

Christ in Prophecy

Daniel 1: Book of Daniel: An Overview

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Introduction

Tim Moore: Greetings in the Name of Jesus—our soon-returning King, and welcome to Christ in Prophecy! Over the next few months, we're going to revisit two major books of prophecy that have much to say about the End Times, Daniel and Revelation.

Nathan Jones: We'll start with Daniel. At only 12 chapters, this last in the series of major prophets is the shortest of those. But Daniel lays a crucial foundation for what is called the End Times and the coming Kingdom of God.

The book of Daniel was of course written by the prophet Daniel. His life had the makings of a great tragedy. He lived in a time of war and conquests and was carried into exile by the Babylonians. Daniel could have succumbed to despair or simply absorbed the culture of Babylon. Instead, he determined to remain faithful to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Tim Moore: Most Christians are familiar with some of the highlights of Daniel's life. How he refused Nebuchadnezzar's choice food. How he described and interpreted the pagan king's dream of a great statue. How he translated handwriting on a wall that foretold Belshazzar's sudden downfall. And how Darius threw him in a lion's den because of jealous naysayers' evil schemes.

Daniel proved himself time and again to a succession of kings. He revealed visions and interpreted dreams. He foresaw kingdoms and prophesied empires. He was even given a glimpse of the end of time.

Nathan Jones: Several men of God are given extensive biographical treatment in the Bible. But, other than Jesus Christ, Daniel is the only one of those who has no character flaw or incident of shortcoming. Yet in chapter 9 Daniel accepted personal responsibility for the sins of his people. He lifted up an anguished prayer of repentance on behalf of the Jews because he realized that the time of their exile was almost over. Anticipating the fulfillment of God's promise, Daniel's prayerful plea became, O Lord hear! O Lord, forgive, O Lord, listen and take action! For Your own sake, O my God, do not delay... His insight came from reading and understanding Bible prophecy.

Tim Moore: We have one advantage Daniel lacked 2,600 years ago. We have hindsight. Whereas he anticipated the coming Messiah, we know Him by Name. We know He has come—and that He is coming again. Over the next few weeks, we'll take a deep dive into Daniel. We're going to kick off today with a special guest: our good friend Todd Hampson. And although Nathan could not join us I sat down with him recently.

Part 1

Tim Moore: Well, we're glad you could join us here for this portion of our conversation with Todd Hampson. Todd, I'm so glad you could join us on Christ in Prophecy today.

Todd Hampson: Honored to be here, man. I'm always glad to join you.

Tim Moore: Well, you can't know how excited I am to be talking to you ever since I got a copy of your book, "The Non-Prophet's Guide to the Book of Daniel" and read it, I was thrilled at the insight you offered, at the illustrations. I mean, we in our Lamplighter Magazine try to evoke ideas not just in the words, but in the pictures and graphics, and you have a true gift to do that, Brother, I tell you what.

Todd Hampson: Thanks, man. It's funny how God works. You know that my background is animation, production and illustration. Never thought the Lord would be using it for ministry, but it just goes to show you God can use anybody and God doesn't waste anything from your past.

Tim Moore: He certainly does not. And if you turn it all over to Him, then He turns it into something even more glorious and beautiful than we can imagine.

Todd Hampson: Well said, amen.

Tim Moore: Well, the obligatory first question: Why did you write this book on Daniel? Obviously, you have a series in the Non-Prophet's Guide, Daniel is very critical as a book of prophecy. The last of the Major Prophets, but what sparked an interest in you for Daniel in such a time as this?

Todd Hampson: So I really always wanted to do one on Daniel, but I wasn't sure if it was too niche, that it wouldn't be a good, broad selling book, that publishers would be interested in that kind of thing. But when I presented it to my publisher and talked about the fact that I'm getting requests for it all the time, people really want to study it, after studying the Revelation. And of course, if go to seminary anywhere and you're taking an eschatology course, you're going to learn Daniel and Revelation in the same class.

Tim Moore: Yeah.

Todd Hampson: So I wanted something where people could have both of those together to kind of fill it out and really give them the full picture. So that's kind of the main reason behind it. But also, I just always loved Daniel. My oldest son's name is Daniel.

