

INTRODUCTORY NOTES TO DANIEL

THE MAN: Daniel stands out as one of the greatest men of OT history. That he was a real man in history is proved by Ezek. 14:14 and 28:3, as well as Mt. 24:15 and Heb. 11:33. He was a teenager in the year 605 BC when Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem and began his conquest of Judah. There were several "deportations" of Jews to Babylon, and Daniel was in the first group because he was of the princely line. It was the practice of Babylon to deport the "cream of the crop" and train them for service in their own palaces. Daniel was still active in Babylon for over 60 years. In fact, he lived through the reigns of four rulers (Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius, and Cyrus) and three different kingdoms (Babylon, Media, Persia). His name means "God is my judge." He held several important positions and was promoted greatly because of his character and wisdom, and because the blessing of God was upon him. Nebuchadnezzar named him chief of the wise men and a ruler of the land (2:48), a position similar to a modern Prime Minister. Nebuchadnezzar's grandson, Belshazzar, called Daniel out of retirement and, because he explained the handwriting on the wall, made Daniel third ruler in the land (5:29). Darius named him leader over the whole realm (6:1-3)! Certainly Daniel was God's faithful witness in a wicked and idolatrous kingdom for at least 75 years.

THE BOOK: Daniel is to the OT what Revelation is to the NT; in fact, we cannot understand one without the other. Prophetically Daniel deals with "the times of the Gentiles" (see Lk. 21:24), that period of time that began in 606 BC with the captivity and will end when Christ returns to earth to judge the Gentile nations and establish His kingdom. In the various visions and dreams in Daniel we see the program of Gentile history from the arrival of Babylon, through the conquests of the Medes, Persians, Greeks, and Romans, and to the rule of Anti-Christ just before the return of Jesus Christ. This book proves that "there is a God in heaven" (2:28) and "The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men" (4:25). Daniel makes it clear that God Almighty is sovereign in the affairs of this world; "history is HIS story." God can take rulers off their thrones; God can defeat the strongest nations and turn them over to their enemies. As you can see from our outline (reverse side), the book is divided into two parts: The Personal History of Daniel, (1-6); The Prophetic Ministry Through Daniel, (7-12). In 1:1-2:3, the writing is in Hebrew; but from 2:4-7:28, it is in the Chaldean language. The Hebrew sections deal primarily with the Jews, so their language is used.

THE ORDER OF HISTORY: The Book of Daniel is not arranged in chronological order. In the first half, Daniel interprets the dreams of others; in the last half, he is given visions of his own concerning the future of his people. The historical order of the book is as follows:

- 1 - Captivity (605-604 BC)
- 2 - Dream of the Image (602 BC)
- 3 - Nebuchadnezzar's image
- 4 - Nebuchadnezzar's tree dream
- 7 - The Vision of the 4 Beasts (556 BC)
- 8 - Ram and He-Goat Vision (554 BC)
- 5 - Belshazzar's Feast - Babylon falls (538 BC)
- 9 - Vision of 70 Weeks (539 BC)
- 6 - The Lions Den
- 10-12 - Closing Visions

You can see that Daniel was a man in his 80's when cast into the lions' den!

A SUGGESTED OUTLINE OF DANIEL

Theme: "The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men" (4:25)

I. THE PERSONAL HISTORY OF DANIEL - 1-6

1. Maintaining his godly walk - 1
2. Interpreting the "image dream" - 2
3. The golden image (Daniel not present here)
4. Interpreting the "tree dream"
5. Interpreting the handwriting on the wall
6. Maintaining his godly devotion - the lions' den

II. THE PROPHETICAL MINISTRY OF DANIEL - 7-12

1. His vision of the four beasts - 7
2. His vision of the ram and he-goat - 8
3. His prayer of confession - the 70 weeks - 9
4. His final vision of the future - 10-12

* * * * *

THE KINGDOMS IN DANIEL: You must keep in mind that six different kingdoms are identified in the Book of Daniel. They are -

1. <u>Babylon</u> (606-539 BC) - the head of gold (36-38)	<u>chapter 2</u>	<u>chapter 7</u>
2. <u>Media-Persia</u> (539-330 BC) arms and chest of silver (39)		the lion with eagle wings (4)
3. <u>Greece</u> (330-about 150 BC) thigh of brass (39)		bear with three ribs (5)
4. <u>Rome</u> (150 BC to about 500 AD) legs of iron (40)		leopard with 4 heads (6)
5. <u>Anti-Christ</u> 10 toes iron and clay (41-43)		dreadful beast (7)
6. <u>Christ</u> Stone that smites (44-45)		little horn (8)
		Ancient of Days (9-14)

