

Daniel: Jesus the Ancient of Days

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Daniel was a contemporary of Ezekiel and close to the same age, the difference was that according to Daniel 1:3-4 Nebuchadnezzar brought Daniel and his three friends upon his initial conquest of Jerusalem where as Ezekiel came eight years latter. This means that Daniel was of noble lineage and would become apart of the kings reidentification process where they would be given a new name, special food and three years of specialized education.

This book breaks down into three sections:

- A. **Chapter 1**: The first chapter is where we are introduced to the author and more specifically his character, his preparation and testing to be a prophet. In a book that is so heavy laden with prophetic text it is important to understand that Daniel didn't view God's prophetic view of the future apart from its present transforming work. The all knowing God's interest in showing us the future isn't to satisfy our curiosity it is rather to instruct us in the present. *God gives us books like Daniel so that we would know how to live today with tomorrow in mind!* It is for this reason that this book doesn't start with the prophetic section first and fact it is the testing and transformation of Daniel and his three friends that enable the reader to understand the meaning of the futuristic texts. Consider Jesus words in the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24:15 where Jesus implies that in His warning where He says, "Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by

- Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (**whoever reads, let him understand**)". That to see these events is one thing to flee the mountains will require the reader to go further and act not just know about it.*
- B. **Chapters 2-7**: Along with two other stories of testing and character development (the three in the fiery furnace and Daniel in the lions den) centers around Daniels dreams and interpretations with regard to the gentile ruling world empires. God doe not reveal the specific detail of an individual's future instead chooses to show His program and plan through the end of the ages of those nations that He will rise up and set down. As you read through Daniels dream and interpretation you will see that what Daniel dreamed was in symbolic language and what God gave Daniel as the interpretation was not, which suggests that God wanted Daniel to not try to figure this out but rather seek the giver of the dreams for the answer.
- C. **Chapters 8-12**: These final chapters deal with God's final plan for His beloved children Israel. It traces Israel's history from the Greeks Alexander the Great to the "little horn" of Antiochus Epiphanes which leads top Daniels confession t which God responds by revealing the coming of God's Messiah and the restoration of the nation.

I. Chapter 1 The authors background

This first section was written in Daniel's native language Hebrew and as such was meant for the nation. According to 1:3-4 Daniel was deported along with "*Some of the children of Israel and some of the king's descendants and some of the nobles, young men in whom there was no blemish, but good-looking, gifted in all wisdom, possessing knowledge and quick to understand, who had ability to serve in the king's*

palace, and whom they might teach the language and literature of the Chaldeans.”

Though it would be the king who tested him to see if he was worthy to serve in his court it was in reality the King of Kings who tested him to see if he would be fit to serve in His court. Dear ones never forget that such testing is necessary. The world may say that “Character does not matter” but that is not so. They may say that what a person does in private between consenting adults is no matter but it matters to God. Nebuchadnezzar's strategy was to strip away these 15 to 16 years identity, to take away their sufficiency. He did this by three things:

1. **Gave him a new name**: Changed his name from “*God is my judge*” to that of a Babylonian deity “*Bel Protect My Life*”. His Hebrew name acknowledged Daniel's need for an ever present eye upon his own character as he would have to give account to God for how he conducted his life. Ah but his new worldly name put no such accountability upon him and only saw the god of this world as subservient to Daniel.
2. **Changed his diet**: Daniel had always only eaten that which was kosher and now he was being required to eat from the portion of the worldly king's table. He ate that which was holy and good and now before him were what was paraded before him and the world as being the best and more than that necessary to feast upon if one is to develop healthily. Paul spoke of such a thing in 1 Cor. 6:12 where he said “*All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.*” Dear one, better is a day in the King of Kings' courts than 1,000 years elsewhere. Better for me to live off the so-called scraps from my Master than what the prince of the world

calls delicacies. And so it has been from the beginning that the prince of this world has always sought to change man kind's diet, telling us over and over how inadequate God's provisions are for us and how such "slim pickens" is do to a restrictive God that is afraid that we will be equal to Him.

3. **Changed what he learned**: The three year education program was to reprogram Daniel from the things he had learned from God's word to the so called "Higher Education". Lenin once said *"Give me four years to teach the children and the seed I have sown will never be uprooted."* This has long been the goal of the prince of this world to reeducate, to indoctrinate and change the way the world views truth. And soon enough what Isaiah spoke of in 5:20 will be the norm as they will *"call evil good, and good evil"*

But Daniel and his three friends what have no of that and were willing to put to test God's provisions and were better prepared to face the world with God that facing the world without God with the provision that the world offers. We are told in 1:20-21 that *"in all matters of wisdom and understanding about which the king examined them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers who were in all his realm. Thus Daniel continued until the first year of King Cyrus."* Such testing was not just once my friend but remained for the entire 70 years in captivity. Saints do you know that right now we dwell in the land of captivity and are being tested by the temptations of the delicacies of this world? Oh I pray that we may past the test and press on to the upward call in Christ!