Tim Moore: I was going to say it seems to have a personal connection to you and to your wife.

Todd Hampson: Yeah, it really does. I've got three kids and a beautiful daughter in law. Love them all to death. And they all have their special places. But when we found out we were pregnant with our first child, we were reading and studying the Book of Daniel. And just so happens that the Lord gave us a boys as our first child, and we were like, you know what, we're going to name him Daniel. So for that reason, and also just almost like a, you know, in the Bible, when you see people, there's meaning in names.

Tim Moore: Yeah.

Todd Hampson: Our goal was to raise godly children, to start a godly heritage. So with our first child, we wanted to kind of set that standard, let's name him after a biblical figure who stood for the Lord and had a thriving relationship with the Lord.

Tim Moore: Boy, he certainly did. I observe oftentimes Daniel is one of the few characters in the Bible with an extensive biography who we see no character flaws. He's almost a prefigure of Christ, and we're going to talk about that. But I've already said I absolutely love the illustrations you bring to this book, and your opening illustration about the confidence we can have in the midst of our storm tossed world, it was just fantastic and it's a great start. But let's jump into a key question that you address right up here at front of our conversation: Is Daniel a book of practical godly living, or is it a book of prophecy?

Todd Hampson: That's a great question. You know, most people who well, not most people, but a lot of people that I talk to who have grown up in church or are familiar with the Book of Daniel, but maybe have never studied it, they have more of what I call flannel graph theology they're familiar with the lion's den and the fiery furnace and some of these really epic stories, the narrative portion of Daniel. But they don't realize there's a whole prophetic section as well. So I always say the book of Daniel is more relevant now than ever because you have the first six chapters are all narrative, the story of Daniel's life, and there's some prophecy in there as well. And then the final six chapters are 100% all prophecy. So and they're prophecies that we're seeing the groundwork being laid in our day. You know, Daniel said he wanted to know what these prophecies were, but he was told, Daniel, go your own way, these are for the time of the end. In other words, you won't understand these; but we're understanding them. So that means we're seeing the groundwork being laid for the whole End Time drama.

Tim Moore: We sure are. And I'd like to tell people oftentimes we can understand better than even the prophet Daniel the very prophecies that the Lord had him record, because we have the advantage of hindsight. Daniel and other prophets in the Old Testament were looking forward, anticipating a Messiah, we know the Messiah's name. We know how He came to Earth in His first advent. And so we have a certain perspective that even they did not have.

Well, obviously you've touched on this already, but you divide the book of Daniel as you're flowing through it in your book into three different sections, and then you talk about application. So what are those sections that the book lends itself to?

Todd Hampson: Yeah, I'd hinted at that a little bit. The first section is really an overview of the book, kind of the set up material, but it's all about His story. The single word key theme of the book of Daniel is sovereignty, it's God's sovereignty. He's in control. And no more time than in Daniel's time when chaos was abounding, when they were, he was taken captive to Babylon. He was a prophet in exile. He came from royalty, but they took him out of everything he was familiar with and dropped him in this pagan environment. And so it's just an amazing thing that proves God's sovereignty, because through the book of Daniel, you see God's sovereignty over Daniel's life, and you see God's sovereignty over the affairs of men. And we'll get into this, but you see the entire Jewish history from Daniel's time until the time of the end. So even in the chaos of war, and conquering, and evil and God even allowing evil things to happen, God is still

sovereign. So it's His story. So I kind of set the framework or the book with that first section. And then I go into the next two sections in that it's half narrative and half prophecy. And it's written, a lot of people don't realize too it's written out of order, and it's also written in different languages. There are sections that are for Gentile audience and they're written in the Gentile language of the day. And there's the sections that are for the Hebrew people were written in Hebrew. So it's just amazing, the more you study it, the more amazing it becomes on so many levels.

Tim Moore: Certainly does. You know, you talk I know in your book about prophecies that have already been fulfilled that we can see in history and so accurately predicted foretold that some scoffers say ah, that couldn't have been written ahead of time, that had to have been written after the time. But we know better than that, just through historical records and texts that we have from the ancient times. And yet there are also prophecies that are yet to be fulfilled. But what do you mean when you talk about the CNS the central nervous system of the Book of Daniel and the scarlet thread that runs not only through Daniel but the entire Bible?

