ([Revelation 18](#)).

Theological Soundings

THE PHYSICAL EFFECTS OF SIN. One of the intriguing theological issues raised by this story is the relationship between sin and our physical bodies. Is it simply coincidental that God’s judgment on Nebuchadnezzar’s pride would take the form of a mental breakdown, where he loses his mind, so that he’s no longer able to enjoy the company of other rational human beings but has to make his home among the beasts of the field? Or is it merely incidental that when Nebuchadnezzar has “lifted [his] eyes to heaven,” he finds his reason returns to him ([Dan. 4:34](#))? In the Western world, we’re tempted to operate with a mind-body dualism that severs the connection between sin and our physical bodies. But this story invites us to ponder their interconnectedness.

JUSTICE. Having been severely humbled, Nebuchadnezzar doesn’t impugn God’s character, or bellyache that his treatment was unjust. Rather, he confesses that “all his works are right and his ways are just” (v. 37). This is a remarkable statement coming from the lips of a man who lost not only his power and authority but also his mind, and who was not only driven out from the company of men but was made to dwell among animals! And yet this pagan king’s humble confession teaches us that God’s punishment always fits, and never exceeds, the crime, regardless of how severe it may appear to our darkened minds.

Personal Implications

Take time to reflect on the implications of [Daniel 4:1–37](#) for your own life today. Consider what you have learned that might lead you to praise God, repent of sin, and trust in his gracious promises. Make notes below on the personal implications for your walk with the Lord of the (1) Gospel Glimpses, (2) Whole-Bible Connections, (3) Theological Soundings, and (4) this passage as a whole.

1. Gospel Glimpses
2. Whole-Bible Connections
3. Theological Soundings
4. [Daniel 4:1–37](#)

As You Finish This Unit . . .

Take a moment now to ask for the Lord’s blessing and help as you continue in this study of Daniel. And take a moment also to look back through this unit of study, to reflect on some key things that the Lord may be teaching you—and perhaps to highlight and underline these things to review again in the future.

Week 6: Belshazzar's Feast (5:1–31)

The Place of the Passage

In [Daniel 5:1–31](#), we are introduced to Babylon's last monarch, Belshazzar, and thus brought chronologically to the end of the Babylonian empire. The chapter describes the events of a great feast hosted by Belshazzar; it's a show of royal power, bounty, and self-satisfaction. Ironically, in the midst of the feast, Belshazzar is confronted with a message of divine judgment—the writing on the wall (v. 5). And that very night, he loses his life, when the city and thus the empire is overtaken by Darius the Mede (vv. 30–31).

The Big Picture

This chapter teaches the sober truth that sometimes people can become so hardened that they're beyond the point of redemption, so that the only thing remaining for them is judgment.

Reflection and Discussion

Read through [Daniel 5:1–31](#), which will be the focus of this week's study. Following this, review the questions below and write your responses concerning this section of the book of Daniel.

1. An idolatrous Feast (5:1–4)

Belshazzar is enjoying a lavish feast for many, many guests. He decides, however, to drink wine out of the vessels of gold and silver brought from the temple in Jerusalem (v. 2; see 1:2). Of course, it's not as if they ran out of drinking utensils and thus had to resort to drinking out of the temple vessels. So why, then, do you think Belshazzar chose to do so? What do you suppose he was trying to say with that gesture?

Although Belshazzar was not literally Nebuchadnezzar's son, the text still refers to him as his "father" (v. 2). Why is that? What is the significance to Belshazzar, or to the message of this story, to draw a close connection between these two rulers of Babylon?

2. An Unreadable Message (5:5–9)

While Belshazzar sees the fingers of a human hand appearing and writing on the wall, he cannot read the message. Nevertheless, he is overtaken with extreme fear, so much so that "his limbs gave way" (v. 6). Why is his immediate reaction one of fear and dread? And why does it get worse, so that he is "greatly alarmed" (v. 9)?

3. A Forgotten Interpreter (5:10–12)

The queen mother enters into the chamber to tell Belshazzar of the existence of Daniel, who had become well-known as a person of "light and understanding and wisdom" (v. 11). She encourages Belshazzar to consult with this Daniel, and refers to him by his Babylonian name, Belteshazzar, which probably means "O Lady [wife of the Babylonian god Bel], protect the king!" Why is the mention of his Babylonian name so ironic in this context?

4. A Message of Judgment (5:13–31)

Daniel alone is able to interpret the writing on the wall. But before he gives Belshazzar the message, he first compares him to King Nebuchadnezzar (vv. 18–23). What are the points of similarity and the points of difference between Belshazzar and Nebuchadnezzar? It may be useful to review [Daniel 4](#) as well.

The writing on the wall is a collection of Aramaic words, “Mene, Mene, Tekel, and Parsin,” which are measures of weight, listed in decreasing order. Presumably, the king’s wise men could have read these rather basic terms. But they were evidently unable to understand their meaning and implications. If the terms are read as verbs, the meaning becomes, “Numbered, numbered, weighed, and divided,” which is the meaning Daniel gives to them (5:26–27). How does Daniel then apply this message to Belshazzar? What does it mean for him, and for his kingdom?

Read through the following three sections on Gospel Glimpses, Whole-Bible Connections, and Theological Soundings. Then take time to consider the Personal Implications these sections may have for you.

Gospel Glimpses

THE CRY FROM THE CROSS. In this story, the writing on the wall is a declaration of divine condemnation. God has tolerated Belshazzar’s pride and rebellion long enough; the time has come for justice to reign. As such, this story reminds our fallen world that we too, like Belshazzar, ought to see the writing on the wall. Indeed, as the apostle Paul says, “the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men” ([Rom. 1:18](#)). Are we not all liable to the same fate that met Belshazzar? And yet God, in his grace and mercy, has set forth his Son to be a sin offering for us, so that instead of having to see the writing on the wall, we can hear the cry from the cross: “It is finished!” ([John 19:30](#)). “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” ([2 Cor. 5:21](#)).

Whole-Bible Connections

WORSHIP OF IDOLS. During the revelry and merrymaking which was Belshazzar’s great feast, things come to a crescendo when Belshazzar not only defiles the vessels of the temple but indeed praises “the gods of gold and silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone” ([Dan. 5:4](#)). This is outright blasphemy and open rebellion against God, the Maker of heaven and earth, who alone deserves all glory, honor, and praise. Ironically, as pride exalts a man, he is all the more willing to prostrate himself before idols. We see this pattern again and again in the Bible, as the prophets polemicize against the folly of worshiping graven images in whom there is no life (again, see [Isaiah 40–48](#)). So, too, the apostle Paul critiques the idols of Athens, declaring that these images are merely human products, “formed by the art and imagination of man” ([Acts 17:29](#)).

Definition: Blasphemy

Any speech, writing, or action that slanders God. In the Old Testament, the penalty for blasphemy was death ([Lev. 24:16](#)), and in the New Testament, Jesus states that “the one who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven” ([Luke 12:10](#)).

Theological Soundings

WILLFUL IGNORANCE. Because of sin, human beings have the ability to induce within themselves a willful ignorance of the truth, so that what should be obvious to them is nevertheless lost upon them. They're ignorant of it, not because they lack exposure to it but because they choose to deny what is plain to them. We see willful ignorance in Belshazzar, which only multiplies his guilt before the Lord. He no doubt has heard what happened to Nebuchadnezzar, how he was humbled by the God of Israel and, once restored, gave God praise (Daniel 4). But in his pride and folly, Belshazzar seems blissfully unaware of this. And yet we learn from the apostle Paul that willful ignorance operates in every fallen heart, as people suppress the knowledge of God to such an extent that they become ignorant of him—even to the point of denying his existence as they worship idols (Rom. 1:18–23).

DIVINE JUDGMENT. While God is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, his mercy does have limits. It is indeed possible for someone to become hardened beyond the point of redemption. Hebrews warns of this as a possibility: “if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries” (Heb. 10:26–27). Belshazzar experienced God's definitive judgment against his sin. But Hebrews warns that those who are privileged to know about the good news of Jesus Christ are liable to an even more severe judgment should they reject this knowledge and profane Jesus' sacrifice (v. 29).

Definition: Judgment

Any assessment of something or someone, especially moral assessment. The Bible also speaks of a final day of judgment when Christ returns, when all those who have refused to repent will be judged (Rev. 20:12–15).

Personal Implications

Take time to reflect on the implications of Daniel 5:1–30 for your own life today. Consider what you have learned that might lead you to praise God, repent of sin, and trust in his gracious promises. Make notes below on the personal implications for your walk with the Lord of the (1) Gospel Glimpses, (2) Whole-Bible Connections, (3) Theological Soundings, and (4) this passage as a whole.

1. Gospel Glimpses
2. Whole-Bible Connections
3. Theological Soundings
4. Daniel 5:1–31

As You Finish This Unit . . .

Take a moment now to ask for the Lord's blessing and help as you continue in this study of Daniel. And take a moment also to look back through this unit of study, to reflect on some key things that the Lord may be teaching you—and perhaps to highlight and underline these things to review again in the future.

Week 7: The Lion's Den (6:1–28)

The Place of the Passage

This chapter presents the famous passage of Daniel in the lions' den. This passage has much in common with [Daniel 3](#), when Daniel's three friends are delivered out of the fiery furnace. In this case, however, it is Daniel, rather than his three friends, who is tossed into a near-death situation; and it takes place under Darius the Mede, and thus happens to Daniel much later in his life. At this point, not only is he an old man, but he has served the empire faithfully for decades. All of this serves to heighten the dramatic tension, and to sweeten the irony when Daniel is both delivered from death and made to prosper during the reign of Darius and indeed even into the reign of Cyrus the Persian (v. 28).

The Big Picture

[Daniel 6:1–28](#) demonstrates that God, who saved Daniel from the power of the lions, can be trusted to deliver and rescue his people from the most perilous or hopeless of situations.

Reflection and Discussion

Read through the complete passage for this study, [Daniel 6:1–28](#). Then review the questions below and write your notes on them concerning this transitional section in the book of Daniel.

1. Daniel Promoted (6:1–3)

Clearly, Daniel is a responsible and faithful senior servant of the empire. In the opening verses of this chapter, what indications do we have of Daniel's trusted status?

2. The Administrators Plot to Remove Daniel (6:4–15)

How does Daniel's faithfulness and reliability pose a challenge to the administrators in their plot against him? What do they think is their only chance of catching Daniel doing something wrong? Reread the Gospel accounts of the trial of Jesus. How does the administrators' plot to remove Daniel resemble the Jews' strategy to see Jesus condemned to die? What motives underlie each? The administrators hatch a plot to catch Daniel violating the king's decree. They persuade the king to issue an edict prohibiting making petitions to any god or man other than King Darius. Presumably, they knew that this would be a problem for Daniel. What does this imply about their knowledge of Daniel's life? And how is that supported by what we read of Daniel's response to the edict (see 6:10)?

3. Daniel Preserved in the Lions' Den (6:16–24)

Although Darius regrets the impact of his decree upon Daniel, he goes ahead with the decision to put him into the lions' den. But clearly he is not happy about having to do so. What evidence from the text shows this?

According to Daniel, why did God deliver him from the lions' den (vv. 21–23)? Is there anything surprising or perhaps unsettling to you about what Daniel says? If so, what is it? And why?

4. Darius Acknowledges the Power of Daniel's God (6:25–27)

From Darius's perspective, why did God deliver Daniel from the lions' den? And what does God's deliverance of Daniel reveal about who God is?

5. Daniel Preserved until the End of the Exile (6:28)

How are the events described at the close of this chapter (v. 28) similar to those of the previous chapters? Would you say preservation is a theme of the book of Daniel? If so, how would you state that theme in your own words?

The closing verse of this chapter mentions not only Darius the Mede but also Cyrus the Persian (v. 28). Why is the mention of Cyrus so significant? Read [2 Chronicles 36:22–23](#) and [Ezra 1:1–3](#).

Read through the following three sections on Gospel Glimpses, Whole-Bible Connections, and Theological Soundings. Then take time to consider the Personal Implications these sections may have for you.

Gospel Glimpses

RESCUED FROM LIONS. The gospel delivers us not only from sin but from Satan. Scripture presents the Devil in a number of forms: sometimes he is a serpent ([Gen. 3:1–14](#)), sometimes a great dragon ([Rev. 12:9](#)), sometimes disguised as an angel of light ([2 Cor. 11:14](#)). The apostle Peter reminds us that our adversary also “prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” ([1 Pet. 5:8](#)). This fallen world is truly, then, a lions' den. And yet Jesus has overcome the Evil One through his death and resurrection; so, too, shall we, by faith in Christ's shed blood for us. “Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” ([1 John 5:5](#)).

ENTRUSTING HIMSELF TO HIM WHO JUDGES JUSTLY. Although [Daniel 6](#) is ultimately about God's deliverance of Daniel from the power of the lions (v. 27), we nevertheless glean much from Daniel's valiant and courageous faith. He is steadfast in prayer, knowing that it may well cost him his life (v. 10). And he is silent before his accusers, even though he knows they want to see him removed only because of their own jealousy. Tossed to the lions, Daniel is thus a type of Christ, who similarly was falsely accused by those who wanted to put an end to his life. And yet, in the midst of the swirl of false charges and allegations, Jesus did not retaliate or revile in return. In fact, he uttered not a word. Instead, he “continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly” ([1 Pet. 2:23](#)). And by so doing, he accomplished salvation for us. As Peter goes on to say, “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed” (v. 24).

Definition: Satan

A spiritual being whose name means “accuser.” As the leader of all the demonic forces, he opposes God's rule and seeks to harm God's people and accuse them of wrongdoing. His power, however, is confined to the bounds that God has set for him, and one day he will be destroyed along with all his demons ([Matt. 25:41](#); [Rev. 20:10](#)).

Definition: Type/typology

A method of interpretation in which a real, historical object, place, or person is recognized as a pattern or foreshadowing (a “type”) of some later object, place, or person. For example, the Bible presents Adam as a “type” of Christ ([Rom. 5:14](#)).

Whole-Bible Connections

ANGELS. Angels play a vital role in the purposes of God. The book of Hebrews calls angels “ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation” ([Heb. 1:14](#)). Sometimes they are deployed by God as his messengers; at other times, they are sent by him to protect his people. We have a powerful example of their protective role in this chapter, as we learn that it was an angel who “shut the lions’ mouths” so that Daniel’s life would be spared ([Dan. 6:22](#)). Angels played a similar role in the rescue of Lot from Sodom and Gomorrah ([Genesis 19](#)), the protection of Elisha and the Israelites from the king of Syria ([2 Kings 6:17](#)), the deliverance of Peter from prison ([Acts 5:19–20](#)), and the rescue of Paul from those who sought to take his life ([Acts 27:23–25](#)). Truly, the Lord “will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways” ([Ps. 91:11](#)).

SIGNS AND WONDERS. Throughout Scripture we see God vindicate his name and advance his purposes through the use of “signs and wonders,” powerful manifestations of the presence of God in the world. Darius recognizes that the deliverance of Daniel is nothing less than the working of God’s “signs and wonders” ([Dan. 6:27](#)). The downtrodden Israelites were delivered from Egyptian bondage through similar means: “And the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great deeds of terror, with signs and wonders” ([Deut. 26:8](#); see [Ex. 7:3](#); [Neh. 9:10](#); [Jer. 32:20](#)). So, too, does God advance the gospel in the lives of people with “signs and wonders” done by the apostles ([Acts 5:12](#)). Similar manifestations of the powerful presence of God attended the apostle Paul’s ministry among Gentiles, verifying its authenticity and guaranteeing its effectiveness (see [Rom. 15:17–19](#)). Signs and wonders are God’s way of bearing witness to his presence and direction in the world ([Heb. 2:4](#)).

Definition: Angel

A supernatural messenger of God, often sent to carry out his will or to assist human beings in carrying out his will. Though angels are more powerful than humans and often instill awe, they are not to be worshiped ([Col. 2:18](#); [Rev. 22:8–9](#)). The Bible does, however, note various appearances of an “Angel of the Lord,” apparently a physical manifestation of God himself.

Theological Soundings

COMMON GRACE. One of the most intriguing features of this chapter of Daniel is the reaction of King Darius to the news that Daniel has violated his edict and must be put to death. Darius is “much distressed” by the situation ([Dan. 6:14](#)), even to the point of fasting through a sleepless night (v. 18). And yet this is a pagan king, not a member of God’s family. Nevertheless, his conscience is burdened by what he sees taking place. We can’t help, then, but see in this story clear testimony to God’s common grace, his restraining of those outside of his covenant purposes, in a way that causes them to bless those who are inside of his covenant purposes. Paul experienced similar largesse when he stood trial before King Agrippa ([Acts 26](#)). Perhaps this is why he later enjoined believers to pray “for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way” ([1 Tim. 2:2](#)).

Definition: Conscience

The ability to understand the rightness or wrongness of one's actions and motives. The conscience is not identical with the inner witness of the Holy Spirit, although the Holy Spirit often employs the conscience in guiding people and convicting them of sin (Rom. 2:15).

Personal Implications

Take time to reflect on the implications of Daniel 6:1–28 for your own life today. Consider what you have learned that might lead you to praise God, repent of sin, and trust in his gracious promises. Make notes below on the personal implications for your walk with the Lord of the (1) Gospel Glimpses, (2) Whole-Bible Connections, (3) Theological Soundings, and (4) this passage as a whole.

1. Gospel Glimpses
2. Whole-Bible Connections
3. Theological Soundings
4. Daniel 6:1–28

As You Finish This Unit . . .

Take a moment now to ask for the Lord's blessing and help as you continue in this study of Daniel. And take a moment also to look back through this unit of study, to reflect on some key things that the Lord may be teaching you—and perhaps to highlight and underline these things to review again in the future.

Week 8: The Vision of the Four Great Beasts (7:1–28)

The Place of the Passage

Daniel 7 marks a significant transition in the book. This and the subsequent chapters describe Daniel's visions of the future. Far from being mere apocalyptic speculation, however, these visions are intended to encourage God's people in the midst of their exile. The overarching message of these chapters is that God is triumphantly in control of the unfolding of history, and thus has good purposes in store for his beleaguered and persecuted people. In this chapter, we are presented with Daniel's vision of four beasts (or kingdoms), and God's plan to vindicate his people and establish his everlasting kingdom (vv. 13–14).

Definition: Apocalyptic

The distinctive literary form of the book of Revelation and of chapters 7–12 of Daniel. These parts of Scripture include revelation about the future, highly symbolic imagery, and the underlying belief that God himself will one day end the world in its present form and establish his kingdom on earth. Apocalyptic is a mode of prophecy designed to encourage and support God's people through hard times.

The Big Picture

In Daniel 7:1–28, God reveals not only how the future will unfold from Daniel's perspective, but also how he will achieve his victory and establish his everlasting dominion over the kingdoms of men (vv. 13–14).

Reflection and Discussion

Read the entire text for this week's study, Daniel 7:1–28. Then review the following questions and write your notes on them concerning this section of Daniel.

1. The Four Great Beasts (7:1–8)

Note that the vision Daniel receives in this chapter takes place during the first year of Belshazzar's reign (v. 1). The events of this chapter therefore are chronologically prior to the events of chapters 5–6. Why do you think this chapter appears here, rather than earlier in the book?

Review the content of Daniel's vision in these opening verses. What is the author trying to communicate through the imagery of darkness (7:2), the blowing of four winds (v. 2), the stirring of a great sea (v. 2), and the appearance of mutant beasts out of all of this frothy chaos (vv. 3–8)? What does this teach us about history, and earthly kings and kingdoms?

Students of the book of Daniel continue to debate the identity of the four beasts mentioned in this vision. Consulting the *ESV Study Bible* would be of help. But what can we say with some assurance about these beasts?

2. The Ancient of Days Judges the Beasts (7:9–12)

Verse 9 marks a change of scene, moving from the stormy seashore setting of verses 1–8 to an altogether different setting. How would you describe this new setting? What does the juxtaposition of these two very different scenes communicate?

At the center of this scene is the Ancient of Days (v. 9). How is he described? And what is this meant to convey about his character and purposes?

3. The Coming of the Son of Man (7:13–14)

Daniel sees a figure riding on (“coming with”; v. 13) the clouds of heaven. What does that suggest about the nature or status of this figure? Who else in the Bible rides on the clouds of heaven (see, for example, [Ps. 104:3](#); [Isa. 19:1](#))?

Although this figure is clearly in some sense divine, Daniel sees that he is like “a son of man” ([Dan. 7:13](#)). How might this shed light on Jesus’ favorite self-designation, “Son of Man” (see, for example, [Mark 2:10, 28; 8:38](#))?

4. The Interpretation of the Vision (7:15–27)

While (as we saw in chapter 2) many scholars have identified the four beasts with Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome, the larger point to be gleaned from Daniel’s vision is the ongoing conflict and chaos of earthly powers, until the Ancient of Days establishes his everlasting kingdom (v. 18). How is this a hopeful message?

Describe the sequence of events that will result in the saints possessing the kingdom (see vv. 19–27). How does this compare with what we know of the unfolding of the end times from the New Testament, especially the book of Revelation (see [Revelation 18–22](#))?

5. Daniel’s Response (7:28)

Consider Daniel’s response to the vision and its interpretation (see v. 28). Is that a surprising response? How might you have expected him to respond? Why do you suppose he responded as he did?

Read through the following three sections on Gospel Glimpses, Whole-Bible Connections, and Theological Soundings. Then take time to consider the Personal Implications these sections may have for you.

Gospel Glimpses

SON OF MAN. We use a number of titles to refer to Jesus: Savior, Lord, Messiah, Son of God. Ironically, the one we use perhaps the least, Jesus used the most; it was his favorite self-designation, namely, Son of Man. Scholars have debated Jesus’ use of the phrase, but evidence strongly suggests that he drew the phrase from this chapter of the book of Daniel (see vv. 13–14). As such, it is perhaps the most exalted self-designation he could have chosen, given the fact that this figure in Daniel clearly is a divine one. And yet Jesus is very careful how and when he uses this title. In Mark’s Gospel, for example, the title appears fourteen times, with the overwhelming majority appearing only after Peter’s confession at Caesarea Philippi, when Jesus first begins to teach them that “the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again” ([Mark 8:31](#)). In other words, the exalted figure of [Daniel 7](#) is first the suffering servant who sheds his own blood for the sake of his people—a stunning gospel truth!

THE GIFT OF THE KINGDOM. We live in a world of godless forces, the kind of mutant beasts Daniel sees in rapid succession in his night vision (see [Dan. 7:1–8](#)). As such, the world often feels like it is out of control; so, too, do our lives. And yet here we recall the hope-giving assurance of our gracious Savior, Jesus, when he said to his followers, “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom” ([Luke 12:32](#)). This, of course, is the overwhelming message of the book of Daniel, and of this chapter in particular, namely, that God will eventually come and render judgment in favor of the saints of the Most High, and then give to them the kingdom—and it shall be forever theirs, world without end, Amen!

Definition: Son of Man

The title Jesus uses more than any other to refer to himself (e.g., [Matt. 8:20; 11:19](#)). While labeling himself this way may underscore Jesus’ humanity, the phrase is most significant in relation to the figure in [Daniel 7](#) who receives supreme authority and an everlasting kingdom from God (compare [Dan. 7:13–14](#) with [Matt. 26:64; Mark 14:62](#)).

Definition: Savior

One who rescues another from disaster and destruction. Jesus is the Savior of all believers, rescuing them from sin and eternal punishment ([Luke 2:11](#)).

Definition: Lord

Someone superior in authority or status to another, similar to “master.” It is a common translation for several different Hebrew titles for God in the Old Testament, and in the New Testament the term regularly refers to Jesus. When spelled in the Old Testament with small capital letters (Lord), it translates Hebrew Yahweh (YHWH), the personal name of God.

Definition: Messiah

Transliteration of a Hebrew word meaning “anointed one,” the equivalent of the Greek word Christ. Originally applied to anyone specially designated for a particular role, such as king or priest. Jesus himself affirmed that he was the Messiah sent from God ([Matt. 16:16–17](#)).