Keep in mind that the Roman Empire has never been replaced by another world empire, so that it actually continues until the rise of Anti-Christ in the latter days. This last world dictator will establish a United States of Europe (the 10 toes) after the pattern of the old Roman Empire. Note that in ch. 2 we have man's view of the nations (valuable metals), while in ch. 7 we have God's view (dangerous beasts).

TOPIC: "Captivity and Compromise" - Daniel 1

In the history of Daniel (chapters 1-6) we find three different times of difficulty: the testing of the four Hebrews when they arrived at Babylon (ch. 1); the fiery furnace (ch. 3); and the lions' den (ch. 6). In each of these experiences, Daniel and his friends won the victory; but the very first victory - described here in ch. 1 - was the foundation for the other victories. Because these Jewish boys were faithful to God while they were yet teenagers, God was faithful to them in the years that followed.

I. A DIFFICULT TRIAL - 1-7

Imagine four Hebrew boys, teenagers, being snatched from their lovely homes in Jerusalem and being moved to far-away Babylon. Since all of them were princes, belonging to the royal family, they were probably not accustomed to this kind of treatment. It is too bad when the youth of the land must suffer because of the sins of the parents. The Jews had refused to repent and obey the Lord, so (as Jeremiah had warned) the Babylonian army came in 606-586 BC, and had conquered the land. It was their custom to take the best of the youths to Babylon for training in the king's court. In vs. 3 we see what fine specimens these four lads were: they were physically strong and handsome, socially experienced and well-liked by others, mentally keen and well-educated, and spiritually devoted to the Lord. Their lives were balanced, as was Christ's in Lk. 2:52 - perfect examples of teenagers!

But a difficult trial lay ahead of them: the king wanted to force them to conform to the ways of Babylon. He was not interested in putting good Jews to work; he wanted these Jews to be Babylonians! Christians today face the same trial: Satan wants us to become "conformed to this world" (Rom. 12:1-2). Sad to say, many Christians give in to the world and lose their power, their joy, and their testimony. Note the changes that were made:

1. A new home (1-2) - No longer were they surrounded by the religious reminders in Jerusalem, and no longer would they have the influence of their godly parents and teachers. When some Christians get away from home, they rejoice at the opportunity to "let down the bars and live it up"; but not so with Daniel and his friends.

2. New knowledge (3-4) - The old Jewish wisdom had to go; from now on it would be the wisdom of the world, the wisdom of Babylon. They had to learn the wisdom and the language of their captors. The king hoped that this "brainwashing" would make better servants out of them. It is too bad when young people abandon the Word of God for the wisdom of men.

3. New diets (5) - For the next three years the four youths would eat the king's diet which, of course, was contrary to the dietary laws of the Jews. No doubt the food was also offered to the idols of the land as well, and for the Hebrew youths to eat it would be to acknowledge the heathen gods.

4. New names (6-7) - The world does not like to recognize the Name of God, yet each of the four boys had God's Name in his name! Daniel ("God is my judge") was changed to Belteshazzar ("Bel protect his life"). Bel was the name of a Babylonian god. Hananiah ("Jehovah is gracious") became Shadrach ("the command of the moon god"); Mishael ("Who is like God?") became Meshach ("who is like Aku" one of the heathen gods); and Azariah ("Jehovah is my helper") became Abed-nego ("the servant of Nego" another heathen god). The Babylonians hoped that these new names would help the youths forget their God and gradually become more like the heathen people with whom they were living and studying.

II. A DARING TEST - 8-16

The Babylonians could change Daniel's home, text-books, menu, and name, but they could not change his heart. He and his friends purposed in their hearts that

they would obey God's Word; they refused to become conformed to the world. Of course, they could have made excuses and "gone along with" the crowd, just as some Christians do today. They might have said, "Everybody's doing it!" or "We had better obey the king!" or "We'll obey on the outside but keep our faith privately." But they didn't! They dared to believe God's Word and trust God for victory. They had surrendered their bodies and minds to the Lord, as Rom. 12:1-2 instructs; and they were willing to let God do the rest.

