

Daniel
Introduction

Introduction

Who is Daniel?

Jesus supplies the answer to that question ...

Matthew 24:15

*“So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ spoken of through **the prophet Daniel**—let the reader understand—*

The endorsement of the Lord Jesus is valid and sufficient for all believers; Daniel was a prophet.

One fourth of the books in the Bible are of prophetic nature. One fifth of the content of Scripture was predictive at the time of its writing. A great deal of fulfilled prophecy happens in the book of Daniel.

Prophetic themes in the Bible include:

- The Lord Jesus Christ
- Israel
- Gentile nations
- evil
- satan
- the man of lawlessness
- The Great Tribulation
- How this age will end

Daniel is referred to in the New Testament prophetic passages more than any other Old Testament book. Daniel also contains more fulfilled prophecies than any other book in the Bible.

A prophet of the exile, Daniel writes from within the heart of Babylon. The Northern Kingdom of Israel was captured by the Assyrians in 722 B.C. Just over a hundred years later the Babylonians took the Southern Kingdom, including the capital Jerusalem. Since Israel had entered the Promised Land, God had been patient with their disobedience and rebellion for five hundred years, but now, in the time of Daniel, judgment falls.

The key to the book of Daniel may be found in Daniel 2.

Daniel 2:44

“In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever.”

The Timeline:

- Ashurbanipal, the last great king of Assyria dies in 620 B.C.
- His son Ashurballit takes control.
- Nabopolassar (Nebuchadnezzar's father) removes Babylon from the Assyrian empire.
- Nineveh (Assyria) fell in 612 B.C., giving Babylon control.
- King Josiah had reigned for 15 years before Daniel's birth and all through his life so Daniel's early influences would have been very Godly.
- 608 B.C. Josiah was killed by the Egyptian pharaoh, Necho, at Megiddo.
- With Josiah's son (Jehoiakim) in control, the nation of Judah then fell back into idolatry and wickedness.
- Daniel, by his time of exile, would have already chosen to remain Godly.
- 605 B.C. Jerusalem taken by Nebuchadnezzar; Daniel, as a teenage boy, is taken captive.
- 602 B.C. Daniel completes his three years of training.
- 598 B.C. Jehoiakim dies.
- 597 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar's second attack on Jerusalem; Jehoiachin is taken to Babylon (along with Ezekiel)
- 593 B.C. Ezekiel begins to prophesy.
- 586 B.C. Final attack on Jerusalem, the temple is destroyed. Walls are destroyed.
- 562 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar dies.
- 559 B.C. Cyrus became king of Persia.
- 536 B.C. 70 years of Babylonian captivity comes to an end.

Like most ancient authors Daniel often refers to himself in the third person. Ezekiel also comments on his contemporary Daniel. Chronological arrangement is not a major concern of Daniel.

The book of Daniel is a battlefield between faith and unbelief. Much in the same way some doubt Isaiah's complete authorship the same speculation is found with Daniel. Some, such as the German critic Dr. S.R. Driver, have attacked the authorship of Daniel but not for nearly two thousand years after it was written. Critics' major argument is that the book is fictional, rejecting the miracles and prophecies of Daniel. Others say it is a forgery written during the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, which was during the Maccabees period just 170 years before Christ or almost four hundred years *after* Daniel lived. However, we know this thinking is false because the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament, was translated *before* the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, and it contains the book of Daniel!

Key People in the Book of Daniel

Jehoiakim

Son of Josiah who reigned in Jerusalem for eleven years, from 610 – 598 B.C. He was placed in power by Egypt. Jehoiakim was selfish and fully committed to his sin. He added to the people's burden by building lavish palaces with forced labor. He practiced idol worship and the sins associated with it, including human sacrifice. He died in disgrace (Jer. 22:19). Son Jehoiachin (2 Kings 24:8) became king.

Jehoiachin

Became king at eight years of age, and reigned for one hundred days (2 Chr. 36:9) He was carried away into exile by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 24:15) to Babylon and imprisoned for 37 years. On the death of Nebuchadnezzar, he was freed and given honorable treatment for the rest of his life. Every day of his life he dined regularly at the king's table (2 Kings 25:27-30).