Whole-Bible Connections

ANTICHRIST. Many students of Daniel have taken the “little horn” who made war with the saints and prevailed over them until the coming of the Ancient of Days ([Dan. 7:21–22](#)) to refer to that figure the New Testament calls the Antichrist. Jesus himself taught that during the end times Antichrist would come ([Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:19](#)). So, too, the apostle Paul warns of his appearing ([2 Thess. 2:1–10](#)). In his first epistle, John catches us by surprise when he says, “Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come” ([1 John 2:18](#)). A little later on in this same letter, he identifies the “spirit of the antichrist” as anyone who denies Jesus has come in the flesh (4:3). This serves as a poignant reminder that the battle against antichrist is waged with truth and won by perseverance in the faith.

ALL PEOPLES, NATIONS, AND LANGUAGES. When the aged apostle John peers into the very throne room of heaven, he sees the twenty-four elders fall down in worship of the Lamb, and hears them sing a new song, celebrating the one who was slain and who by his blood purchased people for God “from every tribe and language and people and nation” (Rev. 5:9). This fourfold phrase appears in Daniel 7, with the triumphant vision of the one “like a son of man” who is given dominion over the whole earth, so that “all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him” (v. 14). But this points us even further back to the original use of this kind of phraseology in Genesis 10, in particular, the Table of the Nations, where we are given a record of the peoples of the earth “by their clans, their languages, their lands, and their nations” (vv. 5, 20, 31). This fourfold phrase is clearly intended to be inclusive of the whole of humanity, and in turn to represent the consummation of God’s global, missional purposes in redemption—gathering ransomed people from all the peoples of the earth!

Theological Soundings

DIVINE AND HUMAN. One of the more fascinating and inspiring portions of this chapter is the description of this figure who is presented to the Ancient of Days and receives the kingdom (Dan. 7:13–14). This figure is clearly divine, since no one but God rides on the clouds of heaven; but this figure, as Daniel sees him, is also clearly human as well—he is “like a son of man” (v. 13). This person is clearly subordinate in role to the Ancient of Days and yet is also given the authority of the Ancient of Days to have dominion over “all peoples, nations, and languages” (v. 14). This paradoxical interplay points us, of course, to the paradox of the incarnation itself, where we see the second person of the Godhead take on human flesh, and be “born in the likeness of men” (Phil. 2:7).

VIEW OF HISTORY. While these chapters are apocalyptic visions and thus call for caution in identifying various aspects of the vision with specific historical realities, what nevertheless does clearly emerge from this passage (and others like it in Daniel) is a particular theological interpretation of history—what is sometimes called the history of salvation. Unlike that of many ancient cultures, the biblical conception of history is linear, not cyclical. It has a definite beginning and end. And while the successive unfolding of earthly empires may appear repetitious and thus pointless, the Bible clearly envisions a sovereign God who is superintending it all and who will one day eradicate evil and put the world to rights.

Definition: History of Salvation

God’s unified plan for all of history, to accomplish the salvation of his people. He executed this salvation plan in the work of Jesus Christ on earth, by his life, crucifixion, burial, and resurrection (Eph. 1:10–12). The consummation of God’s plan will take place when Jesus Christ comes again to establish the “new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells” (2 Pet. 3:13).

Personal Implications

Take time to reflect on the implications of Daniel 7:1–28 for your own life today. Consider what you have learned that might lead you to praise God, repent of sin, and trust in his gracious promises. Make notes below on the personal implications for your walk with the Lord of the (1) Gospel Glimpses, (2) Whole-Bible Connections, (3) Theological Soundings, and (4) this passage as a whole.

1. Gospel Glimpses
2. Whole-Bible Connections
3. Theological Soundings

4. Daniel 7:1-28

As You Finish This Unit . . .

Take a moment now to ask for the Lord's blessing and help as you continue in this study of Daniel. And take a moment also to look back through this unit of study, to reflect on some key things that the Lord may be teaching you—and perhaps to highlight and underline these things to review again in the future.

Week 9: The Vision of the Ram, the Goat, and the Little Horn (8:1–27)

The Place of the Passage

Daniel 8:1–27 presents another vision of the future from Daniel’s perspective. Like the preceding, this is a vision of successive earthly kingdoms, in particular, the Medo-Persian, Greek, and Hellenistic empires. Unlike earlier visions in Daniel, however, the interpretation of the vision in this chapter is more specific in its details. And although the transitions from one kingdom to the next will involve turmoil and suffering, God’s people are hereby encouraged to remain strong and steadfast, confident that God is in control and will achieve his victory.

The Big Picture

This chapter encourages God’s people to continue to remain faithful in the face of persecution and the rising and falling of the kingdoms of this earth.

Reflection and Discussion

Read through the complete text for this study, Daniel 8:1–27. Then review the questions below and write your notes on them concerning this central text of Daniel.

1. The Vision of the Ram and the Goat (8:1–14)

Daniel sees a ram with two horns, one of which is longer than the other (v. 3). Scholars have tended to identify the ram with the Medo-Persian empire. If this is the case, what is the significance of the different horn lengths?

Next Daniel sees a male goat that comes from the west across the face of the whole earth, “without touching the ground” (v. 5). If this is referring to Alexander the Great, what is the significance of this description? Notice, however, that even this mighty beast, which becomes “exceedingly great” and “strong” (v. 8), eventually has its own horn broken into “four conspicuous horns” (v. 8). What is the significance of this imagery? Here you may want to consult the *ESV Study Bibles* notes on this section.

In verses 9–14, we are told about a “little horn” who became exceedingly powerful—“even as great as the Prince of the host” (v. 11). Many scholars consider this to be a reference to Antiochus IV Epiphanes, a member of the Seleucid dynasty who reigned from 175–164 BC. According to a Jewish historical account of this period, Antiochus desecrated the temple and thus the land of Jerusalem and persecuted the Jews severely. How does Daniel’s vision in verses 9–14 depict those very trying circumstances?

2. The Interpretation of the Vision (8:15–26)

In this section, the angel Gabriel appears to Daniel to provide the interpretation of the vision. You will notice that Daniel is given more specific detail about the historical circumstances represented by his dream; he is told, for example, that the two horns are the kings of Media and Persia (v. 20),

and that the goat is Greece (v. 21). Why do you suppose that, in this case, Daniel is given a more specific historical interpretation of his dream? What benefit might that serve?

Daniel's vision culminates with the aggressive and bold action of the little horn. We learn that this one's power will be great—"but not by his own power" (v. 24). What does that mean? We also learn that this figure will rise up against the one whom this passage calls "the Prince of princes" (v. 25). Who is that referring to? And how does this Prince of princes respond to the little horn?

3. Daniel's Response (8:27)

Read the closing verse of this chapter, which describes Daniel's response. Does his reaction to his vision surprise you? Why, or why not? Why do you think he responds so dramatically, being overcome with sickness for some days? And how could he be appalled by a vision he did not understand?

Read through the following three sections on Gospel Glimpses, Whole-Bible Connections, and Theological Soundings. Then take time to consider the Personal Implications these sections may have for you.

Gospel Glimpses

BUT BY NO HUMAN HAND. "And he shall even rise up against the Prince of princes, and he shall be broken—but by no human hand" (Dan. 8:25). Daniel's vision reminds us that God's people will find deliverance from whatever forces of evil are arrayed against them—but that it won't come by any human hand. Rather, God himself, in and through the gospel, will intervene on behalf of his people: redeeming, rescuing, saving. Even in the throes of death, the gospel promises the hope of resurrection from the dead, something God alone accomplishes through the working of his sovereign and powerful Spirit (1 Cor. 15:50–55).

THE APPOINTED TIME OF THE END. Because this chapter contains more specific historical information than other chapters, we are encouraged with the fact that there is an "appointed time of the end" (Dan. 8:19). Indeed, this chapter gives quite specific time references related to the end times (see v. 14), all of which serve to bolster our confidence in the truth of God's Word—that the end is coming, and indeed is even in sight. This would have been very good news to persecuted Jewish exiles in Daniel's day; so, too, would it have been to the beleaguered believers to whom the apostle John writes in the book of Revelation. They are reminded, from the lips of Jesus himself, that the end is at hand. Jesus' last words, in fact, are these: "Surely I am coming soon" (Rev. 22:20).

Definition: End times

A time associated with events prophesied in Scripture to occur at the end of the world and the second coming of Christ—also known as "the last days." Because the early church expected the return of Christ at any time, the end times can refer to any point in the period from Pentecost until Christ returns.

Whole-Bible Connections

THE CONCENTRATION OF EVIL. This chapter presents a frightful picture of the potential of human evil, especially when it is concentrated in the power of the state. This has always posed a serious threat to the

people of God. Recall the Tower of Babel many centuries earlier, the success of which would have, among other things, threatened the viability and security of God's people ([Genesis 11](#)). The earliest Christians understood this well, as they lived under the power of the mighty Roman empire. Indeed, Jesus knew this all too well, as he stood before Pontius Pilate and was then turned over to be flogged and executed as a criminal against the state (see [Luke 23:1–25](#)).

Theological Soundings

THE CHAOS OF HISTORY, THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD. One of the impressions we get from Daniel's vision of the rise and fall of empires depicts the sheer chaos and unpredictability of human history. And yet, at the same time, we are to see—in the midst of the contingencies of this same tumultuous series of events—a sovereign God who in fact causes the rising and falling of nations. Despite appearances, God is directing the course of human history, even down to the minutest of details. If we zoom in with a narrow lens, we see only chaos, but as we zoom out and view history through the wide-angle lens of God's sovereignty, we realize that history itself tells a very different, more promising story!

Definition: Sovereignty

Supreme and independent power and authority. Sovereignty over all things is a distinctive attribute of God ([1 Tim. 6:15–16](#)). He directs all things in order to carry out his purposes ([Rom. 8:28–29](#)).

Personal Implications

Take time to reflect on the implications of [Daniel 8:1–27](#) for your own life today. Consider what you have learned that might lead you to praise God, repent of sin, and trust in his gracious promises. Make notes below on the personal implications for your walk with the Lord of the (1) Gospel Glimpses, (2) Whole-Bible Connections, (3) Theological Soundings, and (4) this passage as a whole.

1. Gospel Glimpses
2. Whole-Bible Connections
3. Theological Soundings
4. [Daniel 8:1–27](#)

As You Finish This Unit . . .

Take a moment now to ask for the Lord's blessing and help as you continue in this study of Daniel. And take a moment also to look back through this unit of study, to reflect on some key things that the Lord may be teaching you—and perhaps to highlight and underline these things to review again in the future.

Week 10: Daniel's Prayer and Its Answer (9:1–27)

The Place of the Passage

Daniel 9 is a remarkable passage. From the opening verses we learn that Daniel discovers not only the reason for the exile of the Jewish people but also the number of years that must pass before their return. He gleaned this information from the prophet Jeremiah (v. 2), thus connecting this book and this chapter in particular with the whole sweep of redemptive history, from exile to return. The chapter itself consists of Daniel's prayer of penitence on behalf of his people, lamenting their sins and repenting of any wrongdoing, in the hope that God will hear his pleas for mercy and respond accordingly. The angel Gabriel, God's chosen messenger, is sent as a response to Daniel's prayer, and offers a word of reassurance that the end of exile is indeed coming.

Definition: Penitence

The condition of being repentant and sorrowful for wrongdoing.

The Big Picture

In Daniel 9:1–27, we see that sin has consequences, but that the grace of God will triumph still.

Reflection and Discussion

In Daniel 9:1–27, we see that sin has consequences, but that the grace of God will triumph still.

Read through the complete passage for this study, Daniel 9:1–27. Then review the questions below and record your notes and reflections on this section of Daniel's prophecy.

1. Daniel's Prayer concerning the 70 Years (9:1–19)

Daniel is motivated to pray after having read from the book of the prophet Jeremiah (v. 1–2). Read Jeremiah 25:11 and 29:10–14 within their contexts. What does Daniel realize about the Jewish people's time in exile? How does this shed light on his motivation to pray?

As part of Daniel's prayer, he says that to the Jewish people belongs "open shame" (Dan. 9:7). What does Daniel mean by that phrase? What other words and phrases does Daniel use to describe his people's sin?

In his prayer Daniel confesses that the "curse and oath that are written in the Law of Moses" have in fact been poured out on the people of Israel (v. 11). He is referring to the curses of the covenant outlined in Leviticus 26:14–45 and Deuteronomy 28:15–68. Take a moment to review those passages and compare them with Daniel's prayer. Also review Deuteronomy 30:1–10. How might this passage inform Daniel's prayer?

Daniel offers several reasons for God to hear and heed his plea for mercy. What are these reasons? And what does this teach us about how we ought to plead with God?

2. Gabriel's Answer: 70 Sevens before the Promised Redemption (9:20–27)

As in [Daniel 8](#), so here the angel Gabriel is sent in response to Daniel's prayer. Look closely at Gabriel's initial words to Daniel (9:22–23). What does Gabriel say that ought to encourage Daniel? Gabriel tells Daniel that “seventy weeks” have been decreed for the people of Israel before the exile is over. Students of the book of Daniel continue to discuss and debate the meaning of these “seventy weeks,” with various interpretations being offered. Here you may want to consult the *ESV Study Bible*, 1607, for more information. But regardless of the precise meaning of the “seventy weeks,” what is the main point of this for God's people?

What do we learn about the promised restoration of God's people from Gabriel's reply in verses 25–27? How will it come about? What phases will it involve? And what are the major events that will take place?

Read through the following three sections on Gospel Glimpses, Whole-Bible Connections, and Theological Soundings. Then take time to consider the Personal Implications these sections may have for you.

Definition: Exile

Several relocations of large groups of Israelites/Jews have occurred throughout history, but “the exile” typically refers to the Babylonian exile, that is, Nebuchadnezzar's relocation of residents of the southern kingdom of Judah to Babylon in 586 BC. (Residents of the northern kingdom of Israel had been resettled by Assyria in 722 BC.) After Babylon came under Persian rule, several waves of Jewish exiles returned and repopulated Judah.

Gospel Glimpses

PLEAS FOR MERCY. “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” ([Luke 18:38](#)). This was the cry of a man who knew his situation was desperate and yet also held out the hope that the Son of David, Jesus of Nazareth, would be merciful. Daniel finds himself in a similarly desperate situation, as he recalls the terms of God's covenant and contemplates the sin of God's people. Without a hint of trying to downplay their plight, Daniel thus confesses on behalf of his people, “we have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and rules” ([Dan. 9:5](#)). And while he freely acknowledges that the Lord has been entirely righteous in his care for and even his punishment of Israel, Daniel still holds out the hope that God will yet be merciful to them. Thus, in his prayer he includes “pleas for mercy” (v. 3). God's disposition to show mercy to hopeless sinners comes into clearest focus in the gospel. “According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” ([1 Pet. 1:3](#)).

EVERLASTING RIGHTEOUSNESS. The angel Gabriel promises Daniel that God himself will bring “everlasting righteousness” to his people ([Dan. 9:24](#)). Within the context of Daniel, this refers to the state of sanctity and holiness that will come about after the “seventy weeks” decreed for God's people, which will “put an end to sin” and “atone for iniquity” (v. 24). But this points us to what God has accomplished in his Son, Jesus Christ, who has brought a definitive end to sin on the cross. As the book of Hebrews reminds us, “he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself” ([Heb. 9:26](#)). As such, Jesus has truly become the believer's everlasting righteousness. “And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption” ([1 Cor. 1:30](#)).

Definition: Righteousness

The quality of being morally right and without sin; one of God's distinctive attributes. God imputes righteousness to (justifies) those who trust in Jesus Christ; he accepts them accordingly, as he accepts Jesus himself.

Whole-Bible Connections

REPENTANCE, RESTORATION, AND RETURN. In [Daniel 9](#) we see that Israel will find restoration only through repentance. This is a common pattern we find in the Old and New Testaments: that genuine repentance, including the confession of sin, is the prerequisite to God restoring and renewing his people. We find this pattern outlined most clearly for us in [Deuteronomy 30](#), where Moses tells the people of Israel what to do once the curses of the covenant come upon them. They are to call the words of the covenant to mind, and return to the Lord in humility and repentance (vv. 1–2). When this happens within the people, God promises to return them to the land, to “gather you again from all the peoples where the Lord your God has scattered you” (v. 3). Nehemiah reflects this same pattern in his prayer of confession ([Nehemiah 9](#)). And we see the apostle Peter draw on this same pattern in his sermon in Solomon’s portico: “Repent therefore, and turn back,” he says to the Jews, “that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus” ([Acts 3:20](#)).

Definition: Repentance

A complete change of heart and mind regarding one's overall attitude toward God or one's own individual actions. True regeneration and conversion is always accompanied by repentance.

Theological Soundings

GOD-CENTEREDNESS. Daniel’s prayer teaches us about the character of God, in particular, what God ultimately values. Even a cursory reading of Daniel’s plea reveals that this is a man praying out of a sense of deep need, even desperation. “O my God, incline your ear,” he repeatedly prays ([Dan. 9:18](#)). In light of the sin of his people, he knows he doesn’t have much of a leg to stand on in prayer. This is why he appeals to what God values most—the honor of his own name. Daniel thus prays in a most God-centered way, appealing to what God prizes above everything else: “Delay not, *for your own sake*, O my God, because your city and your people are called *by your name*” (v. 19).

ATONEMENT. In his response to Daniel’s plea for mercy, the angel Gabriel tells him that “seventy weeks” have been decreed for his people, in order to “atone for iniquity” (v. 24). Atonement is a central theological concept in the Bible, in both the Old and the New Testament. It refers to the reconciliation of a person with God, and is often associated with the offering of a sacrifice. Occasionally, the Old Testament will refer to human suffering as a means of atonement, as is implied here in [Daniel 9](#). But ultimately, Jesus Christ made atonement for the sins of believers. His death satisfied God’s just wrath against sinful humanity, just as Old Testament sacrifices symbolized substitutionary death as payment for sin.

Definition: Atonement

The reconciliation of a person with God, often associated with the offering of a sacrifice. Through his death and resurrection, Jesus Christ made atonement for the sins of believers. His death satisfied God's just wrath against sinful humanity, just as Old Testament sacrifices symbolized substitutionary death as payment for sin.

Personal Implications

Take time to reflect on the implications of Daniel 9:1–27 for your own life today. Consider what you have learned that might lead you to praise God, repent of sin, and trust in his gracious promises. Make notes below on the personal implications for your walk with the Lord of the (1) Gospel Glimpses, (2) Whole-Bible Connections, (3) Theological Soundings, and (4) this passage as a whole.

1. Gospel Glimpses
2. Whole-Bible Connections
3. Theological Soundings
4. Daniel 9:1–27

As You Finish This Unit . . .

Take a moment now to ask for the Lord's blessing and help as you continue in this study of Daniel. And take a moment also to look back through this unit of study, to reflect on some key things that the Lord may be teaching you—and perhaps to highlight and underline these things to review again in the future.

Week 11: Daniel's Vision of the Final Conflict (10:1–12:13)

The Place of the Passage

The closing three chapters of Daniel form a single vision and bring the book to a fitting climax. With Daniel's final vision, the veil is drawn back and we are given clearer insight into spiritual battles that are reflected in earthly conflicts. While [Daniel 10:1–11:1](#) offers rather direct insight into the nature of spiritual conflict taking place in heavenly realms, [Daniel 11:2–45](#) goes on to provide rather specific insight into future conflict among earthly kingdoms. The final chapter of the book brings resolution to the whole, by directing our attention to the promise of glory or shame, resurrection or judgment (12:1–13). What ultimately matters is not how long this shall continue, which was Daniel's question (12:6), but how one ought to live *now*—in light of the certainty of God's final triumph (12:9–13).

The Big Picture

[Daniel 10:1–12:13](#) shows us that despite conflicts, both earthly and spiritual, God will achieve victory in the world and will vindicate his people.

Reflection and Discussion

Read through [Daniel 10:1–12:13](#), the passage for this week's study. Then review the following questions, taking notes on the final section of Daniel's prophecy.

1. A Heavenly Messenger Brings News of Heavenly Conflict (10:1–11:1)

We are told that Daniel received vision of a “great conflict” during the third year of Cyrus king of Persia (10:1). Two years earlier, some of the Jewish exiles were allowed to return to Jerusalem. But these Jewish returnees encountered problems. Read [Ezra 1–4](#), which recounts the situation. Assuming Daniel knew about their trouble, what might this vision of a “great conflict” be intended to show Daniel, and through him, other Jews?

Daniel is told by his angelic messenger that he was opposed by the “prince of the kingdom of Persia” for twenty-one days, but was eventually helped on his way by the angel Michael (10:13). Most scholars agree that the prince referred to here is a demonic being. If this is the case, what does this reveal about the nature of the unseen world around us?

How does Daniel respond to the insight he is given into the reality of spiritual conflict? What does the angel do in response to Daniel's reaction?

2. A Detailed Vision of Future Earthly Conflicts among Nations (11:2–45)

While the historical details of this portion of Daniel are selective, they are nevertheless of so specific a nature as to lead some critical scholars to claim that this couldn't be predictive prophecy, but the writing of history which is only made to look like prophecy. Assuming that it is predictive in nature, however, what would be the point of Daniel receiving such a detailed account of future earthly conflicts? What useful purpose might that serve?

In order to appreciate fully the prophecies in this chapter, you are encouraged to consult the *ESV Study Bible*, 1610–1617. It would be easy to get lost in the historical complexities, but that’s not the purpose. What are you most intrigued by? What is new to you in all of this? What remains unclear? Where do you need to do some more study to shore up your understanding of the history here described?

3. The Promise of Resurrection to Glory or Shame (12:1–4)

Daniel is told that there will be an intensification of trouble at the end, “such as never has been since there was a nation till that time” (v. 1). It is within this context that he hears of both the promise of resurrection and the threat of “shame and everlasting contempt” (v. 2). How does the promise and threat relate to the news of a coming great tribulation?

Jesus spoke about a coming intensification of trouble for God’s people. Review his teaching on this topic in the Gospels (see [Matthew 24](#); [Mark 13](#); [Luke 21:5–36](#)). What parallels do you see between them and what we find here in [Daniel 12](#)? And do you see ways in which the book of Daniel has informed Jesus’ teaching?

4. How Long until the End? (12:5–13)

Daniel asks the angelic messenger two different questions. What are they? And why do you think these were paramount concerns for Daniel? How does the angel respond to the questions?

The angel tells Daniel that at the end of days, while the wicked will continue to act wickedly, “those who are wise shall understand” (v. 10). What does it mean to be wise in this context? And what understanding will the wise have that the wicked will lack?

Consider the closing verse of this chapter, indeed, of the entire book of Daniel: “But go your way till the end. And you shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days” (v. 13). What is the angel telling Daniel to do in practical terms? And is this the sort of closing comment you would have expected for this book? What might it have meant for the first readers of Daniel’s message? What should it mean for us?

Read through the following three sections on Gospel Glimpses, Whole-Bible Connections, and Theological Soundings. Then take time to consider the Personal Implications these sections may have for you.

Gospel Glimpses

NAMES WRITTEN IN THE BOOK. The angelic messenger assures Daniel that, despite the intensification of suffering near the end of history, those whose names are “found written in the book” shall be delivered (12:1). Not only here, but throughout the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, we see that God is a bookkeeper; he has written names in what is called the “book of life” ([Rev. 3:5](#); [17:8](#); [20:12, 15](#)). At the end of the book of Revelation this book is referred to as “the Lamb’s book of life” (21:27), underscoring the fact that it is only because of the sacrifice of the Lamb that anyone’s name is written in this book. This is a powerful image emphasizing the fact that God “knows those who are his” ([2 Tim. 2:19](#)), and indeed that he has chosen and predestined them “before the foundation of the world” ([Eph. 1:4](#)). Because God’s choice is sure, our salvation is as well. This is the assurance Daniel receives in this passage, but it is also the glorious truth made possible by the gospel. Therefore, as Jesus reminds his disciples, “rejoice that your names are written in heaven” ([Luke 10:20](#)).

Definition: Predestined

God's sovereign choice of people for redemption and eternal life. Also referred to as "election."