Daniel asked for a 10-day test, which was not very long considering they had three years of training ahead of them; and the head servant agreed with their plan. "When a man's ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him (Prov. 16:7). See also Mt. 6:33 and Prov. 22:1. The servant was afraid to change the king's orders, lest anything happen to the youths and to himself; so Daniel's proposed test was a good solution to the problem. Of course, God honored their faith! The boys were fed vegetables (pulse) and water for ten days, thus avoiding the bloody meat and defiled food of the Babylonians. At the end of the test, the four lads were healthier and handsomer than the other students who ate from the king's table.

It takes faith and obedience ("trust and obey") to overcome the temptations and pressures of the world. I Cor. 10:13 had not yet been written, but Daniel and his three friends knew its truth by experience. Note how polite and kind Daniel was to the Babylonian servant; he did not "parade" his religion or embarrass the man. This is a good example for us to follow: we may have convictions without becoming cranks!

III. DIVINE TRIUMPH - 17-21

A test for ten days is one thing, but what about the three-year course at the University of Babylon? The answer is in vs. 17: "God gave them ..." all that they needed! He enabled them to learn their lessons better than the other students, and He added to this knowledge His own spiritual wisdom. Of course, the "magicians and astrologers" in vs. 20 were the men of the kingdom who studied the stars and sought to determine matters for the king. As we shall see, they also tried to interpret dreams. Certainly Daniel and his friends did not believe the foolish religion and practices of the Babylonians, but they studied it just the same, just as a Christian student must do when he attends a university today and is told to know "facts" that he knows are contrary to God's Word. Daniel understood that God would use him as a witness in that godless place - and He did for the next seventy-five years!

The king himself had to admit that the four Hebrew teenagers were ten times smarter than his best advisors. Of course, this kind of reputation made the astrologers envious, and it is no wonder they tried to do away with the Jews in later years. If Daniel had been worried about pleasing people and being "popular," he would have yielded to the pressures and failed the Lord. But because he lived to please the Lord, he ignored the faces and threats of men and did the thing God wanted him to do. We need Christians today who will purpose in their hearts to put Christ first in everything - in the dining room, in the class room, and even in the throne room!

"And Daniel continued ..." What a testimony! Satan must have said to Daniel, "You had better follow the crowd if you want to stay around here." But Daniel obeyed the Lord - and he "stayed around" longer than anyone else. He ministered under four kings and probably lived to see the Jews return to their land at the end of the captivity. "He that doeth the will of God abideth forever" (I Jn. 2:17). In fact, we today are being blessed and helped because of Daniel's faithfulness. Had he failed God when he faced tests in his youth, Daniel would never have enjoyed the victories and blessings of the later years. He was called "beloved" (10:11), an honor given in the Bible only to one other - Jesus Christ. Because he lived in the will of God, Daniel enjoyed the love of God (I Jn. 2:15-17). His consecration gave him courage; his faith made him faithful. "Dare to be a Daniel - dare to stand alone - dare to have a purpose firm - dare to make it known!"

TOPIC: "The Great Image" - Daniel 2

Study this chapter carefully, for it is the outline of world history. A grasp of this chapter, and chapter 7, will assist you in your study of Revelation and other portions of Bible prophecy. Note the chart in the Introductory Notes.

I. DANIEL'S PERIL - 1-13

When Nebuchadnezzar first came to Jerusalem to conquer, he was not yet king; he was acting for his father, Nabopolassar, back in Babylon. This accounts for the seeming contradiction between the three years of training for Daniel in 1:5 and "the second year" of the king's reign in 2:1. Once again archaeology has proved the Bible true. The king was concerned about his future (see vs. 29) and whether or not his kingdom would last. God gave him a dream describing the future, but of course he could not understand it. In fact, he forgot it! The Christian has the Holy Spirit to teach him and remind him (Jn. 14:26). The "fake" magicians and wise men were really on the spot; for the king wanted not only an interpretation of the dream, but also a description of it! Any man could "invent" an interpretation, but it was impossible for them to describe a dream they had never seen. What a failure is the wisdom of this world! They tried to "stall for time" (vs. 8) hoping the king would "change his mind" (vs. 9); but instead, the king ordered all the wise men to be slain - and that included Daniel and his three friends! Satan is a murderer (Jn. 8:44); he would certainly have been happy to see Daniel killed.

