

## **Daniel: Jesus the Ancient of Days**

- I. Chapter 1 The authors background**
- II. Chapters 2-7 The future of foreigners**
- III. Chapters 8-12 Hope for the Hebrews**

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.

### **III. Chapters 8-12 Hope for the Hebrews**

Here the focus of Daniel's vision is the prophetic plan for Israel which starts with a vision in chapter 8 of the Ram and the Goat which depicts Israel's existence under the Ram of the Medo-Persian Empire (verse 20) and then Goat of the Grecian Empire (verse 21). So specific is the vision God gave Daniel that he sees that Greece will have a according to verse 21b a "*large horn that is between its eyes is the first king*" which would have been

Alexander the Great. He further saw that after Alexander the Great's death that in verse 22 *“four kingdoms shall arise out of that nation, but not with its power”*. And so it was as the Greeks divided the nation between Alexander the Great four generals:

- Ptolemy in the South
- Lysimachus in the North
- Casander in the West
- Seleucus in the East

The little horn of 8:9 is the same one Daniel saw in 7:8 also known as the “Beast” or antichrist in Revelation. In the last days he will do something that Antiochus Epiphanes (**one of the Syrian kings established by Seleucus**) and that is set himself as the object of worship in the temple. Daniel in verse 11 describes part of what the antichrist will do by saying *“He even exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily sacrifices were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down.”* Much of the rest of chapter 8 deals with what Gabriel told Daniel in 8:17 *“refers to the time of the end.”* We get further insight into whom this person is referring to in 8:10 as we are told that he *“grew up to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and some of the stars to the ground, and trampled them”* an obvious reference to Satan, which would make this world leader demonically possessed. So while the antichrist demands worship those that are worshipping him will be in effect worshipping Satan (Rev. 13:4). The key thing that the antichrist will do is in verse 11 *“by him the daily sacrifices were taken away”*, which is further mentioned by Daniel in 9:27 where he says that, *“Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who*

*makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate.”* (Also mentioned in 11:31) Jesus also mentions it when He answered the disciples question with regards to the destruction of the temple in Matthew 24:15 saying, *“Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand)”*

Gabriel in Daniel 8:23-26 gives Daniel the understanding of the vision saying: *“And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors have reached their fullness, a king shall arise, having fierce features, who understand sinister schemes. His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power; he shall destroy fearfully, and shall prosper and thrive; he shall destroy the mighty, and also the holy people. Through his cunning he shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule; and he shall exalt himself in his heart. He shall destroy many in their prosperity. He shall even rise against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without human means. And the vision of the evenings and mornings which was told is true; therefore seal up the vision, for it refers to many days in the future.”* Such a vision we are told in verse 27 causes Daniel to become, *“faint and was sick for days; afterward I arose and went about the king's business. I was astonished by the vision, but no one understood it.”*

In the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter Daniel by this time quite old as he realizes the prophecies of Jeremiah with regards to their captivity were nearing the 70 years of completion makes prayer and confession on behalf of the nation. After this prayer and confession (verses 1-19) God gives Daniel the revelation of the 70 weeks including the Messiah’s atoning sacrifice. The word “week” in verse 24 is actually “seven” and in context refers to a 7 year period. Daniel had been thinking of God’s promise that the captivity would last 70

years but Gabriel brought the message that not just 70 years were determined upon God's people but rather 490 years. The key section of this chapter centers on Gabriel's words to Daniel in verses 24-27. Here is what we see:

- Based Vs. 24 and the words "*To finish the transgression, to make an end of sins*" much of this prophecy awaits the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Christ. As we have not yet made "*reconciliation for iniquity*" which will "*bring in everlasting righteousness*".
- Based upon Vs. 25 and the words "*That from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince*" that this 490 year period of time begins with the commandment to rebuild Jerusalem which Cyrus decreed in 536 B.C. recorded by Ezra. This division of 490 years is divided into "*seven weeks and sixty-two weeks*" and then in verse we are told of yet another "week" or seven. So the 490 years is divided into 49 years (seven sevens or weeks) 434 years or (sixty-two sevens or weeks) and then a seven year period of time. It seems as though the 49 year period of time was completed during the rebuilding of the city described in the words "*The street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times*" which happened in the books of Nehemiah and Malachi.
- After which based upon verse 26 there would be another 434 years before the Messiah would come as Prince of Israel. And during these 434 years many of Daniel's other prophecies were fulfilled such as the fall of Persia the rise and fall of Greece. Then the rise of the Roman Empire. And in Israel the conflicts with Egypt and Syria and the uprising of Judas Maccabee.