Whole-Bible Connections

GREAT TRIBULATION. The visions of Daniel, especially in chapters 11–12, indicate that evil will intensify toward the end of history, and that God's people will therefore have to endure a severe time of testing. "And there shall be a time of trouble," the angel says to Daniel, "such as never has been since there was a nation till that time" (12:2). Jesus, perhaps drawing on this teaching in Daniel, envisions a similar intensification of things in the last days: "For in those days there will be such tribulation as has not been from the beginning of the creation that God created until now, and never will be" ([Mark 13:19](#); see [Matt. 24:21](#)). John may refer to this intense period of trial and suffering when he sees the dragon enraged and making war on the people of God ([Rev. 12:17](#)). Understandably, this period of history has been referred to as the "great tribulation." But regardless of when it comes, or what exactly it will be like, the message for God's people is the same, whether from Daniel or Jesus: "But the one who endures to the end will be saved" ([Mark 13:13](#)).

Theological Soundings

SPIRITUAL WARFARE. Daniel refers to the conflict among earthly kingdoms, but what we learn is that this is reflective of a greater spiritual conflict taking place in heavenly realms. The New Testament supports this perspective. No small part of Jesus' ministry was taken up with conflict with spiritual forces, in particular, demons (see, for example, [Mark 1:21–28](#)). And we remember what the apostle Paul says: "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" ([Eph. 6:12](#)). Satan and his minions exercise significant influence over this "present evil age" ([Gal. 1:4](#)); Satan is, after all, the "god of this world" ([2 Cor. 4:4](#)). Yet through the cross of Christ, God has effectively disarmed these spiritual forces arrayed against the church ([Col. 2:15](#)). Furthermore, we know from both Daniel and the rest of Scripture that their ultimate judgment is sure.

DOUBLE RESURRECTION. [Daniel 12](#) contains perhaps the clearest witness to the reality of resurrection anywhere in the Old Testament. "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (12:2). This is a stunning message of hope for the beleaguered Old Testament believers to whom Daniel writes; it is not unlike the promise Jesus gives in [John 5](#): "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live" ([John 5:25](#)). But, as we see in Daniel, Jesus goes on to clarify that this resurrection will actually be a *double resurrection*, a resurrection that issues in both blessing and judgment: "those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment" ([John 5:29](#)). For those who die in Christ, a glorious resurrection awaits (see [1 Cor. 15:50–56](#)); for those who die in unbelief, there is only judgment.

Definition: Demon

An evil spirit that can inhabit a human being and cause him or her to carry out its will. Demons (fallen and corrupted angels) were created by God and are always limited by God. Jesus and his

followers cast out many demons, demonstrating Jesus' superiority over them. All demons will one day be destroyed along with Satan (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10).

Personal Implications

Take time to reflect on the implications of Daniel 10:1–12:13 for your own life today. Consider what you have learned that might lead you to praise God, repent of sin, and trust in his gracious promises. Make notes below on the personal implications for your walk with the Lord of the (1) Gospel Glimpses, (2) Whole-Bible Connections, (3) Theological Soundings, and (4) this passage as a whole.

1. Gospel Glimpses
2. Whole-Bible Connections
3. Theological Soundings
4. Daniel 10:1–12:13

As You Finish This Unit . . .

Take a moment now to ask for the Lord's blessing and help as you continue in this study of Daniel. And take a moment also to look back through this unit of study, to reflect on some key things that the Lord may be teaching you—and perhaps to highlight and underline these things to review again in the future.

Week 12: Summary and Conclusion

The Big Picture of Daniel

Daniel is a fascinating book, for many reasons. The opening six chapters contain some of the most dramatic and exciting narratives in the Bible. We also grow to admire the conviction and courage of Daniel and his three friends, as their faith is tested and put on display, so to speak, again and again in those opening chapters. There is much to be gleaned by attending closely to the lives of these great saints of old.

But Daniel also intrigues us because of its visions, and the sheer scope of what it covers. Not only do we gain insight into Israel's own history, from exile to return, but we are also given a sweeping view of human history, from the rise of the Babylonian empire to the conquest and ultimate destruction of the Roman empire many centuries later. Daniel is thus a masterful blend of sacred and secular history; in fact, what we see is that these two histories are one, being closely intertwined by God's own design. Furthermore, Daniel opens our eyes to the fact that there is always more going on than meets the eye. What we can gather with our five senses is not the whole story; indeed, it may be only a reflection of a more important story—a cosmic battle taking place in the heavenly realms, which we cannot see with our human eyes, but only with the eyes of faith.

Ultimately, however, the book of Daniel is about God—his character, his plans, his purpose for the world. God is the main actor in Daniel, as he is everywhere in the Bible. And while we often have reason to be worried, if not discouraged, by the appearance of things all around us in our fallen and sin-wracked world, the book of Daniel serves as a powerful reminder that God is on his throne and is sure to get his victory. What is more, one day God will put the world to rights, destroying unrighteousness and ushering in his eternal kingdom.

Gospel Glimpses

The whole premise of the book of Daniel is that Israel has failed to keep the terms of the Sinai covenant and thus has come under God's judgment and has been sent into exile. And yet the whole message of the book of Daniel is that God is not only merciful to forgive but also powerful to effect restoration and even return for his people. Even though the people of God may suffer in this life, they can bank on the fact that God will not abandon them but will one day achieve his victory in the world and in their lives. This, of course, is the message of the gospel itself, as it is revealed to us in the person and work of Jesus Christ. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," Scripture says ([Rom. 3:23](#)), but God has provided a way to be right with him, "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (v. 24). And although we continue to endure suffering, we can rest confidently in our future victory in God and thus "rejoice in hope of the glory of God" ([Rom. 5:2](#)).

Has Daniel brought new clarity to your understanding of the gospel? How so?

Were there any particular passages or themes in Daniel that led you to a fresh understanding and grasp of God's grace to us through Jesus?

Whole-Bible Connections

Perhaps no other book of the Old Testament is as formative of the eschatology of the New Testament authors, and of Jesus himself, as is the book of Daniel. In it we are given a sweeping view of redemptive history, from the time of the exile to the time of Christ and beyond. We're also given a powerful picture of how the Abrahamic blessing unfolds through the lives of God's people, in this case Daniel and his three friends, into the lives of the nations, from Nebuchadnezzar the Babylonian to Darius the Mede.

How has this study of Daniel filled out your understanding of the biblical storyline of redemption?

Were there any themes emphasized in Daniel that help you to deepen your grasp of the Bible's unity?

Have any passages or themes expanded your understanding of the redemption that Jesus provides, which he began at his first coming and will consummate at his return?

What connections between Daniel and the New Testament were new to you?

Theological Soundings

Daniel has much to contribute to Christian theology. Numerous doctrines and themes are developed, clarified, and reinforced throughout Daniel, especially the sovereignty of God, the relationship of church and state, and the eschatological kingdom of God.

Has your theology shifted in minor or major ways during the course of studying Daniel? How so?

How has your understanding of the nature and character of God been deepened throughout this study?

What unique contributions does Daniel make toward our understanding of who Jesus is and what he accomplished through his life, death, and resurrection?

What, specifically, does Daniel teach us about the human condition and our need of redemption?

Personal Implications

God wrote the book of Daniel to transform us. As you reflect on Daniel as a whole, what implications do you see for your life?

What implications for life flow from your reflections on the questions already asked in this week's study concerning Gospel Glimpses, Whole-Bible Connections, and Theological Soundings?

What have you learned in Daniel that might lead you to praise God, turn away from sin, or trust more firmly in his promises?

As You Finish Studying Daniel . . .

We rejoice with you as you finish studying the book of Daniel! May this study become part of your Christian walk of faith, day by day and week by week throughout all your life. Now we would greatly encourage you to study the Word of God on a week-by-week basis. To continue your study of the Bible, we would encourage you to consider other books in the Knowing the Bible series, and to visit www.knowingthebibleseries.org.

Lastly, take a moment to look back through this study. Review the notes that you have written, and the things that you have highlighted or underlined. Reflect again on the key themes that the Lord has been teaching you about himself and about his Word. May these things become a treasure for you throughout your life—which we pray will be true for you, in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Daniel

English Standard Version

Daniel Taken to Babylon

¹ In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. ² And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the vessels of the house of God. And he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and placed the vessels in the treasury of his god. ³ Then the king commanded Ashpenaz, his chief eunuch, to bring some of the people of Israel, both of the royal family^[a] and of the nobility, ⁴ youths without blemish, of good appearance and skillful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding learning, and competent to stand in the king's palace, and to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans. ⁵ The king assigned them a daily portion of the food that the king ate, and of the wine that he drank. They were to be educated for three years, and at the end of that time they were to stand before the king. ⁶ Among these were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah of the tribe of Judah. ⁷ And the chief of the eunuchs gave them names: Daniel he called Belteshazzar, Hananiah he called Shadrach, Mishael he called Meshach, and Azariah he called Abednego.

Daniel's Faithfulness

⁸ But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's food, or with the wine that he drank. Therefore he asked the chief of the eunuchs to allow him not to defile himself. ⁹ And God gave Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs, ¹⁰ and the chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel, "I fear my lord the king, who assigned your food and your drink; for why should he see that you were in worse condition than the youths who are of your own age? So you would endanger my head with the king." ¹¹ Then Daniel said to the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had assigned over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, ¹² "Test your servants for ten days; let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink. ¹³ Then let our appearance and the appearance of the youths who eat the king's food be observed by you, and deal with your servants according to what you see." ¹⁴ So he listened to them in this matter, and tested them for ten days. ¹⁵ At the end of ten days it was seen that they were better in appearance and fatter in flesh than all the youths who ate the king's food. ¹⁶ So the steward took away their food and the wine they were to drink, and gave them vegetables.

¹⁷ As for these four youths, God gave them learning and skill in all literature and wisdom, and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. ¹⁸ At the end of the time, when the king had commanded that they should be brought in, the chief of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. ¹⁹ And the king spoke with them, and among all of them none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Therefore they stood before the king. ²⁰ And in every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his kingdom. ²¹ And Daniel was there until the first year of King Cyrus.

Footnotes

- a. [Daniel 1:3](#) Hebrew *of the seed of the kingdom*

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

2 In the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his spirit was troubled, and his sleep left him. **2** Then the king commanded that the magicians, the enchanters, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans be summoned to tell the king his dreams. So they came in and stood before the king. **3** And the king said to them, "I had a dream, and my spirit is troubled to know the dream." **4** Then the Chaldeans said to the king in Aramaic,^[a] "O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation." **5** The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, "The word from me is firm: if you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you shall be torn limb from limb, and your houses shall be laid in ruins. **6** But if you show the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. Therefore show me the dream and its interpretation." **7** They answered a second time and said, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show its interpretation." **8** The king answered and said, "I know with certainty that you are trying to gain time, because you see that the word from me is firm— **9** if you do not make the dream known to me, there is but one sentence for you. You have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the times change. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can show me its interpretation." **10** The Chaldeans answered the king and said, "There is not a man on earth who can meet the king's demand, for no great and powerful king has asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or Chaldean. **11** The thing that the king asks is difficult, and no one can show it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh."

12 Because of this the king was angry and very furious, and commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be destroyed. **13** So the decree went out, and the wise men were about to be killed; and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill them. **14** Then Daniel replied with prudence and discretion to Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon. **15** He declared^[b] to Arioch, the king's captain, "Why is the decree of the king so urgent?" Then Arioch made the matter known to Daniel. **16** And Daniel went in and requested the king to appoint him a time, that he might show the interpretation to the king.

God Reveals Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

17 Then Daniel went to his house and made the matter known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, **18** and told them to seek mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his companions might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. **19** Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. **20** Daniel answered and said:

"Blessed be the name of God forever and ever,
to whom belong wisdom and might.

21 He changes times and seasons;
he removes kings and sets up kings;
he gives wisdom to the wise
and knowledge to those who have understanding;

22 he reveals deep and hidden things;
he knows what is in the darkness,
and the light dwells with him.

23 To you, O God of my fathers,
I give thanks and praise,
for you have given me wisdom and might,
and have now made known to me what we asked of you,
for you have made known to us the king's matter."

24 Therefore Daniel went in to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon. He went and said thus to him: "Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon; bring me in before the king, and I will show the king the interpretation."

²⁵ Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste and said thus to him: “I have found among the exiles from Judah a man who will make known to the king the interpretation.” ²⁶ The king declared to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, “Are you able to make known to me the dream that I have seen and its interpretation?” ²⁷ Daniel answered the king and said, “No wise men, enchanters, magicians, or astrologers can show to the king the mystery that the king has asked, ²⁸ but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream and the visions of your head as you lay in bed are these: ²⁹ To you, O king, as you lay in bed came thoughts of what would be after this, and he who reveals mysteries made known to you what is to be. ³⁰ But as for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because of any wisdom that I have more than all the living, but in order that the interpretation may be made known to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your mind.

Daniel Interprets the Dream

³¹ “You saw, O king, and behold, a great image. This image, mighty and of exceeding brightness, stood before you, and its appearance was frightening. ³² The head of this image was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its middle and thighs of bronze, ³³ its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. ³⁴ As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. ³⁵ Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

³⁶ “This was the dream. Now we will tell the king its interpretation. ³⁷ You, O king, the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, and the might, and the glory, ³⁸ and into whose hand he has given, wherever they dwell, the children of man, the beasts of the field, and the birds of the heavens, making you rule over them all—you are the head of gold. ³⁹ Another kingdom inferior to you shall arise after you, and yet a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. ⁴⁰ And there shall be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron, because iron breaks to pieces and shatters all things. And like iron that crushes, it shall break and crush all these. ⁴¹ And as you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom, but some of the firmness of iron shall be in it, just as you saw iron mixed with the soft clay. ⁴² And as the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly brittle. ⁴³ As you saw the iron mixed with soft clay, so they will mix with one another in marriage,^[c] but they will not hold together, just as iron does not mix with clay. ⁴⁴ And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever, ⁴⁵ just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure.”

Daniel Is Promoted

⁴⁶ Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face and paid homage to Daniel, and commanded that an offering and incense be offered up to him. ⁴⁷ The king answered and said to Daniel, “Truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery.” ⁴⁸ Then the king gave Daniel high honors and many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon. ⁴⁹ Daniel made a request of the king, and he appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego over the affairs of the province of Babylon. But Daniel remained at the king's court.

Footnotes

- a. Daniel 2:4 The text from this point to the end of chapter 7 is in Aramaic
- b. Daniel 2:15 Aramaic *answered and said*; also verse 26

c. Daniel 2:43 Aramaic *by the seed of men*

Nebuchadnezzar's Golden Image

3 King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits^[a] and its breadth six cubits. He set it up on the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. **2** Then King Nebuchadnezzar sent to gather the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. **3** Then the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces gathered for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. And they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. **4** And the herald proclaimed aloud, "You are commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, **5** that when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. **6** And whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace." **7** Therefore, as soon as all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, all the peoples, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

The Fiery Furnace

8 Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and maliciously accused the Jews. **9** They declared^[b] to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live forever! **10** You, O king, have made a decree, that every man who hears the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, shall fall down and worship the golden image. **11** And whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into a burning fiery furnace. **12** There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These men, O king, pay no attention to you; they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

13 Then Nebuchadnezzar in furious rage commanded that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought. So they brought these men before the king. **14** Nebuchadnezzar answered and said to them, "Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up? **15** Now if you are ready when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, well and good.^[c] But if you do not worship, you shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you out of my hands?"

16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. **17** If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king.^[d] **18** But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

19 Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with fury, and the expression of his face was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He ordered the furnace heated seven times more than it was usually heated. **20** And he ordered some of the mighty men of his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. **21** Then these men were bound in their cloaks, their tunics,^[e] their hats, and their other garments, and they were thrown into the burning fiery furnace. **22** Because the king's order was urgent and the furnace overheated, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. **23** And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell bound into the burning fiery furnace.

24 Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up in haste. He declared to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the fire?" They answered and said to the king, "True, O king." **25** He answered and said, "But I see four men unbound, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods."

26 Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the burning fiery furnace; he declared, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here!" Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came

out from the fire. ²⁷ And the satraps, the prefects, the governors, and the king's counselors gathered together and saw that the fire had not had any power over the bodies of those men. The hair of their heads was not singed, their cloaks were not harmed, and no smell of fire had come upon them. ²⁸ Nebuchadnezzar answered and said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him, and set aside[Ⓛ] the king's command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God. ²⁹ Therefore I make a decree: Any people, nation, or language that speaks anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins, for there is no other god who is able to rescue in this way." ³⁰ Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

Footnotes

- a. Daniel 3:1 A *cubit* was about 18 inches or 45 centimeters
- b. Daniel 3:9 Aramaic *answered and said*; also verses 24, 26
- c. Daniel 3:15 Aramaic lacks *well and good*
- d. Daniel 3:17 Or *If our God whom we serve is able to deliver us, he will deliver us from the burning fiery furnace and out of your hand, O king*
- e. Daniel 3:21 The meaning of the Aramaic words rendered *cloaks* and *tunics* is uncertain; also verse 27
- f. Daniel 3:28 Aramaic *and changed*

Nebuchadnezzar Praises God

⁴ ^[a] King Nebuchadnezzar to all peoples, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you! ² It has seemed good to me to show the signs and wonders that the Most High God has done for me.

³ How great are his signs,
how mighty his wonders!
His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
and his dominion endures from generation to generation.

Nebuchadnezzar's Second Dream

⁴ ^[b] I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and prospering in my palace. ⁵ I saw a dream that made me afraid. As I lay in bed the fancies and the visions of my head alarmed me. ⁶ So I made a decree that all the wise men of Babylon should be brought before me, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. ⁷ Then the magicians, the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the astrologers came in, and I told them the dream, but they could not make known to me its interpretation. ⁸ At last Daniel came in before me—he who was named Belteshazzar after the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods^[c]—and I told him the dream, saying, ⁹ “O Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you and that no mystery is too difficult for you, tell me the visions of my dream that I saw and their interpretation. ¹⁰ The visions of my head as I lay in bed were these: I saw, and behold, a tree in the midst of the earth, and its height was great. ¹¹ The tree grew and became strong, and its top reached to heaven, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth. ¹² Its leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in it was food for all. The beasts of the field found shade under it, and the birds of the heavens lived in its branches, and all flesh was fed from it.

¹³ “I saw in the visions of my head as I lay in bed, and behold, a watcher, a holy one, came down from heaven. ¹⁴ He proclaimed aloud and said thus: ‘Chop down the tree and lop off its branches, strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the beasts flee from under it and the birds from its branches. ¹⁵ But leave the stump of its roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze, amid the tender grass of the field. Let him be wet with the dew of heaven. Let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth. ¹⁶ Let his mind be changed from a man's, and let a beast's mind be given to him; and let seven periods of time pass over him. ¹⁷ The sentence is by the decree of the watchers, the decision by the word of the holy ones, to the end that the living may know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will and sets over it the lowliest of men.’ ¹⁸ This dream I, King Nebuchadnezzar, saw. And you, O Belteshazzar, tell me the interpretation, because all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known to me the interpretation, but you are able, for the spirit of the holy gods is in you.”

Daniel Interprets the Second Dream

¹⁹ Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was dismayed for a while, and his thoughts alarmed him. The king answered and said, “Belteshazzar, let not the dream or the interpretation alarm you.” Belteshazzar answered and said, “My lord, may the dream be for those who hate you and its interpretation for your enemies! ²⁰ The tree you saw, which grew and became strong, so that its top reached to heaven, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth, ²¹ whose leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in which was food for all, under which beasts of the field found shade, and in whose branches the birds of the heavens lived— ²² it is you, O king, who have grown and become strong. Your greatness has grown and reaches to heaven, and your dominion to the ends of the earth. ²³ And because the king saw a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, ‘Chop down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump of its roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze, in the tender grass of the field, and let him be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven periods of time pass over him,’ ²⁴ this is the interpretation, O king: It is a decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king, ²⁵ that you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. You shall be made to eat grass like an ox, and you shall be wet with the dew of heaven, and seven periods of time shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High

rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will. ²⁶ And as it was commanded to leave the stump of the roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be confirmed for you from the time that you know that Heaven rules. ²⁷ Therefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you: break off your sins by practicing righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed, that there may perhaps be a lengthening of your prosperity.”

Nebuchadnezzar's Humiliation

²⁸ All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. ²⁹ At the end of twelve months he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, ³⁰ and the king answered and said, “Is not this great Babylon, which I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty?” ³¹ While the words were still in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, “O King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: The kingdom has departed from you, ³² and you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. And you shall be made to eat grass like an ox, and seven periods of time shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will.” ³³ Immediately the word was fulfilled against Nebuchadnezzar. He was driven from among men and ate grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair grew as long as eagles' feathers, and his nails were like birds' claws.

Nebuchadnezzar Restored

³⁴ At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and praised and honored him who lives forever,

for his dominion is an everlasting dominion,

and his kingdom endures from generation to generation;

³⁵ all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing,

and he does according to his will among the host of heaven

and among the inhabitants of the earth;

and none can stay his hand

or say to him, “What have you done?”

³⁶ At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my majesty and splendor returned to me. My counselors and my lords sought me, and I was established in my kingdom, and still more greatness was added to me. ³⁷ Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble.

Footnotes

- a. [Daniel 4:1](#) Ch 3:31 in Aramaic
- b. [Daniel 4:4](#) Ch 4:1 in Aramaic
- c. [Daniel 4:8](#) Or *Spirit of the holy God*; also verses [9](#), [18](#)

The Handwriting on the Wall

5 King Belshazzar made a great feast for a thousand of his lords and drank wine in front of the thousand.

² Belshazzar, when he tasted the wine, commanded that the vessels of gold and of silver that Nebuchadnezzar his father^[a] had taken out of the temple in Jerusalem be brought, that the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them. ³ Then they brought in the golden vessels that had been taken out of the temple, the house of God in Jerusalem, and the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines drank from them. ⁴ They drank wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone.

⁵ Immediately the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace, opposite the lampstand. And the king saw the hand as it wrote. ⁶ Then the king's color changed, and his thoughts alarmed him; his limbs gave way, and his knees knocked together. ⁷ The king called loudly to bring in the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the astrologers. The king declared^[b] to the wise men of Babylon, "Whoever reads this writing, and shows me its interpretation, shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around his neck and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom." ⁸ Then all the king's wise men came in, but they could not read the writing or make known to the king the interpretation. ⁹ Then King Belshazzar was greatly alarmed, and his color changed, and his lords were perplexed.

¹⁰ The queen,^[c] because of the words of the king and his lords, came into the banqueting hall, and the queen declared, "O king, live forever! Let not your thoughts alarm you or your color change. ¹¹ There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the spirit of the holy gods.^[d] In the days of your father, light and understanding and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods were found in him, and King Nebuchadnezzar, your father—your father the king—made him chief of the magicians, enchanters, Chaldeans, and astrologers, ¹² because an excellent spirit, knowledge, and understanding to interpret dreams, explain riddles, and solve problems were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar. Now let Daniel be called, and he will show the interpretation."

Daniel Interprets the Handwriting

¹³ Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king answered and said to Daniel, "You are that Daniel, one of the exiles of Judah, whom the king my father brought from Judah. ¹⁴ I have heard of you that the spirit of the gods^[e] is in you, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in you. ¹⁵ Now the wise men, the enchanters, have been brought in before me to read this writing and make known to me its interpretation, but they could not show the interpretation of the matter. ¹⁶ But I have heard that you can give interpretations and solve problems. Now if you can read the writing and make known to me its interpretation, you shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around your neck and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom."

¹⁷ Then Daniel answered and said before the king, "Let your gifts be for yourself, and give your rewards to another. Nevertheless, I will read the writing to the king and make known to him the interpretation. ¹⁸ O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father kingship and greatness and glory and majesty. ¹⁹ And because of the greatness that he gave him, all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him. Whom he would, he killed, and whom he would, he kept alive; whom he would, he raised up, and whom he would, he humbled. ²⁰ But when his heart was lifted up and his spirit was hardened so that he dealt proudly, he was brought down from his kingly throne, and his glory was taken from him. ²¹ He was driven from among the children of mankind, and his mind was made like that of a beast, and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys. He was fed grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, until he knew that the Most High God rules the kingdom of mankind and sets over it whom he will. ²² And you his son,^[f] Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, though you knew all this, ²³ but you have lifted up yourself against the Lord of heaven. And the vessels of his house have been brought in before you, and you and your lords, your wives, and your concubines have drunk wine from them. And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see or hear or know, but the God in whose hand is your breath, and whose are all your ways, you have not honored.