Todd Hampson: Yeah. Yeah, I call Bible prophecy in general, the central nervous system of the Bible because every key person, area of theology, and key story is somehow connected to prophecy. You know, prophecy is, the Bible is the only religious book in the world that claims to be the Word of God and has predicted prophecy as a proof that God means what He says and says what he means. So that's the CNS, the central nervous system. Just like our central nervous system, kind of touches on every other system in our body, and if the central nervous system goes down, everything else goes down. So I think that shows the importance of prophecy of the Bible. Excuse me. Also, I call it I point out the scarlet thread, meaning from Genesis 3:15 to the end of the Bible, there's hints of the Messiah. You know, it builds throughout Scripture. But every book of the Bible somehow, somehow points to the Savior. And I'm not the first one to come up with the scarlet thread, that's kind of an old thing that's been around for a while. But in the book I went through and looked, sure enough, every single book there's something that points to the Messiah or connects to the Messiah.

Tim Moore: You know, you mention the sovereignty of God. One of the beautiful things in the Book of Daniel is how many times pagan kings. And so we're reminded that here's this this man who was faithful to the Lord, who would not defile himself even by eating pagan food that had been sacrificed to idols. And yet, because of his living testimony, pagan kings came to respect and honor the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. We don't know if they became actual believers in the sense that we would say, but they absolutely respected the God of Daniel.

Todd Hampson: They really did, I think, and there's three case studies there if you look at it; you've got Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar and then Darius. And it seems three different times the Lord was really trying to draw Nebuchadnezzar, and each time he came a little bit closer, but then there's little hints that he still kind of clung to his polytheism. And the final one with Nebuchadnezzar it's really not clear, maybe he became a believer, maybe not. But it seems like he kind of still clung to that, you know, a little bit just clung to his old ways, and didn't cross that line of faith, so to speak.

Then you have Belshazzar, who is just outright rejecting it, pagan to hilt, nothing to do with it. And we see what happened to him.

Tim Moore: And then Darius.

Todd Hampson: And then Darius, I'm sorry, yeah Darius who protected Daniel and hated the fact that they tricked him into putting him in the lion's den, and then went overboard and threw them in their families in the lion's den.

Tim Moore: Yeah.

Todd Hampson: After Daniel came out. So yeah, those are three snapshots of how God does love world leaders and wants to get a hold of even pagan world leaders, we need to remember that.

Tim Moore: We need to remember that. And we remember that God is sovereign. So even if we bemoan pagan leaders in our own country or elsewhere, God can use them to fulfill His sovereign will, just as He did through Pharaoh in the time of the Exodus, just as he does with Nebuchadnezzar, Darius, you mentioned Cyrus, who's coming later. Nobody is beyond the ability for God to reach in and change the trajectory of human history, even if He has to put hooks in their jaws and turn their heads. You know, one of the things that we already mentioned is that Daniel didn't always understand the prophecies. It's actually a comfort to me that when Gabriel came to visit Daniel, he called him a highly esteemed man, similar to what he greeted Mary when he was there to announce the birth of Christ. And yet Daniel didn't understand all the prophecies. So how can we think that it's possible other than in hindsight, for us to understand what even Daniel could not?

Todd Hampson: Well, thankfully, we have the entire Canon. You know, we have the entire Word of God that we can now compare and put together, we can kind of put the puzzle pieces together. As we mentioned, you know, Revelation is also often taught with Daniel, add the Olivet Discourse and some of the other Old Testament prophets, and you get more of a complete picture of these things. So in our time in particular, we're seeing the conditions come together that we can see. So, we do have hindsight, we have the full Canon of Scripture to compare and look at. And also I think it's just God unseals things at the right time. I believe we're understanding Scripture. You know, there's a passage in Daniel where he talks about people will run to and fro and knowledge will be increased. And there's a debate among good teachers whether that means travel increases or whether it means people will run to and fro in the Scriptures. And the more I study it and compare it with other passages that use that same term, I kind of I'm leaning now more towards the idea that they're running to and fro in Scripture. That in the end times, the closer you get to the end times, the more people will be comparing Scripture with Scripture and putting these puzzle pieces together.