- Taking in the fact that the combining 49 year period of time with the 434 year period of time being 483 years and applying the fact that the Hebrew prophetic calendar was 360 days not 365  $\frac{1}{4}$ . Then factoring in that Jesus birth was in \$ B.C. would make the time when the *“Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself”* A.D. 30 the year when Jesus was between 33 and 34 years old which was the year of His crucifixion. Daniel was given these words over 500 years before they happened can only be accounted for by factor in divine inspiration fro God who is out side of time space and matter.
- “The people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary” this happened in 70 A.D. at the hands of the Roman General Titus which would be an indication that the coming evil prince of this world would be coming out of the revised Roman empire. The *“flood”* mentioned here most likely is a reference to the great dispersion enforced by the Romans A.D. 135. The *“end of the war desolations are determined”* is another remarkable phrase as Jesus affirmed this in Matt. 24:6 speaking of the fact that in the almost 2000 years there would be *“wars and rumors of wars”*. Since the time that the world killed the Prince of Peace the world has never known a time of peace.
- In verse 27 we are told *“he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week”* the “he” being a reference to the antichrist will kick of the “70<sup>th</sup>” week where the antichrist will broker a peace treaty with Israel that will include the building of the temple and the reestablishment of the sacrifices on the Holy Mount. All will seem well in the world until we are told that *“in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering”*. At 3  $\frac{1}{2}$  year mark of the final

seven year period of human history as we now know it satan will demand worship in the rebuilt temple. And according to Matt. 24:15-21, Daniel 8:9-12 and 2 Thess. 2:3-4 he will set up his image as the sole object of worship and tie it to all commerce and trade.

The 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> chapters give further amazing details of Israel's future history. In the

10<sup>th</sup> chapter Daniel has a vision in verses 5-6 describing *“a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist was girded with gold of Uphaz! His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in color, and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude.”* Revelation 1:13 tells us who Daniel saw as He is *“like the Son of Man”* thus he saw a pre-incarnate Jesus who sent an answer to Daniel's persistent prayer (10:12). This chapter also provides with great insight into the invisible realm that Paul described in Ephesians 2:2 as “prince of the power of the air”.

The 11<sup>th</sup> chapter fills in more details of 100's of years from the time of Daniel's captivity the Roman conquests.

- 11:2 “Three Kings in Persia” these were the three kings and their reigns that came after Cyrus which were: Cambyses also known as Ahasuerus, Smerdis also known as Artaxerxes and Darius Hystaspes.
- 11:2 the 4<sup>th</sup> king was Xerxes whose army and navy fought against the Greeks only to lose. He was most likely the king during the time of Esther.
- 11:3-4 The “mighty king” was Alexander the Great who after more than 100 years of Persian power destroyed the Persians and swiftly defeated other nations. His kingdom rose quickly but was divided into his four generals after his death.

- 11:5 “The King of the South” begins a detailed prophecies of the conflicts between two of the generals of Alexander Ptolemy in Egypt (South) and Seleucus in Syria (North), these are mentioned because of how this impacted Israel.
- 11:6-7 “The kings’ daughter” is a reference to Bernice Ptolemy the 2<sup>nd</sup> daughter who married Antiochus Theos, the 3<sup>rd</sup> king of Syria. The brother of Bernice invaded and sacked Syria in revenge for her assassination.
- 11:16 “the glorious land” is a reference to Israel which was caught between these warring nations.
- 11:17 “the daughter of women” is Cleopatra still a young under the care of a nurse.
- 11:29-32 is all referring to Antiochus Epiphanes who is a type of the final antichrist.
- 11:44-45 The kings of the East and of the North represent a future development where by Turkey Syria and Iraq along with India and China will converge in war. And the antichrist will then break his treaty with Israel.

The 12<sup>th</sup> chapter describes how God’s people will be saved and preserved through the tribulation. This time also called the “time of Jacob’s trouble” and the “great tribulation” will start at the 3 ½ year mark of the 70<sup>th</sup> week. Yet Daniel is told that in verse 1 that “*at that time your people shall be delivered, every one who is found written in the book.*” Revelation 12:6, 14 tells they will be protected in the wilderness and will receive their Messiah upon His return at the end of the tribulation period as they will look upon Him whom they pierced, Zech. 12:10. In Daniel 12:2 there is a specific

promise of “*those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt.*” Verse 3 tells us that they will live forever without diminish. Daniel learns that knowledge will race forth and will be a breakneck speed just before His coming. Based upon verse 11 there are 1260 days from the setting of the image in the temple until the beast is destroyed at Jesus 2<sup>nd</sup> coming.