Nebuchadnezzar

Ruled Babylonian empire from 605-562 B.C.
Mentioned in Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel

Belshazzar

The last king of Babylon
Considered a weak king

Cyrus

Persian king
Gave the Jews permission to return to Israel

Chronological Order of Daniel

Chapters 1-4	Captivity and interpretation of dreams and visions
Chapter 7	Vision of the four beasts
Chapter 8	Vision of the ram and goat
Chapter 5	Belshazzar's feast – conquest of Babylon
Chapter 9	Vision of the Seventy weeks
Chapter 6	Daniel in the lion's Den
Chapters 10-12	Daniel's Prayer & Visions

*Daniel 1:1-2:3, 8:1-12:13 is written in Hebrew
Daniel 2:4-7:28 is written in Aramaic*

The Kings of Israel

Kings of Judah (c 925-586 BC)			Kings of Israel (c 925-721 BC)		
King	Relationship to Previous King	God's Judgment	King	Relationship to Previous King	God's Judgment
<u>Rehoboam</u>	son	<u>did evil</u>	<u>Jeroboam</u>	servant	<u>did evil</u>
<u>Abijam</u>	son	<u>did evil</u>			
<u>Asa</u>	son	Godly	<u>Nadab</u>	son	<u>did evil</u>
			<u>Baasha</u>	none	<u>did evil</u>
			<u>Elah</u>	son	<u>did evil</u>
			<u>Zimri</u>	captain	<u>did evil</u>
			<u>Omri</u>	captain	<u>did evil</u>
			<u>Ahab</u>	son	<u>did evil</u>
<u>Jehoshaphat</u>	son	Godly	<u>Ahaziah</u>	son	<u>did evil</u>
			<u>Jehoram</u>	son of Ahab	<u>did evil</u>
<u>Jehoram</u>	son	<u>did evil</u>	<u>Jehu</u>	captain	Both
<u>Ahaziah</u>	son	<u>did evil</u>			
<u>Athaliah</u>	mother	<u>did evil</u>			
<u>Joash</u>	son of Ahaziah	Godly in youth, evil in old age	<u>Jehoahaz</u>	son	<u>did evil</u>
			<u>Joash</u>	son	<u>did evil</u>
<u>Amaziah</u>	son	Godly in youth Evil in old age	<u>Jeroboam II</u>	son	<u>did evil</u>
<u>Uzziah</u>	son	Godly	<u>Zachariah</u>	son	<u>did evil</u>
			<u>Shallum</u>	none	<u>did evil</u> (surmised)
			<u>Menahem</u>	none	<u>did evil</u>
			<u>Pekahiah</u>	son	<u>did evil</u>
			<u>Pekah</u>	captain	<u>did evil</u>
<u>Jotham</u>	son	Godly	<u>Hoshea</u>	none	<u>did evil</u>
<u>Ahaz</u>	son	<u>did evil</u>			
<u>Hezekiah</u>	son	Godly	Assyrian captivity		
<u>Manasseh</u>	son	<u>did evil</u>			
<u>Amon</u>	son	<u>did evil</u>			
<u>Josiah</u>	son	Godly			
<u>Jehoahaz</u>	son	<u>did evil</u>			
<u>Jehoiakim</u>	son of Josiah	<u>did evil</u>			
<u>Jehoiachin</u>	son	<u>did evil</u>			
<u>Zedekiah</u>	son of Josiah	<u>did evil</u>			
Babylonian captivity					

Daniel

Chapter One

- Daniel's Training in Babylon

Daniel's Training in Babylon Verses 1-21

Verse 1

“In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it.”

Many people may not think of Daniel as a scholar but when it comes to the Old Testament Daniel should not be overlooked for his intellect. Daniel was one of the most educated people of the Bible. Many people see Paul as a New Testament scholar and Solomon as a man full of wisdom, but Daniel is close to that category.

Daniel begins his work by telling us when he went to Babylon, “*in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim*”. Most agree that this was the year 605 B.C. Parallel passages detailing this account are:

2 Kings 24:1-2

“During Jehoiakim's reign, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon invaded the land, and Jehoiakim became his vassal for three years. But then he changed his mind and rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar. ² The LORD sent Babylonian, Aramean, Moabite and Ammonite raiders against him. He sent them to destroy Judah, in accordance with the word of the LORD proclaimed by his servants the prophets.”

2 Chronicles 36:5-7

“Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eleven years. He did evil in the eyes of the LORD his God. ⁶ Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon attacked him and bound him with bronze shackles to take him to Babylon. ⁷ Nebuchadnezzar also took to Babylon articles from the temple of the LORD and put them in his temple there.”

There were three distinct deportations:

- 605 B.C. when Daniel was sent to Babylon
- 598 B.C. when Jehoiachin was captured (with Ezekiel) and the temple treasures (2 Kings 24:10-17)
- 587 B.C. when Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed and Judah ceased to be the southern kingdom (2 kings 25:1-21)

In the Babylonian cuneiform, (characters formed by the arrangement of small wedge-shaped elements) Nebuchadnezzar is really spelled nabu-kudurri-usur. When translated we get the current spelling. His name means “protect the boundary”.