II. Chapters 2-7 The future of foreigners

We now move to the 2nd part of the book which deals with Daniels interpretation of dreams and his further testing of character. This section was written in Aramaic the native language of the Babylonians and was meant for the gentile nations to read. In the 2nd chapter God raises up Daniel as he is the only that can give the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream as all of his so called wise men and sorcerers want the dream first before they will give the interpretation and he knows that they will just lie to him. And in 2:10-13 we are told that they answered the king, "There is not a man on earth who can tell the king's matter; therefore no king, lord, or ruler has ever asked such things of any magician, astrologer, or Chaldean. It is a difficult thing that the king requests, and there is no other who can tell it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh." "So the king was angry and very furious, and gave a command to destroy all the wise men of Babylon." And when "*they began killing the wise men; and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill them.*" So Daniel and his three friends received time to seek the Lord and God blessed them and gave Daniel the dream with the answer. It is interesting that even today that critics of the word of God use Daniel's understanding of the dream as it relates to the gentile world ruling powers as a reason to doubt Daniel's authorship saying that he could not be the author as it is 100% correct in knowing the order of world powers. First Daniel saw the Babylonian empire ruling then he saw the Med's and Persians, then the Greeks even to the splintering of the Grecian empire to four generals. Then he saw Rome's world dominance and finally just before the return of the Messiah he sees a 10 nation confederacy. And in 2:44-45 Daniel declares that "*in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and*

consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold--the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure." So impressed by this interpretation is Nebuchadnezzar that he elevates Daniel to his 2nd in command. And says in 2:47, *"Truly your God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret."*

The third chapter opens to Nebuchadnezzar letting this image of he being a head of gold *"go to his head"* by erecting an image in gold image around 90 feet high and a command is ordered that at the play of music all are to bow down and worship the image. To this decree the three friends of Daniel refuse and furnace is stocked so hot that it killed the men that were to throw the three in. Listen to what they say in 3:16-18 *"O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up."* And when the king peered into the furnace he saw according to 3:25 *"four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."* Nebuchadnezzar made a decree that *"that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God!"*

In the 4th chapter Nebuchadnezzar speaks of another dream that he had in which is taken down and lives like a beast for his pride until he was humbled and speaks of God's greatness not his own in 4:34-35 saying, *"I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven,*

and my understanding 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 is from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; he does according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand or say to Him, "What have You done?" In the 5th chapter we skip many years to when Nebuchadnezzar grandson is now reigning asking and fails to see the “*Hand witting on the wall*”. The 6th chapter brings us into the reign of the Med’s and the Persians starting with Darius and his leaders who can find nothing wrong with Daniel accept “*unless we find it against him concerning the law of his God.*” A law is fashioned which makes it illegal to worship any god accept Darius for 30 days punishable by death by lion! Daniel does not seek to alter his worship and is caught and thrown in. So distraught was the king that he could not be comforted and went to see if Daniel was still alive by asking in 6:20 “*has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?*” To which Daniel replies in 6:22 “*My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you.*” Darius like Nebuchadnezzar before writes a decree in 26-27 “*I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom men must tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. For He is the living God, and steadfast forever; His kingdom is the one which shall not be destroyed, and His dominion shall endure to the end. He delivers and rescues, and He works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, Who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.*”

The 7th chapter takes us back to the time when the Babylonians reigned as Daniel sees four beasts which correspond with Nebuchadnezzar’s dream in chapter 2. The Head

of Gold = verse 4 a lion with eagles wings. And this is the Babylonian kingdom. The shoulders of silver = verse 5 the bear raised up on one side with three ribs in its mouth. This speaks of the Meds and the Persian kingdom. The body or trunk of bronze speak of the Grecian reign which = verse 6 and the leopard, which had four heads. The last one was the two legs of Iron of the Roman empire where the feet was mingled with clay. There was the Roman empire and there will yet be a revised Roman empire made up of 10 nations in Europe = this is what he sees in verse 8 and during this time Daniel sees the anti christ “*speaking pompous words*”. It is during this scene that Daniel writes in 7:9 that he “watched till thrones were put in place, and the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire”. And then in 7:11-14 Daniel says, “*I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame. As for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time. I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then 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 the one which shall not be destroyed.*”