²⁴ “Then from his presence the hand was sent, and this writing was inscribed. ²⁵ And this is the writing that was inscribed: Mene, Mene, Tekel, and Parsin. ²⁶ This is the interpretation of the matter: Mene, God has numbered^[a] the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end; ²⁷ Tekel, you have been weighed^[b] in the balances and found wanting; ²⁸ Peres, your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.”^[j]

²⁹ Then Belshazzar gave the command, and Daniel was clothed with purple, a chain of gold was put around his neck, and a proclamation was made about him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.

³⁰ That very night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was killed. ³¹ ^[i] And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old.

Footnotes

- a. Daniel 5:2 Or *predecessor*; also verses 11, 13, 18
- b. Daniel 5:7 Aramaic *answered and said*; also verse 10
- c. Daniel 5:10 Or *queen mother*; twice in this verse
- d. Daniel 5:11 Or *Spirit of the holy God*
- e. Daniel 5:14 Or *Spirit of God*
- f. Daniel 5:22 Or *successor*
- g. Daniel 5:26 *Mene* sounds like the Aramaic for *numbered*
- h. Daniel 5:27 *Tekel* sounds like the Aramaic for *weighed*
- i. Daniel 5:28 *Peres* (the singular of *Parsin*) sounds like the Aramaic for *divided* and for *Persia*
- j. Daniel 5:31 Ch 6:1 in Aramaic

Daniel and the Lions' Den

6 It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom 120 satraps, to be throughout the whole kingdom; ²and over them three high officials, of whom Daniel was one, to whom these satraps should give account, so that the king might suffer no loss. ³Then this Daniel became distinguished above all the other high officials and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him. And the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. ⁴Then the high officials and the satraps sought to find a ground for complaint against Daniel with regard to the kingdom, but they could find no ground for complaint or any fault, because he was faithful, and no error or fault was found in him. ⁵Then these men said, "We shall not find any ground for complaint against this Daniel unless we find it in connection with the law of his God."

⁶Then these high officials and satraps came by agreement^[a] to the king and said to him, "O King Darius, live forever! ⁷All the high officials of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the counselors and the governors are agreed that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce an injunction, that whoever makes petition to any god or man for thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. ⁸Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which cannot be revoked." ⁹Therefore King Darius signed the document and injunction.

¹⁰When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously. ¹¹Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and plea before his God. ¹²Then they came near and said before the king, concerning the injunction, "O king! Did you not sign an injunction, that anyone who makes petition to any god or man within thirty days except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?" The king answered and said, "The thing stands fast, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be revoked." ¹³Then they answered and said before the king, "Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or the injunction you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day."

¹⁴Then the king, when he heard these words, was much distressed and set his mind to deliver Daniel. And he labored till the sun went down to rescue him. ¹⁵Then these men came by agreement to the king and said to the king, "Know, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no injunction or ordinance that the king establishes can be changed."

¹⁶Then the king commanded, and Daniel was brought and cast into the den of lions. The king declared^[b] to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, deliver you!" ¹⁷And a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet and with the signet of his lords, that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel. ¹⁸Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; no diversions were brought to him, and sleep fled from him.

¹⁹Then, at break of day, the king arose and went in haste to the den of lions. ²⁰As he came near to the den where Daniel was, he cried out in a tone of anguish. The king declared to Daniel, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?" ²¹Then Daniel said to the king, "O king, live forever! ²²My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm." ²³Then the king was exceedingly glad, and commanded that Daniel be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no kind of harm was found on him, because he had trusted in his God. ²⁴And the king commanded, and those men who had maliciously accused Daniel were brought and cast into the den of lions—they, their children, and their wives. And before they reached the bottom of the den, the lions overpowered them and broke all their bones in pieces.

²⁵Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: "Peace be multiplied to you. ²⁶I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel,

for he is the living God,
enduring forever;
his kingdom shall never be destroyed,
and his dominion shall be to the end.

²⁷ He delivers and rescues;
he works signs and wonders
in heaven and on earth,
he who has saved Daniel
from the power of the lions.”

²⁸ So this Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

Footnotes

- a. Daniel 6:6 Or *came thronging*; also verses 11, 15
- b. Daniel 6:16 Aramaic *answered and said*; also verse 20

Daniel's Vision of the Four Beasts

7 In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel saw a dream and visions of his head as he lay in his bed. Then he wrote down the dream and told the sum of the matter. ²Daniel declared,^[a] "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea. ³And four great beasts came up out of the sea, different from one another. ⁴The first was like a lion and had eagles' wings. Then as I looked its wings were plucked off, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man, and the mind of a man was given to it. ⁵And behold, another beast, a second one, like a bear. It was raised up on one side. It had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth; and it was told, 'Arise, devour much flesh.' ⁶After this I looked, and behold, another, like a leopard, with four wings of a bird on its back. And the beast had four heads, and dominion was given to it. ⁷After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, terrifying and dreadful and exceedingly strong. It had great iron teeth; it devoured and broke in pieces and stamped what was left with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. ⁸I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them another horn, a little one, before which three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots. And behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things.

The Ancient of Days Reigns

⁹"As I looked,

thrones were placed,
and the Ancient of Days took his seat;
his clothing was white as snow,
and the hair of his head like pure wool;
his throne was fiery flames;
its wheels were burning fire.

¹⁰A stream of fire issued
and came out from before him;
a thousand thousands served him,
and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him;
the court sat in judgment,
and the books were opened.

¹¹"I looked then because of the sound of the great words that the horn was speaking. And as I looked, the beast was killed, and its body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire. ¹²As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.

The Son of Man Is Given Dominion

¹³"I saw in the night visions,

and behold, with the clouds of heaven
there came one like a son of man,
and he came to the Ancient of Days
and was presented before him.

¹⁴And to him was given dominion
and glory and a kingdom,
that all peoples, nations, and languages
should serve him;
his dominion is an everlasting dominion,
which shall not pass away,

and his kingdom one
that shall not be destroyed.

Daniel's Vision Interpreted

¹⁵ “As for me, Daniel, my spirit within me^[b] was anxious, and the visions of my head alarmed me. ¹⁶ I approached one of those who stood there and asked him the truth concerning all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of the things. ¹⁷ ‘These four great beasts are four kings who shall arise out of the earth. ¹⁸ But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, forever and ever.’

¹⁹ “Then I desired to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the rest, exceedingly terrifying, with its teeth of iron and claws of bronze, and which devoured and broke in pieces and stamped what was left with its feet, ²⁰ and about the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn that came up and before which three of them fell, the horn that had eyes and a mouth that spoke great things, and that seemed greater than its companions. ²¹ As I looked, this horn made war with the saints and prevailed over them, ²² until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given for the saints of the Most High, and the time came when the saints possessed the kingdom.

²³ “Thus he said: ‘As for the fourth beast,

there shall be a fourth kingdom on earth,
which shall be different from all the kingdoms,
and it shall devour the whole earth,
and trample it down, and break it to pieces.

²⁴ As for the ten horns,
out of this kingdom ten kings shall arise,
and another shall arise after them;
he shall be different from the former ones,
and shall put down three kings.

²⁵ He shall speak words against the Most High,
and shall wear out the saints of the Most High,
and shall think to change the times and the law;
and they shall be given into his hand
for a time, times, and half a time.

²⁶ But the court shall sit in judgment,
and his dominion shall be taken away,
to be consumed and destroyed to the end.

²⁷ And the kingdom and the dominion
and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven
shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High;
his kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom,
and all dominions shall serve and obey him.’^[c]

²⁸ “Here is the end of the matter. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts greatly alarmed me, and my color changed, but I kept the matter in my heart.”

Footnotes

- a. Daniel 7:2 Aramaic *answered and said*
- b. Daniel 7:15 Aramaic *within its sheath*
- c. Daniel 7:27 Or *their kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey them*

Daniel's Vision of the Ram and the Goat

8 In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar a vision appeared to me, Daniel, after that which appeared to me at the first. ² And I saw in the vision; and when I saw, I was in Susa the citadel, which is in the province of Elam. And I saw in the vision, and I was at the Ulai canal. ³ I raised my eyes and saw, and behold, a ram standing on the bank of the canal. It had two horns, and both horns were high, but one was higher than the other, and the higher one came up last. ⁴ I saw the ram charging westward and northward and southward. No beast could stand before him, and there was no one who could rescue from his power. He did as he pleased and became great.

⁵ As I was considering, behold, a male goat came from the west across the face of the whole earth, without touching the ground. And the goat had a conspicuous horn between his eyes. ⁶ He came to the ram with the two horns, which I had seen standing on the bank of the canal, and he ran at him in his powerful wrath. ⁷ I saw him come close to the ram, and he was enraged against him and struck the ram and broke his two horns. And the ram had no power to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground and trampled on him. And there was no one who could rescue the ram from his power. ⁸ Then the goat became exceedingly great, but when he was strong, the great horn was broken, and instead of it there came up four conspicuous horns toward the four winds of heaven.

⁹ Out of one of them came a little horn, which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the glorious land. ¹⁰ It grew great, even to the host of heaven. And some of the host and some^[a] of the stars it threw down to the ground and trampled on them. ¹¹ It became great, even as great as the Prince of the host. And the regular burnt offering was taken away from him, and the place of his sanctuary was overthrown. ¹² And a host will be given over to it together with the regular burnt offering because of transgression,^[b] and it will throw truth to the ground, and it will act and prosper. ¹³ Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to the one who spoke, "For how long is the vision concerning the regular burnt offering, the transgression that makes desolate, and the giving over of the sanctuary and host to be trampled underfoot?" ¹⁴ And he said to me,^[c] "For 2,300 evenings and mornings. Then the sanctuary shall be restored to its rightful state."

The Interpretation of the Vision

¹⁵ When I, Daniel, had seen the vision, I sought to understand it. And behold, there stood before me one having the appearance of a man. ¹⁶ And I heard a man's voice between the banks of the Ulai, and it called, "Gabriel, make this man understand the vision." ¹⁷ So he came near where I stood. And when he came, I was frightened and fell on my face. But he said to me, "Understand, O son of man, that the vision is for the time of the end."

¹⁸ And when he had spoken to me, I fell into a deep sleep with my face to the ground. But he touched me and made me stand up. ¹⁹ He said, "Behold, I will make known to you what shall be at the latter end of the indignation, for it refers to the appointed time of the end. ²⁰ As for the ram that you saw with the two horns, these are the kings of Media and Persia. ²¹ And the goat^[d] is the king of Greece. And the great horn between his eyes is the first king. ²² As for the horn that was broken, in place of which four others arose, four kingdoms shall arise from his^[e] nation, but not with his power. ²³ And at the latter end of their kingdom, when the transgressors have reached their limit, a king of bold face, one who understands riddles, shall arise. ²⁴ His power shall be great—but not by his own power; and he shall cause fearful destruction and shall succeed in what he does, and destroy mighty men and the people who are the saints. ²⁵ By his cunning he shall make deceit prosper under his hand, and in his own mind he shall become great. Without warning he shall destroy many. And he shall even rise up against the Prince of princes, and he shall be broken—but by no human hand. ²⁶ The vision of the evenings and the mornings that has been told is true, but seal up the vision, for it refers to many days from now."

²⁷ And I, Daniel, was overcome and lay sick for some days. Then I rose and went about the king's business, but I was appalled by the vision and did not understand it.

Footnotes

- a. Daniel 8:10 Or *host, that is, some*
- b. Daniel 8:12 Or *in an act of rebellion*
- c. Daniel 8:14 Hebrew; Septuagint, Theodotion, Vulgate *to him*
- d. Daniel 8:21 Or *the shaggy goat*
- e. Daniel 8:22 Theodotion, Septuagint, Vulgate; Hebrew *a*

Daniel's Prayer for His People

9 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, by descent a Mede, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans— ² in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years that, according to the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years.

³ Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. ⁴ I prayed to the Lord my God and made confession, saying, “O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, ⁵ we have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and rules. ⁶ We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. ⁷ To you, O Lord, belongs righteousness, but to us open shame, as at this day, to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to all Israel, those who are near and those who are far away, in all the lands to which you have driven them, because of the treachery that they have committed against you. ⁸ To us, O Lord, belongs open shame, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against you. ⁹ To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against him ¹⁰ and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God by walking in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. ¹¹ All Israel has transgressed your law and turned aside, refusing to obey your voice. And the curse and oath that are written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out upon us, because we have sinned against him. ¹² He has confirmed his words, which he spoke against us and against our rulers who ruled us,^[a] by bringing upon us a great calamity. For under the whole heaven there has not been done anything like what has been done against Jerusalem. ¹³ As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this calamity has come upon us; yet we have not entreated the favor of the Lord our God, turning from our iniquities and gaining insight by your truth. ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord has kept ready the calamity and has brought it upon us, for the Lord our God is righteous in all the works that he has done, and we have not obeyed his voice. ¹⁵ And now, O Lord our God, who brought your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and have made a name for yourself, as at this day, we have sinned, we have done wickedly.

¹⁶ “O Lord, according to all your righteous acts, let your anger and your wrath turn away from your city Jerusalem, your holy hill, because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and your people have become a byword among all who are around us. ¹⁷ Now therefore, O our God, listen to the prayer of your servant and to his pleas for mercy, and for your own sake, O Lord,^[b] make your face to shine upon your sanctuary, which is desolate. ¹⁸ O my God, incline your ear and hear. Open your eyes and see our desolations, and the city that is called by your name. For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy. ¹⁹ O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive. O Lord, pay attention and act. Delay not, for your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people are called by your name.”

Gabriel Brings an Answer

²⁰ While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my plea before the Lord my God for the holy hill of my God, ²¹ while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the first, came to me in swift flight at the time of the evening sacrifice. ²² He made me understand, speaking with me and saying, “O Daniel, I have now come out to give you insight and understanding. ²³ At the beginning of your pleas for mercy a word went out, and I have come to tell it to you, for you are greatly loved. Therefore consider the word and understand the vision.

The Seventy Weeks

²⁴ “Seventy weeks^[c] are decreed about your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place.^[d] ²⁵ Know therefore and understand that from the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the

coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks. Then for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again^[e] with squares and moat, but in a troubled time. ²⁶ And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing. And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its^[f] end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war. Desolations are decreed. ²⁷ And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week,^[g] and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator.”

Footnotes

- a. Daniel 9:12 Or *our judges who judged us*
- b. Daniel 9:17 Hebrew *for the Lord's sake*
- c. Daniel 9:24 Or *sevens*; also twice in verse 25 and once in verse 26
- d. Daniel 9:24 Or *thing, or one*
- e. Daniel 9:25 Or *there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks. It shall be built again*
- f. Daniel 9:26 Or *His*
- g. Daniel 9:27 Or *seven*; twice in this verse

Daniel's Terrifying Vision of a Man

10 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a word was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar. And the word was true, and it was a great conflict.^[a] And he understood the word and had understanding of the vision.

² In those days I, Daniel, was mourning for three weeks. ³ I ate no delicacies, no meat or wine entered my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, for the full three weeks. ⁴ On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river (that is, the Tigris) ⁵ I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, a man clothed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. ⁶ His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude. ⁷ And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision, but a great trembling fell upon them, and they fled to hide themselves. ⁸ So I was left alone and saw this great vision, and no strength was left in me. My radiant appearance was fearfully changed,^[b] and I retained no strength. ⁹ Then I heard the sound of his words, and as I heard the sound of his words, I fell on my face in deep sleep with my face to the ground.

¹⁰ And behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. ¹¹ And he said to me, "O Daniel, man greatly loved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for now I have been sent to you." And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling. ¹² Then he said to me, "Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words. ¹³ The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia, ¹⁴ and came to make you understand what is to happen to your people in the latter days. For the vision is for days yet to come."

¹⁵ When he had spoken to me according to these words, I turned my face toward the ground and was mute. ¹⁶ And behold, one in the likeness of the children of man touched my lips. Then I opened my mouth and spoke. I said to him who stood before me, "O my lord, by reason of the vision pains have come upon me, and I retain no strength. ¹⁷ How can my lord's servant talk with my lord? For now no strength remains in me, and no breath is left in me."

¹⁸ Again one having the appearance of a man touched me and strengthened me. ¹⁹ And he said, "O man greatly loved, fear not, peace be with you; be strong and of good courage." And as he spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, "Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me." ²⁰ Then he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? But now I will return to fight against the prince of Persia; and when I go out, behold, the prince of Greece will come. ²¹ But I will tell you what is inscribed in the book of truth: there is none who contends by my side against these except Michael, your prince.

Footnotes

- a. [Daniel 10:1](#) Or *and it was about a great conflict*
- b. [Daniel 10:8](#) Hebrew *My splendor was changed to ruin*

The Kings of the South and the North

11 “And as for me, in the first year of Darius the Mede, I stood up to confirm and strengthen him.

² “And now I will show you the truth. Behold, three more kings shall arise in Persia, and a fourth shall be far richer than all of them. And when he has become strong through his riches, he shall stir up all against the kingdom of Greece. ³ Then a mighty king shall arise, who shall rule with great dominion and do as he wills. ⁴ And as soon as he has arisen, his kingdom shall be broken and divided toward the four winds of heaven, but not to his posterity, nor according to the authority with which he ruled, for his kingdom shall be plucked up and go to others besides these.

⁵ “Then the king of the south shall be strong, but one of his princes shall be stronger than he and shall rule, and his authority shall be a great authority. ⁶ After some years they shall make an alliance, and the daughter of the king of the south shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement. But she shall not retain the strength of her arm, and he and his arm shall not endure, but she shall be given up, and her attendants, he who fathered her, and he who supported^[a] her in those times.

⁷ “And from a branch from her roots one shall arise in his place. He shall come against the army and enter the fortress of the king of the north, and he shall deal with them and shall prevail. ⁸ He shall also carry off to Egypt their gods with their metal images and their precious vessels of silver and gold, and for some years he shall refrain from attacking the king of the north. ⁹ Then the latter shall come into the realm of the king of the south but shall return to his own land.

¹⁰ “His sons shall wage war and assemble a multitude of great forces, which shall keep coming and overflow and pass through, and again shall carry the war as far as his fortress. ¹¹ Then the king of the south, moved with rage, shall come out and fight against the king of the north. And he shall raise a great multitude, but it shall be given into his hand. ¹² And when the multitude is taken away, his heart shall be exalted, and he shall cast down tens of thousands, but he shall not prevail. ¹³ For the king of the north shall again raise a multitude, greater than the first. And after some years^[b] he shall come on with a great army and abundant supplies.

¹⁴ “In those times many shall rise against the king of the south, and the violent among your own people shall lift themselves up in order to fulfill the vision, but they shall fail. ¹⁵ Then the king of the north shall come and throw up siegeworks and take a well-fortified city. And the forces of the south shall not stand, or even his best troops, for there shall be no strength to stand. ¹⁶ But he who comes against him shall do as he wills, and none shall stand before him. And he shall stand in the glorious land, with destruction in his hand. ¹⁷ He shall set his face to come with the strength of his whole kingdom, and he shall bring terms of an agreement and perform them. He shall give him the daughter of women to destroy the kingdom,^[c] but it shall not stand or be to his advantage. ¹⁸ Afterward he shall turn his face to the coastlands and shall capture many of them, but a commander shall put an end to his insolence. Indeed,^[d] he shall turn his insolence back upon him. ¹⁹ Then he shall turn his face back toward the fortresses of his own land, but he shall stumble and fall, and shall not be found.

²⁰ “Then shall arise in his place one who shall send an exactor of tribute for the glory of the kingdom. But within a few days he shall be broken, neither in anger nor in battle. ²¹ In his place shall arise a contemptible person to whom royal majesty has not been given. He shall come in without warning and obtain the kingdom by flatteries. ²² Armies shall be utterly swept away before him and broken, even the prince of the covenant. ²³ And from the time that an alliance is made with him he shall act deceitfully, and he shall become strong with a small people. ²⁴ Without warning he shall come into the richest parts^[e] of the province, and he shall do what neither his fathers nor his fathers' fathers have done, scattering among them plunder, spoil, and goods. He shall devise plans against strongholds, but only for a time. ²⁵ And he shall stir up his power and his heart against the king of the south with a great army. And the king of the south shall wage war with an exceedingly great and mighty army, but he shall not stand, for plots shall be devised against him. ²⁶ Even those who eat his food shall break him. His army shall be swept away, and many shall fall down slain. ²⁷ And as for the two kings, their hearts shall be bent on doing evil. They shall speak lies at the same table, but to no avail, for the end is

yet to be at the time appointed. ²⁸ And he shall return to his land with great wealth, but his heart shall be set against the holy covenant. And he shall work his will and return to his own land.

²⁹ “At the time appointed he shall return and come into the south, but it shall not be this time as it was before. ³⁰ For ships of Kittim shall come against him, and he shall be afraid and withdraw, and shall turn back and be enraged and take action against the holy covenant. He shall turn back and pay attention to those who forsake the holy covenant. ³¹ Forces from him shall appear and profane the temple and fortress, and shall take away the regular burnt offering. And they shall set up the abomination that makes desolate. ³² He shall seduce with flattery those who violate the covenant, but the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action. ³³ And the wise among the people shall make many understand, though for some days they shall stumble by sword and flame, by captivity and plunder. ³⁴ When they stumble, they shall receive a little help. And many shall join themselves to them with flattery, ³⁵ and some of the wise shall stumble, so that they may be refined, purified, and made white, until the time of the end, for it still awaits the appointed time.

³⁶ “And the king shall do as he wills. He shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak astonishing things against the God of gods. He shall prosper till the indignation is accomplished; for what is decreed shall be done. ³⁷ He shall pay no attention to the gods of his fathers, or to the one beloved by women. He shall not pay attention to any other god, for he shall magnify himself above all. ³⁸ He shall honor the god of fortresses instead of these. A god whom his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts. ³⁹ He shall deal with the strongest fortresses with the help of a foreign god. Those who acknowledge him he shall load with honor. He shall make them rulers over many and shall divide the land for a price.^[f]

⁴⁰ “At the time of the end, the king of the south shall attack^[g] him, but the king of the north shall rush upon him like a whirlwind, with chariots and horsemen, and with many ships. And he shall come into countries and shall overflow and pass through. ⁴¹ He shall come into the glorious land. And tens of thousands shall fall, but these shall be delivered out of his hand: Edom and Moab and the main part of the Ammonites. ⁴² He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape. ⁴³ He shall become ruler of the treasures of gold and of silver, and all the precious things of Egypt, and the Libyans and the Cushites shall follow in his train. ⁴⁴ But news from the east and the north shall alarm him, and he shall go out with great fury to destroy and devote many to destruction. ⁴⁵ And he shall pitch his palatial tents between the sea and the glorious holy mountain. Yet he shall come to his end, with none to help him.

Footnotes

- a. Daniel 11:6 Or *obtained*
- b. Daniel 11:13 Hebrew *at the end of the times*
- c. Daniel 11:17 Hebrew *her, or it*
- d. Daniel 11:18 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain
- e. Daniel 11:24 Or *among the richest men*
- f. Daniel 11:39 Or *land as payment*
- g. Daniel 11:40 Hebrew *thrust at*

The Time of the End

12 “At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book. ² And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. ³ And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above;^[a] and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. ⁴ But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.”

⁵ Then I, Daniel, looked, and behold, two others stood, one on this bank of the stream and one on that bank of the stream. ⁶ And someone said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream,^[b] “How long shall it be till the end of these wonders?” ⁷ And I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream; he raised his right hand and his left hand toward heaven and swore by him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time, and that when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end all these things would be finished. ⁸ I heard, but I did not understand. Then I said, “O my lord, what shall be the outcome of these things?” ⁹ He said, “Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end. ¹⁰ Many shall purify themselves and make themselves white and be refined, but the wicked shall act wickedly. And none of the wicked shall understand, but those who are wise shall understand. ¹¹ And from the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1,290 days. ¹² Blessed is he who waits and arrives at the 1,335 days. ¹³ But go your way till the end. And you shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days.”

Footnotes

- a. Daniel 12:3 Hebrew *the expanse*; compare Genesis 1:6–8
- b. Daniel 12:6 Or *who was upstream*; also verse 7