Verse 2

“And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God. These he carried off to the temple of his god in Babylonia and put in the treasure house of his god.”

Jehoiakim is defeated and Daniel is sent to Babylon. *Daniel's theme is seen here* in this verse, "And the Lord delivered..." **Daniel expressed the Sovereignty of God.** This theme is seen throughout the remainder of the book!

Daniel also mentions the articles of the temple being carried off to Babylon. This sets the stage for his story of Belshazzar's feast in chapter 5. Carrying worship vessels from one nation to another, from one god to another was a common practice for ancient kings.

When Daniel writes that the articles were "carried off" it paints the same picture of evil, opposition to the message and spirit of God, being sent to Babylon in Zechariah 5.

Zechariah 5:5-11

"Then the angel who was speaking to me came forward and said to me, "Look up and see what this is that is appearing." ⁶ I asked, "What is it?" He replied, "It is a measuring basket." And he added, "This is the iniquity of the people throughout the land." ⁷ Then the cover of lead was raised, and there in the basket sat a woman! ⁸ He said, "This is wickedness," and he pushed her back into the basket and pushed the lead cover down over its mouth. ⁹ Then I looked up—and there before me were two women, with the wind in their wings! They had wings like those of a stork, and they lifted up the basket between heaven and earth. ¹⁰ "Where are they taking the basket?" I asked the angel who was speaking to me. ¹¹ He replied, "To the country of Babylonia to build a house for it. When it is ready, the basket will be set there in its place."

Twice in this verse Daniel tells us that Nebuchadnezzar put the temple vessels in the "temple of his god", which is Murduk the god of the Babylonians. By repeating this statement Daniel is emphasizing the importance of this conflict. Jerusalem versus Babylon, the kingdom of God versus the kingdom of satan, the church versus the world, the Christ versus the anti-christ. Daniel is describing one of many struggles between these two worlds. False religion began with the Tower of Babel in Babylon in Genesis 11.

What Daniel is telling us happened, Isaiah prophesized...

2 Kings 20:14-18

"¹⁴ Then Isaiah the prophet went to King Hezekiah and asked, "What did those men say, and where did they come from?" "From a distant land," Hezekiah replied. "They came from Babylon." ¹⁵ The prophet asked, "What did they see in your palace?" "They saw everything in my palace," Hezekiah said. "There is nothing among my treasures that I did not show them." ¹⁶ Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Hear the word of the LORD : ¹⁷ The time will surely come when everything in your palace, and all that your fathers have stored up until this day, will be carried off to Babylon. Nothing will be left, says the LORD. ¹⁸ And some of your descendants, your own flesh and blood, that will be born to you, will be taken away, and they will become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon."

Verse 3

“Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring in some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility-”

Like Joseph before, Daniel is not “summoned” to the king. Nebuchadnezzar has a strategy in mind. Find talented young men, train them in your ways and take advantage of their skills. It would have been a waste of their talents to just make them slaves.

Verse 4

“young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians.”

Nebuchadnezzar is looking for the “cream of the crop. Four young men met and exceeded all the qualifications. How young were these young men? We can't be certain but based on events yet to happen, they had to be in their teens. History tells us that the Persians started training their youth at age 14 and assuming that the Babylonians did the same would not be a stretch.

Their fitting the qualification is not surprising because they would have been well educated in their homeland. This is a picture of the royalty of one kingdom serving the royalty of another kingdom. The word Babylon is actually “Chaldeans” which is the language Abraham spoke.

Verse 5

“The king assigned them a daily amount of food and wine from the king's table. They were to be trained for three years, and after that they were to enter the king's service.”

Like most Master of Divinity programs in our seminaries, the length of their training period was to be three years. While they were being trained, Nebuchadnezzar offered only the best of the king's food and drink. However, Daniel was influenced by Josiah and had already made the decision in his personal life that he was not going to dishonor his God in any way – no matter what comfort foreign royalty offered.

Verse 6

“Among these were some from Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.”

Daniel now mentions the others who are in training with him. Daniel calls them by their Hebrew names – not their Babylonians names.

- Daniel means “God is judge”
- Hananiah means “Jehovah is gracious”
- Mishael means “Who is what God is”, meaning God has no equal
- Azariah means “The Lord helps”.

All four names appear elsewhere in the Bible (1 Chr 3:1, Ezra 8:2, Neh. 10:6, 1 Chr. 25:23, 2 Chr. 26:11, Jer. 36:12)

All four of these young men were obviously named by Godly parents and their names reflect their spiritual commitments.