II. DANIEL'S PRAYER AND PRAISE - 14-23

We must admire the courage of Daniel, for he faced the chief executioner boldly, and even went right in to see the king! "The righteous are bold as a lion" (Prov. 28:1). God overruled in these conversations (Prov. 21:1) and the king gave Daniel time, even though he had refused to give the other wise men time. Daniel and his three friends knew what to do; they spent the next hours in fervent prayer to God. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God" (James 1:5). "Ask and it shall be given you" (Mt. 7:7). And God revealed the dream and its meaning to Daniel in the hours of the night! Read Prov. 3:32 and Ps. 25:14 to see why Daniel was given this privilege. Instead of rushing to the king, or boasting of his new wisdom, Daniel paused to praise the Lord! And you will note in vss. 25-30 that Daniel gave all the glory to God; he took none of it for himself. There is no limit to what God will do for the believer who will let God have all the glory.

III. DANIEL'S PROPHECY - 24-25

The prophet went to the chief executioner and told him not to slay the other wise men. They deserved death, of course, and it would have exalted Daniel's position had they been removed; but Daniel was not a man with hatred for his enemies. How many lost people have been saved from physical harm by the presence and intercession of a believer, only eternity will reveal. Then Daniel told the king the contents of his forgotten dream. The king had been worried about the future of his kingdom (vs. 29), so God gave him a vision of the kingdoms to come. He saw a huge statue of a man: the head was of gold, the breast and arms of silver, the belly and thigh of copper or bronze (but not brass, which was not known at that time), and the legs of iron, and the feet of iron and clay. He also saw a stone come down upon the feet and crush the entire image into powder. Then the stone grew and filled the whole earth like a great mountain.

Vs. 28 tells us that the full meaning is for the "latter days." Each metal represented a different kingdom: Babylon was the head of gold (38); it would be followed by the Medo-Persian kingdom, the breast and arms of silver; then would come Greece, the belly and thigh of bronze; Rome would follow, as the two legs of iron

(and the Roman Empire did divide into Eastern and Western parts). The feet of iron and clay (a brittle mixture) represented the kingdoms at the end times, a continuation of the Roman Empire and divided into ten kingdoms (the ten toes). Of course, the final "human kingdom" on earth will be that of the Anti-Christ during the last part of the tribulation. How would it all end? Christ, The Stone (Mt. 21:44), would suddenly appear and smite the nations of the world, setting up His own worldwide kingdom of power and glory.

This image, then, is a picture of world history. You can see that the materials in it decrease in weight (from gold to clay) so that the statue is top-heavy and easily pushed over. Men think that human civilization is so strong and enduring, when it is really resting on brittle feet of clay! Note, too, that the value decreases: from gold to silver to bronze to iron to clay. Is man getting "better and better" as time goes on? No! Human civilization is actually getting cheaper! There is also a decrease in beauty and glory (gold is certainly more beautiful than iron mixed with clay); and there is a decrease in strength (from gold to clay) as we approach the end of human history. Each of the successive kingdoms had its own strengths, of course, and Rome exercised a tremendous military power; but civilization will become weaker and weaker. This explains why the Anti-Christ will be able to organize a worldwide dictatorship: men and nations will be so weak they will demand a dictator just to be able to survive.

Each of these kingdoms had a different form of government. Babylon was an absolute monarch, a dictatorship (see 5:19). The Medo-Persian empire had a king, but he worked through princes and established laws (see 6:1-3 - and remember the "law of the Medes and the Persians" in Esther 2:19). Greece operated through a king and an army; and Rome was supposed to be a republic, but it was actually a rule of the military through laws. When you come to the iron and clay, you have our present governments: the iron represents law and justice, the clay represents mankind; and together they make up democracy. What is the strength of democracy? Law. What is its weakness? Human nature. We are seeing today that lawlessness comes when human nature refuses to be bound by God's order and laws.

So, this entire picture is not a very optimistic one! Nebuchadnezzar saw that his own kingdom would fall one day and be replaced by the Medes and Persians. This happened in 538 BC (Dan. 5:30-31). The Medes and Persians would be conquered by the Greeks about 330 BC; and Greece would give way to Rome. The Roman Empire outwardly would disappear; but its laws, philosophies, and institutions would continue until this very day, taking us down to the "feet of clay." The only hope for this world is the return of Christ. When He comes to the earth, it will be to conquer the nations (Rev. 19:11ff) and to establish His own glorious kingdom.