Tim Moore: You know, that's fascinating. And sadly, we know that throughout Church history, the last 2,000 years, there were many long stretches where the average Christian wasn't even allowed to own a Bible, let alone read it in their own language. If you were found to have a Bible in your possession, it was a capital offense. And so today we have the great blessing of having Bibles in every Christian home, I dare I say.

Todd Hampson: In our pockets.

Tim Moore: But how often do we open and read them and study them? So that's the challenge for us, if we really want to understand.

Todd Hampson: That's right. So true. We have more tools now than we've ever had before. People have probably maybe seen some of these video clips of people in the underground church in China receiving Bibles and just hugging them and clinging to them. We take for granted that we have God's written Word at our access, at our fingertips, any given time of the day.

Tim Moore: Let's talk about Daniel 9. What does that reveal about the character of the prophet and really the anticipation of a Savior?

Todd Hampson: Yeah, so you open Daniel 9, and it opens with Daniel pouring out his heart to God, confessing his sins and the sins of his people. And as you mentioned, what sins? Daniel seemed like a righteous guy, but he knew compared to a holy God, we're all sinners. Even on our best day, we don't come close to comparing. So he was confessing his sins in the sins of his people. He knew that they were in exile for disobeying God in the promised Land. And so he was really, and actually he was studying another prophet, he was studying Jeremiah.

Tim Moore: Yeah.

Todd Hampson: A contemporary who is before him, but also an exile prophet kind of towards the end of Jeremiah's life. And he was reading the book of Jeremiah and saw that it was going to be 70 years in exile. So, it was about that time frame, so he started praying, "Well, Lord Jeremiah says, 70 years, we're going back." So, really he was just praying about when we get to go back home. And he was old, so he wasn't really planning on it, it appears. But he knew his people needed to go back home and reestablish the temple and all that stuff. But God often when we confess our sins and come to Him in just humble prayer, he often gives us more than we bargained for.

Tim Moore: He really does.

Todd Hampson: So not only did He give Daniel the time frame for going back into the land, He gave Daniel the entire Jewish history from Daniel's time until the end of times.

Tim Moore: And you know, it's during this prayer, this confessional prayer that the Lord sends the messenger, the Angel Gabriel, to say, "The Lord has heard your prayer, and so He's going to reveal." I think sometimes we want to just, just give me the bottom line. You know, I just want to I want to go to the end of the book and get the full answer. But Daniel studied, as you said, Bible prophecy through the prophet Jeremiah, and he prayed and sought after the Lord, and his whole life was a living testimony. I think too often we skip over the prayer, the seeking the Lord and the S-T-U-D-Y the study of God's Word.

Todd Hampson: So true.

Tim Moore: You make a point that in Revelations 404 verses, there are over 800 references or allusions to the Old Testament, including Daniel, although John seldom says, as the prophet so-and-so said, and he never quotes chapter and verse because they didn't have chapters and

verses in those days. But if you don't understand the allusions, you miss many of the illustrations of Revelation.

Todd Hampson: You really do. And I think in Revelation in particular, that's where some people get into a lot of trouble trying to pour their own meaning into the symbols or looking at the modern-day world around us for symbols that connect with it. When, like you said, they find their context in the Old Testament. Matter of fact, half of the symbols in Revelation, the meaning is given to you in the context of Revelation, the other half are all direct allusions to the Old Testament. So, if you don't know the Old Testament, you're not going to understand Revelation. And, you know, Revelation is a very Jewish book. It's written just like the Old Testament type of prophetic books. And you've got two Jewish witnesses, 144 Jewish witnesses, evangelists you have it's all about Israel, the desecration of the Temple, all the stuff that happens at the midpoint. So, it's all about Israel, all about the Jewish people.

