

From the Garden to Glory

Daniel

Author: Daniel

Timeline: 605 - 536 B.C. (2 Kings 24-25)

Location: Babylon

Category: Prophetical, Major Prophet

Theme: The Sovereignty of God

Overview:

The book of Daniel emphasizes the sovereign will of God over the affairs of people throughout the ages. God establishes and deposes kings and empires to serve His purposes. Nebuchadnezzar came to understand this truth (4:35).

At about the age of sixteen, Daniel was taken captive to Babylon during the first invasion by Nebuchadnezzar. Chapters one and six reveal Daniel's godly integrity. God used Daniel in the government of Babylon.

Daniel has been called the prophet of dreams because God revealed to him future events in dreams and visions. Chapters two through five record Daniel's interpretations of the dreams and visions of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar. In chapters seven through twelve, Daniel received his own visions from God and their meanings. God showed Daniel the course of the Gentile history until the establishing of the promised kingdom on earth.

Introduction:

As we begin our study of the book of Daniel, consider the following questions and write your responses:

- 1.** David Jeremiah says, "Daniel's book has a theme of such simplicity that the most brilliant minds in the world have been unable to grasp it. It is just this: God is in charge." Why do you believe this is such a difficult concept for those who have "brilliant minds"? How does it impact your *daily life* knowing that you belong to a God who is "in charge"?
- 2.** The book of Daniel revolves around various dreams and God-given visions. Has the Lord ever revealed Himself, His thoughts or His will to you in a dream or a vision? If so, what was the dream or vision and how did it influence your life?
- 3.** Consider these words from Henrietta Mears, "Daniel was in the palace at Babylon the same time Ezekiel was toiling in a slave gang. If Daniel's was the easier life in many of its material aspects, it may also be considered far the more perilous." Why is this true? How does this relate to your life in the United States in 2005?

Daniel the Captive

Read Daniel 1 and 2

- 1.** Look at 1:8. Describe a time when you "purposed in your heart" not to defile yourself. What was the outcome? How did this situation draw you closer to the Lord?
- 2.** Look at 1:9. What did the Lord do for Daniel? When has the Lord done this in your life?

3. Look at 2:20-23. Commenting on these verses, John MacArthur says:

This praise to God sums up the theme of the whole book, namely that God is the One who controls all things and grants all wisdom and might.

What is one area of your life where you need God's control today? In what area do you need His wisdom and might? Take some time today and sit before Him and tell Him all about these needs.

Nebuchadnezzar, the Proud King

Read Daniel 3 and 4

1. Look at 3:13-18. Have you ever been asked to "serve other gods"? If yes, describe the situation. What was your response? What was the outcome?
2. Look at 3:19-27, concentrating on verses 25 and 27. Many commentators believe that the fourth person was a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Christ. Think of a time when you were in a very difficult situation (a "fiery" trial). How did the Lord's involvement in your life at this time keep the "fire" from having power over you?
3. Look at 4:34-35 and note everything you learn about the Most High from these verses. What is most encouraging to you today? Why?

Belshazzar's Reign

Read Daniel 5

1. Describe what happened in verses 1-4. The people treated the things of the Lord with contempt. What is one example of how the things of the Lord are held in contempt in our society?

2. Look at verses 18-21. What do you learn about King Nebuchadnezzar from verse 20? What have been the negative consequences of pride in your own life? What do you do to avoid succumbing to pride? Be specific.
3. Look at verses 25-29. According to Henrietta Mears, "The prophet (Daniel) fearlessly condemned the foolish and sensual young king." King Belshazzar was not only foolish, he was also very powerful. What do you think gave Daniel the courage to confront him? What has given you the courage to confront someone who is in a position of authority?

Darius's Reign

Read Daniel 6

1. Look at verse 3. Darius was reorganizing the newly conquered kingdom and was looking for responsible leaders. From what you have learned of Daniel thus far, what leadership qualities do you think he possessed which would have caused him to be distinguished above the governors and satraps?
2. Look at verse 10. What was Daniel's custom every day? How long had this been his custom? Describe the pattern of your prayer life. How can you have a routine in your prayer life without being legalistic?
3. Verses 10-23 describe the familiar story of Daniel in the lions' den. As you read this section of Scripture today, ask the Lord to allow you to see it afresh, as though you were reading it for the first time. Make a note of everything He teaches you.

God's Glory

Read Daniel 10

1. Look at verses 4-9. Describe Daniel's vision and the impact it had on him. Read Revelation 1:13-16. How is the Son of Man described in these verses? What is John's reaction in Revelation 1:17? Based on comparing these verses from Daniel with those in Revelation, who do you think Daniel saw in his vision?
2. Look at verses 10-14. What do you learn about spiritual warfare from these verses? Read 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 and Ephesians 6:10-12. How do these sections of Scripture add to your understanding?
3. Look carefully at verse 12. Notice the two things that Daniel did. He set his heart to understand, and he humbled himself before God. How can you do each of these on a daily basis? Be specific.

The Conflict of Kings

Read Daniel 11

1. Look at verses 2-4. The fourth king would stir the others up by his strength and his riches. How are strength and riches used to motivate others to get involved in a conflict in our world today?
2. Look at verse 35. This verse refers to believers who will fall victim to persecution. How has persecution caused you to become refined and purified?
3. Verses 36-45 describe a king who will do according to his own will. Most commentators believe that this section of Daniel describes the Antichrist. Make a note of everything you learn about him from these verses.

Daniel's Last Message

Read Daniel 12

1. Look at verses 1-3. In verse 1 Daniel was told that Michael the archangel will stand watch over "the sons of your people". It appears that this section of Scripture describes Israel during the Great Tribulation. What do you learn about this time from these verses?
2. Look at verses 4 and 9. What was Daniel told to do? Has the Lord ever revealed something to you, but told you to "go your way" until it was His perfect time to bring about its fulfillment? What was that waiting time like for you?
3. Look at verse 10. What does this verse say will happen? How does Zechariah 13:8-9 add to your understanding?

Summary

As you conclude your study of the book of Daniel consider the following questions and write your answers:

1. What is the most important lesson you have learned from your study of this book? How can you apply this lesson in your life this week?
2. What "new insights" did you learn about the Lord and yourself from your study?
3. List one way in which your study caused you to do each of the following:

Praise and worship the Lord:

Confess an area of sin to the Lord:

Thank the Lord:

Ask for something from the Lord: