

# Daniel

The Book of Daniel is a wonderfully inspiring book. It contains a marvelous record of the faith, commitment and obedience to the God of Daniel and his friends living in a wicked pagan nation. This Book also has extremely accurate predictions about kings, nations, the Messiah and other matters.

## Author

The prophet Daniel wrote the Book of Daniel. In Matthew 24:15, Jesus Christ reveals Daniel wrote the predictions recorded in Daniel 9:27, 11:31 and 12:11 about the abomination of “desolation”. The prophet Ezekiel confirms that Daniel was a real historical figure (see Ezekiel 14:14, 14:20 and 28:3). The liberal idea that all or most of the Book of Daniel was written in about 167 B.C. to encourage the Jewish resistance movement against the Syrian Seleucid King Antiochus Epiphanes is based mainly on the rationalist assumptions of liberal theologians who do not believe God gives accurate miraculous predictions of the future hundreds of years before the events occur. <sup>1</sup> Note also in Daniel 9:2 and 10:2, Daniel reveals he wrote the Book of Daniel.

## Date

The Book of Daniel covers from the time the Babylonians conquered the southern nation of Judah’s capital Jerusalem through the time of the Exile of the Jews in Babylon, the reign of the Babylonian kings Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar, the conquest of Babylon by the Persians and the reigns of some of the Persian kings.

## The nature of the Book of Daniel

The Book of Daniel is a mixture of *autobiography*, *history* and *predictive prophecy*. Daniel Chapters 1-6 contain the autobiography and historical sections. Daniel Chapters 7-12 mainly contains predictive prophecies.

## The major teachings of the Book of Daniel

The four main teachings of the Book of Daniel are:

1. The *absolute universal supreme rule of God* in relation to all nations and especially His people of *faith* even during a time when they were suffering punishments as a result of the sins of their ancestors and their fellow faithless Jews. After seeing how God had saved

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to Gleason Archer’s, “A Survey of Old Testament Introduction”, pages 423-447 for detailed attacks of the various liberal arguments about who wrote the Book of Daniel.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego from being burnt alive and how God humbled Nebuchadnezzar, the latter said in Daniel 4:34-35: *“And at the end of the time 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 of Him, ‘What have You done?’”*

2. The *progression of the Kingdom of God* despite the actions of kings, powerful nations and God’s enemies. Daniel’s God-given prophecies about future events also relate to this.
3. God’s call to His people to be faithful to Him and to obey Him even in times of great difficulty, persecution and suffering. In the Book of Daniel, we see that Shadrach, Meshach, Abed-Nego and Daniel were faithful to God and obedient to His commands while being under enormous pressure from wicked pagans (see Daniel 1:8, 3:1-30 and 6:1-28). These four young men refused to follow pagan customs and unbiblical ethical standards even if it cost them their lives.
4. God hates human pride. We see this in his dealings with kings Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar (see Daniel 4:19-37 and 5:1-31).

## **God’s supreme rule or sovereign Lordship in Daniel**

God’s supreme rule over all people and things is evidenced in:

1. Daniel 1:2 teaches that it was the Lord who gave the Jewish King Judah into the hands of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. The giving of the Jewish king into Nebuchadnezzar’s hand meant the Lord gave the Jewish army and nation he led into the Babylonian king’s rule.
2. Daniel 1:9 shows God gave Daniel favour before Nebuchadnezzar’s chief of staff.
3. God gave Nebuchadnezzar dreams to show the proud king and others that God had pre-planned the futures of his kingdom and of other conquering and conquered nations. God also gave these dreams in order to increase Daniel’s influence in Nebuchadnezzar’s court.
4. God exercises authority and power over the hottest of fires in order to save three of His faithful sons (see Daniel 3:1-25).
5. God predicts the defeat of King Belshazzar of Babylon earlier on the same day the Persians conquer Babylon.
6. God shows His absolute authority over savage lions when He saves Daniel (see Daniel 6:1-23). Note Hebrews 11:35-38 reveals God did not deliver all men and women of faith from such deaths. These latter verses says some people of faith were tortured, stoned, sawn in two and so on. A number of years ago, one American woman preacher wrongly wrote in her husband’s magazine that said those who were eaten by lions had no faith.