Tim Moore: You know, it's funny people who we would call Replacement Theologians or they have replaced Israel with the Church, they don't have much interest in Revelation. And it's almost goes hand in glove and they'll deny that they are replacement minded. But I've seen it too many times when I ask them about Revelation, well, that really has no relevance, because they have discounted God's promises throughout the Old Testament and continuing into the New Testament to the Jewish people. I find that one of the beautiful phrases that is used to describe Daniel is what Gabriel heralds him as, he says, son of man. And later that same phrase is what Jesus grabs a hold of as a messianic title for Himself. That was little "s" son, little "m" man when it came to Daniel is capital "S" Son capital "M" He is the ultimate fulfillment of God and man, that being Jesus Christ. But Daniel, upon seeing some of these visions of the Messiah to come, I just am reminded in chapter seven, verse 14, speaking of the coming Messiah he says "Into him was given dominion, glory, and a kingdom that all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him." His dominion is in everlasting dominion, which will not pass away, and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed. Contrasted to the kingdoms of Nebuchadnezzar, and Belshazzar, and Darius, obviously their kingdoms did not last very long. But Christ is coming and His kingdom will last forever.

Todd Hampson: Amen. And you get a beautiful snapshot of that in Daniel chapter two and seven, but two in particular with the statues. You see man sees them, their empires as these beautiful, you know, metallic statues from gold, to silver, to bronze to and then but at the bottom you have the feet of mixed of iron and clay and then a rock not cut by man comes in and demolishes at all. So that's the Millennial Kingdom coming in to take over all other kingdoms. So that's the future Millennial Kingdom. So there in that one prophetic symbolism of the statue you have the full overview of history from Daniel's time until the time of the end. It's mind blowing.

Tim Moore: It is mind blowing. People sometimes discredit or discount the appearance of the Trinity in the Old Testament. But if I back up one verse to Daniel 7:13, Daniel opening this passage said, "I kept looking in the night visions and behold, with the clouds of heaven, one like a Son of Man was coming." He looks like a man, but he's not. He's like a son of man. And he came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. So, he's talking about the Son approaching the Father and then being given this kingdom, and this dominion. I mean, it's a messianic passage that just makes your heart thrill. And yet Daniel also saw not just toward

the First Coming of Christ, but He knew that there would be great times of tribulation until that Second Coming. So He gives almost an outline of the time frame that we can anticipate.

Todd Hampson: He really does. And I'm sure we'll do a future show specific on Daniel 9, so, we won't get to deep in that. But in that passage you see that overview as well, the First and Second Coming and this mysterious gap in the middle that we call the Church Age. And in chapter three, you have another snapshot of Jesus in the fiery furnace.

Tim Moore: Yes.

Todd Hampson: Three men were thrown in, there's an extra one in there, and He looks like a Son of Man, or he looks like a Son of God.

Tim Moore: Yes.

Todd Hampson: So, you had that the God man, the human, the God Man in there throughout, you know, hidden in the Old Testament, concealed in the Old Testament, revealed in the New. And it's a beautiful thing to go back and see Jesus showing up in the Old Testament.

Tim Moore: I think it's interesting, the person who recognizes that son like a god, is none other than Nebuchadnezzar.

Todd Hampson: That's right.

Tim Moore: So you think that the world will witness Christ at the time of the Rapture or just at the time of the Second Coming?

Todd Hampson: I think, I tend to believe when I read other passages, I think the Rapture will be for believers only. I think we'll be the only ones that see Him. It's not a secret Rapture because we're all going to disappear and that's going to be absolute chaos everywhere. But I think the whole world will see Him and the Scripture is clear about that on the Second Coming for sure, I think the whole world will see Him somehow, someday, at the same moment, the entire world is going to see the return of Christ. That Shekinah Glory cracking through the darkness that's there at the end times. What a beautiful sight that's going to be.

Tim Moore: Well, we're going to have a whole section of our series here on application. But as we are now in the year 2024, as this show is first going to air, the world seems to be coming apart at the seams. The nations seem to be hurling into chaos. And there's war and rumors of war. All the various signs seem to be multiplying, or as we like to say, increasing in intensity and in frequency.

Todd Hampson: That's right.

Tim Moore: Make a case that this ancient book that some would discount as, ah that's Old Testament, I'm a New Testament Christian, has relevance to us today.

Todd Hampson: It has relevance. I highlight this every chance I get, two levels, one, we're seeing all the prophecies other than in chapter 11, there's about 30 prophecies that were all fulfilled in the Intertestamental Period, but all the end time prophecies and there's a ton of them, we're seeing the groundwork so clearly being laid in our day. So that should get our

attention from a prophetic standpoint that the great end time drama is drawing near. We're there we're on the cusp of it. We don't know when it is, but it's very clear that the groundwork is being laid for that.