Verse 7

“The chief official gave them new names: to Daniel, the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego.”

The four new names given to these young men exalt a god of Babylon.

Belteshazzar - appeals to the Babylonian god Bel (Marduk). This is similar to Baal, the chief god of the Canaanites.

Shadrach - represents the Sumerian moon god

Meshach – (remember Mishael meant “Who is what God is”) Meshach means “who is what Aku is”.

Abednego – means servant of Nebo, another pagan god.

To help remember the pronunciation of these new names children have been taught the phrase:

“My snack, your snack, and off to bed we go”

Verse 8

“But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way.”

Early on in this book we see Daniel’s courage and his convictions. Daniel’s commitment to God will not allow him to defile himself, which the king’s non-kosher food would do. Not only was this food non-kosher (Lev. 3:17, 7:26, 17:10-14, 19:26) but it was probably offered to idols as well. When food and drink was offered to idols, the eating and drinking of that implied recognition of those deities.

Hosea prophesized the people of Israel would face this problem.

Hosea 9:1-4

“Do not rejoice, O Israel; do not be jubilant like the other nations. For you have been unfaithful to your God; you love the wages of a prostitute at every threshing floor. ² Threshing floors and winepresses will not feed the people; the new wine will fail them. ³ They will not remain in the LORD's land; Ephraim will return to Egypt and eat unclean food in Assyria. ⁴ They will not pour out wine offerings to the LORD, nor will their sacrifices please him. Such sacrifices will be to them like the bread of mourners; all who eat them will be unclean. This food will be for themselves; it will not come into the temple of the LORD.”

Why did Daniel object to the king’s food but not to the name change or the new education? Probably because the last two did not directly defy Jewish law.

Verses 9-10

“Now God had caused the official to show favor and sympathy to Daniel, but the official told Daniel, “I am afraid of my lord the king, who has assigned your food and drink. Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men your age? The king would then have my head because of you.”

Once again Daniel highlights the Sovereignty of God. First, he delivered Judah to Babylon, now He works in the heart of Ashpenaz to produce kindness and sympathy.

Verses 11-12

“Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, “Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink.”

Daniel, who understands the Babylonian culture and its conflict with the Word of God, has the maturity and wisdom to not yield to the pressure of the culture he’s in. He isn’t asking the king; he speaks to *“the guard whom the chief official had appointed”*. A ten-day test is the compromise. Vegetables would have consisted of anything grown in the ground.

Verses 13-14

“Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you see.” So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days.”

Any legitimate assessment requires verification of the results. Daniel had no fear that God would not honor his stand against defiled food. He had no fear of exam time.

Verses 15-16

“At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food. So the guard took away their choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead.”

The results? No surprise. God has always wanted his people to be different, to stand out from ungodly nations. Is this a miracle? No. A diet of vegetables and water is far better than a diet of red meat and alcohol. Now Daniel’s diet becomes the norm, as Melzar (KJV) the guard, changed the diets of all those in training.

Verse 17

“To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds.”

What did God do next? Just as He blessed Solomon, He now blesses these four young men. He gave them *“knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning.”* Daniel, however, has the ability to understand visions and dreams. Daniel will

become the Prime Minister to two great world empires. He is living in a time where God often used dreams and visions to communicate. Today we have His Word.

Verses 18-19

“At the end of the time set by the king to bring them in, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar. The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's service.”

“At the end of the time” means the three years the king set for them to complete their training. All the candidates in training were presented to the king and he hand-picked Daniel and the other three Hebrew young men. As this book progresses, we see the significance to the training and the selection process.

Verse 20

“In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom.”

The magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers relied on being sly and cunning whereas with Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah the king saw true wisdom. We should be reminded that Daniel is not completely in chronological order so the interpretation of the dream which occurs in the next chapter, could have happened before the training period was over. Otherwise, the king may not have summoned the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers bypassing them and went to Daniel first.

Verse 21

“And Daniel remained there until the first year of King Cyrus.”

This verse jumps us ahead and tells us that the same Daniel who started with Nebuchadnezzar served in the court for the full forty years until Cyrus arrived. This means that Daniel was there from the earliest of the exile to the preparation of the release of the Israelites back to Jerusalem. Over this time period, Nebuchadnezzar was gone, Belshazzar was gone but Daniel remained. This again reminds us of the parallel between Joseph and Daniel, both serving and having influence in the affairs of a pagan nation which ultimately became a blessing for Israel.