## **Daniel’s prophecies of the Messiah**

Two marvelous prophecies about the Messiah are given in:

- Daniel 7:13-14 – this is the “*Son of Man*” prophecy which Jesus refers to in Matthew 24:30, 26:64, Mark 13:26, 14:62, Luke 21:27 and is mentioned again in Revelation 1:13 and 14:14. Daniel 7:13-14 states: “*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.*”
- and Daniel 9:24-26: “*Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times. And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; and the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, the end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined.*”

## **Eternal life taught in Daniel**

Daniel 12:2 refers to people receiving eternal life: “*And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt.*”

## **Daniel’s prayer in Daniel 9:1-19**

Jeremiah 25:9-12 and 29:10 reveal that God told the prophet Jeremiah that after the nation of Israel was conquered by the Babylonians, and taken to Babylon, 70 years would pass before God would bring the Jews back to Judah.

In Daniel 9:1-19, Daniel prayed on the basis of Jeremiah’s 70 year prophecy. In Daniel’s prayer, he refers to *God’s righteousness* (verse 7, 14 and 16), the *sins* of the Israelites (verse 5, 8, 11, 13 and 16), the *curses* of the *Mosaic Law* coming on the Israelites (see verses 11 and 13), God’s *wrath* (see verse 16), their *turning* from their *sins* (verse 13), God’s *mercy* (verses 4, 9 and 18), and *God’s forgiveness* (see verse 9). Note in verse 18, Daniel stressed he was not praying on the basis of *self-righteousness*. Daniel also prayed that God’s prophecy through Jeremiah about the Jews returning to Judah after 70 years in Babylon would be fulfilled.

## **Angelic appearances and possibly a Christophany**

Daniel 9:20-23 records Daniel saw a vision of the angel Gabriel. Daniel did not fall down as a result. But note when he came into contact with the spiritual being recorded in Daniel 9:1-19, he did. Read verses 8-9. Some Bible teachers argue this person Daniel saw here was God the Son in His pre-incarnate form. This experience of Daniel here is very similar to that of John in Revelation 1:12-17. Note in verse 17, John fell as dead at Christ’s resurrected feet.

## Other key points about the Book of Daniel

Note the following other key points about the Book of Daniel:

1. God gave Daniel and his friends wonderful knowledge and skill in all kinds of literature and wisdom (see Daniel 1:17). God loves giving His people His wisdom. His promise in James 1:5-8 refers to Him liberally giving His people Biblical wisdom, supernatural guidance and natural wisdom.
2. God gave Daniel supernatural understanding in all visions and dreams (see Daniel 1:17). In His supreme rule, God gave Daniel these dreams and visions in His time and way. Daniel did not manufacture these things in his own mind and imagination. Nor did he try to manipulate God into giving these.
3. Daniel 2:1-45 reveals that God sometimes gives supernatural dreams to pagans. Pagans rarely if ever even briefly pray to praise or worship the true God. Also pagans do not live godly lives. But despite this, God still sometimes gives them supernatural dreams and visions to communicate with Him.
4. Daniel did not boast about his spiritual revelations and abilities. Instead he boasted about God (see Daniel 2:27-30). Daniel did not promote his own ministry. Instead he showed great humility and trust in God.
5. Compare Daniel's humility to the arrogant pride of Kings Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar. Daniel 4:1-37 refers to God dealing with Nebuchadnezzar's pride and conceit. Daniel 5:1-31 records God punishing Belshazzar for his arrogant attitude to using gold and silver vessels from God's Temple.
6. Daniel 6:4 records what an extremely high standard of integrity Daniel exhibited in his attitudes and actions among unbelievers: ***“So the governors and satraps sought to find some charge against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find no charge or fault, because he was faithful; nor was there any error or fault found in him.”*** Would God say the same about you or me?
7. Daniel deliberately disobeyed his human rulers only in cases when they commanded him to do things contrary to the teachings and commands of the Scriptures. After the governors and satraps of Darius, the King of the Persians and Medes tricked him into making it a law that no one was allowed to pray to their god for 30 days, Daniel disobeyed this command (see Daniel 6:1-10). He did this even though he risked being killed as a punishment.
8. Daniel 6:28 records that God prospered Daniel: ***“So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.”*** But note God prospered Daniel in the context of numerous hardships, difficulties and even persecution for his faith.
9. Daniel 5:24-28 records that God gave a miraculous message to the wicked Babylonian King Belshazzar. Note that part of this message was that Belshazzar had ***“been weighed in the balances and found wanting”***. This does not mean that it was possible for people in Old Testament times to be saved by having a certain number of good works in comparison to the number of their sins. Instead this phrase reveals that God sometimes decides whether to punish an unbeliever on Earth on the basis of Him weighing unbeliever's attitudes and actions in His balances.
10. Satan rules over the world (see John 12:31 and 1 John 5:19). Daniel 10:13 and 20 refers to demonic spiritual rulers of the kingdoms of Persia and Greece. But despite this, Daniel 5:21