And also, the practical side of seeing how Daniel and his friends pre-decided they were going to stand for God in a godless culture. They were going to in a whimsical, prayerful way, they were going to seek God's face and stand for Him no matter what it cost. You know, when they were thrown into the fiery furnace, they said, "Even if, even if He does not choose to protect us through this, we're still not going to bow to your statue." So that's the attitude we need to have.

Tim Moore: Powerful.

Todd Hampson: Yeah.

Tim Moore: Yeah. I think Daniel should embolden those of us who want to serve the Lord. I love what he says later in the book, when Daniel indicating the time of the end, he says, and this is with regard to response to the Antichrist, so I put it in the proper context, but the application still holds. He says, "The people who know their God will display strength and take action." So today, if you're worried about all the chaos in the world, then if you know your God display strength, not fear, not anxiety and take action. Well, what action can we take, Todd, as followers of Christ?

Todd Hampson: I think one key thing we can do; a lot of people think, I've got to do some big thing. No, if anything, just draw a line in the sand, know where your standards are, biblical standards, and say, I'm not going to bow to culture in this area. I'm going to stand for Christ. I'm going to preach boldly. For pastors and teachers of the Word I think it means teaching the whole counsel of God, teaching God's prophetic Word, boldly stating truth, speaking the truth in love. You know, we live in an era where we try to dumb down the Gospel, to meet people where they are, when the Gospel is supposed to be transformative and powerful. And it is, it does cause upheaval, but in a good way, it changes lives and makes people become born again.

Tim Moore: Amen. I can tell you so many folks that approach us through our ministry, I'm sure you've heard the same thing that said, I came to faith in Christ from studying His prophetic Word and seeing that He is the fulfillment of the ancient prophecies, and they're still coming to pass before our eyes today.

Well, your book has been a great blessing to me. I know it'll be a blessing to all who get it. We're going to make this available to you even through our ministry. But I have to ask Todd, what's the next in the Non-Prophet's series?

Todd Hampson: So the next book is "The Non-Prophet's Guide to Heaven." So that'll be a cool one. It's about Heaven, but also everything that leads up to that, so Rapture, Bema Seat, Millennial Kingdom, so all the future glory that we have to look forward to as believers. And I, the reason I wrote it is because I hear people say, you know, you can be so heavenly minded that you're no earthly good. I think it's the opposite. I think the more truly, biblically heavenly

minded we are, the more earthly good we're going to be. Because we know time is short, and we know we got to leave it all on the field for the Lord.

Tim Moore: Well, you've left so much here for us. I'm going to read this over and over again because I've already done so just in preparation for this conversation. But every time I've gone back to your book, let alone the Word of God, I get a blessing. So, Todd, thank you for writing, for using your gifts and for joining us today on Christ in Prophecy.

Todd Hampson: It's my honor, my pleasure. Always, always glad to join you guys.

Tim Moore: We'll have you back, brother. Guaranteed.

Todd Hampson: Sounds good.

Part 2

Tim Moore: Daniel is one of my favorite books of the Old Testament. Not only does it offer vivid illustrations of tough and persevering faith, it affirms the sovereignty of God, and His willingness to reveal His plan for mankind.

In our much briefer overview of Daniel during our Jesus in the Old Testament series, one of our key verses was Daniel 2:22, "It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with Him." As fascinating as the rise and fall of empires and the culmination of human history is, the most profound revelation is the person and purpose of the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Nathan Jones: And we know from hindsight that Jesus has come, bringing salvation to all who put their trust in Him. But another key verse from Daniel centers on the promise made to the Messiah, "In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever."

And certainly, all the signs of the times declare that we are living on the cusp of the fulfillment of that prophecy. And, as we approach the End Times Daniel foretold, the words that he concealed and sealed up 2,600 years ago are coming to light as never before.

Tim Moore: Tune in again next week as we continue our study of Daniel. Until then, as we await our soon-returning King, join us in crying out as Daniel did, "For Your own sake, O my God, do not delay..." Godspeed!!

End of Program