IV. DANIEL'S PROMOTION - 46-49

The king kept his promise (vs. 6) and gave honors and gifts to Daniel, who, of course, did not want to receive them since he was anxious that God alone receive the glory. Daniel was honored and promoted because he was faithful to God, and not because he compromised his convictions. He sat in the gate, which was the place of authority. Lot also sat in the gate (Gen. 19:1), but this was because he had compromised and moved out of God's will - and he lost everything! Note that Daniel did not keep the honors for himself, but asked that his three friends also share the promotion (49). The more we see of this man, the more we love him for his unselfishness and humility!

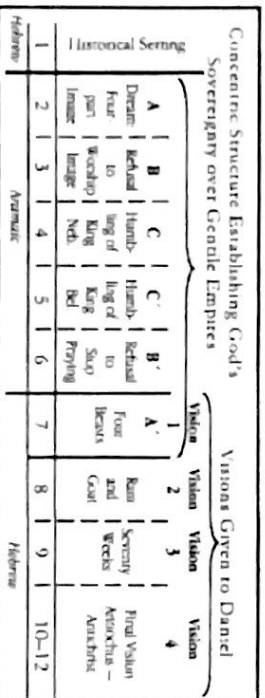
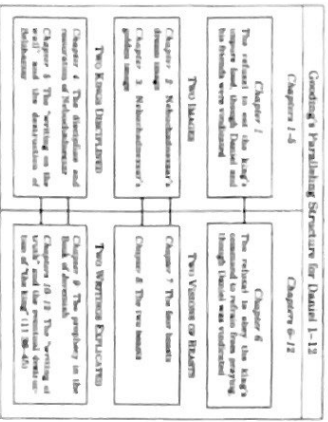
We are going to meet these same kingdoms again in Chapter 7. There they will be pictured as wild beasts, because that is what God sees when he looks at human history. God is not impressed with gold, silver, bronze, etc. He sees the human heart and he knows that the kingdoms of the world are full of violence and sin. From man's point of view, earthly kingdoms are like metal - durable and strong; but from God's point of view they are ferocious beasts that must be slain! Daniel had perfect confidence and peace because he knew God's plan for the future. The Christian today who knows God's Word and believes it will also have peace, no matter what the rulers and the nations may do.

The Book of Daniel

The Historic Night (Daniel's Interpretation) Daniel and His Personal Friends

The Prophetic Light (Daniel's Visions) Daniel and His People's Future

Chapter	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10-12				
Outline	Historical Setting The King's Diet	A Great Image The King's Dream	The Fiery Furnace The King's Decree	The Great Tree The King's Discipline	Writing on the Wall The King's Doom	Lions' Den The King's Delight	Vision 1 Four Great Beasts	Vision 2 Ram and He Goat	Vision 3 Seventy Sevens	Vision 4 The Time of the End				
Parallels		A Four-part image	B Refusal to worship	C Humbling of King	C Humbling of King	B Refusal to stop praying	A Four Beasts							
Names of God	Adonai Elohim	God of Heaven God of Gods Lord of Kings	Most High God	The High God The Most High King of Heaven	Lord of Heaven	The Living God	Ancient of Days Son of Man	The Prince of Princes	Jehovah	Him that Liveth Forever				
Date (BC)	606 18	603 21	601 23	571 53	539 85	539-537 85-87	553 70	551 72	538 86	536 88				
Kingdom	NEBUCHADREZZAR (605-d 562BC), BELSHAZZAR (553-d 539BC) 606BC: Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem – First Invasion 597BC: Nebuchadnezzar besieges Jerusalem – Second Invasion 586BC: Nebuchadnezzar besieges Jerusalem – Third Invasion 70 years' captivity from 606BC to 536BC (later & temple foundation, Ez. 3) 70 years' desolations from 586BC to 516BC (temple completed, Ez. 6:15)						MEDO-PERSIA First year of Cyrus and Darius (subordinate)		BABYLON First year of Belshazzar		BABYLON Third year of Belshazzar		MEDO-PERSIA Ch. 9 First year of Darius Ch. 10 Third year of Cyrus	



J Paul Tanner (2003) – The Literary Structure of Daniel



Daniel 2



Daniel 7



Daniel 8