records: “...*the Most High God rules in the kingdom of men, and appoints over it whomever He chooses.*” Many of the human rulers of the world make decisions inspired by Satan or demons. But God also oversees and intervenes in the affairs of all human political rulers.

## **Daniel prayed on the basis of God’s revealed will**

The prophet Daniel was another who knew how to trust God for miracles. He didn’t pray in presumption, or “If it be Thy will”, or “I hope God has answered” prayers in relation to miracles. He knew how to find God’s will first and then pray in faith-filled *assurance* that whatever miracle God led him to trust Him for, would come to pass.

In Daniel 9:2, we see Daniel found God’s will about a specific matter by studying the Scriptures. Daniel found in Jeremiah 25:11-12 and 29:10 that God had told Jeremiah that Jerusalem would remain desolate for 70 years after King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon took the Jews into captivity in Babylon. Jeremiah 29:10 also revealed that it was God’s will for some of these Jews taken captive to Babylon, to return to Jerusalem and Judea to rebuild Jerusalem and their nation.

Daniel 9:3-19 reveals that then Daniel prayed in certainty for these things to be brought about by God.

God answered Daniel’s prayer request on the same day that Daniel trusted God to bring about His Word. Verse 2 shows where Daniel found out God’s will about what he should pray. Verses 3-19 reveal Daniel’s faith in this Word from God. Verses 16 and 17 show how Daniel asked God to do what He had promised Jeremiah that He would do. Daniel’s faith for this miracle was based on God’s will – His Word.

Verses 20-23 of Daniel 9 reveal a very important lesson. From the *same moment in time* that Daniel prayed in faith on the basis of God’s Word, God said that Daniel’s prayer request was granted. But the manifestation in the physical world of God’s answer to this prayer of faith in His Word, did not occur until later.

## **Tremendous faith**

A great example of what we should do when we do not know God’s will in a situation can be seen in the lives of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego, as recorded in Daniel Chapter 3.

King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon made a pagan idol of gold. It was ninety feet high and nine feet wide. He commanded all of his officials to fall down and worship this demonic idol. Anyone who refused to do so, was to be thrown into a blazing furnace.

Some Satan-inspired astrologers told Nebuchadnezzar that the three Jews – Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego – would not obey him by worshipping the pagan image nor would they serve his gods. The king became furious with rage and summoned the three Jews to appear before him. He gave them a choice – either bow down and worship the idol or be immediately thrown into the furnace.

Note the response the three Jews gave to the king, as recorded in Daniel 3:16-18: ***“Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, ‘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.”***

The words of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego reveal they believed God was able to rescue them, but they were not sure whether it was His will to save them in this case.

According to some the above is not faith because it is not believing God will rescue them. But note that Daniel 3:28 reveals the attitudes of the three Jews were faith or trust in Him.

Here we see that when we do not know God's will about a specific matter, faith is expressed not by expecting Him to do a specific thing. Instead, faith is expressed here by totally surrendering the whole situation over to Him, believing He is able to rescue us if it is His will and still being totally committed in love to Him if He does not rescue us.

Daniel 3:28 reveals that because the three Jews did not know whether God would rescue them in this situation, they were willing to surrender their own lives in order to maintain their relationship to God. This verse reveals that such *surrender instead of demanding to be rescued*, in a situation where God had not revealed His will, is *strong faith*.