

The King of Kings Daniel

Intro: Last week we read through Daniel and I want to help you focus on its main point so that you aren't distracted by the very prominent minor points.

The book of Daniel is set just after the first attack on Jerusalem and the first wave of exiles have been taken captive (2 Kings 24). Among them was Daniel and his three friends -

- Daniel – Belteshazzar
- Hananiah - Shadrach
- Mishael - Meshach
- Azariah - Abed-nego

We have a tendency to get caught up in the various stories and visions in the book, but Daniel is really about

- Maintaining our identity as citizens of God's kingdom
- Maintaining our hope in the King of God's kingdom

in a land of exile and struggle.

The book divides easily as:

- 1-6 – Stories about Daniel and his friends
- 7-12 – Daniel's visions

Note: Chapters 1-2 – Hebrew
 2-7 – Aramaic
 8-12 – Hebrew

Each chapter introduces a crisis, the Hebrews's response and God's providence.

First: The Crises

1 - A Purity Crisis. Ch 1

Daniel and his friends are recruited to serve the king in Babylon but choose to maintain Jewish dietary laws which places them in conflict with their overseers. Although the diet they choose consisted only of vegetables and water with much less sustenance than that of their Babylonian captors, the four men end up looking healthier after a ten-day challenge.

2 – A Dream Crisis. Ch 2

Nebuchadnezzar has a dream of a gargantuan statue. None of his magicians, enchanters or sorcerers is able to interpret the dream but Daniel is.

- a) Gold head = Babylonians
- b) Chest and two arms = Medo-Persians
- c) Bronze = Greeks
- d) Legs of iron = Romans
- e) Feet = future kingdom
- f) The stone represents Jesus whose kingdom

After interpreting the dream,

- Nebuchadnezzar acknowledges Jehovah as the true God
- He makes Daniel ruler over all of Babylon and all of its wise men
- Daniel's 3 friends were also promoted

3 – A Worship Crisis. Ch 3

- Nebuchadnezzar constructed a 90-foot statue of himself and commanded everyone to worship it.
- Daniels 3 friends refuse to do so.
- In response, they are thrown into a fire
- where Jesus appears to fellowship with them and protect them

Daniel 3:25 - I see four men unbound, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods."

4 – A Pride Crisis (of two kings). Chs 4 & 5

- Ch 4 – Nebuchadnezzar tells the story of how God humbled him.
- For 7 years Nebuchadnezzar is stricken with an insanity.
- His kingdom, like a tree, is toppled but the stump remains.
- Nebuchadnezzar regains his sanity, repents, acknowledges Jehovah as God and his kingdom is returned to him.
- Ch 5 – Nebuchadnezzar's son, Belshazzar used the vessels used the vessels taken from the temple

- A hand writes on a mysterious comment on a wall which Daniel interprets

Daniel 5:26 – *God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end. You have been weight in the balances and found wanting. Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.*

- Belshazzar is assassinated that very night.

Note: Both of these accounts draw their imagery from Gen 1-2 & Psalm 8 which tell us that humans are created in God's royal image to rule as God's ambassadors. When human rebel against the true King, God, they become less than human, like beasts who face God's judgement.

5 – A Prayer Crisis. Ch 6

Daniel refuses to acknowledge Darius, the Persian king as his ultimate authority and continues to seek the God of Israel in daily prayer. As a result, he is thrown into a lion's den.

- King of beasts
- King of Persia
- King of Kings

In the end, Daniel is saved, the king acknowledges Jehovah

Daniel 6:25-26 - *I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for he is the living God, enduring forever; his kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion shall be to the end.*

APP: This is the point of the book! Kingdoms come and go but God is overseeing it all as his kingdom continues to grow and one day fill the earth.

- The men who attempted to ruin Daniel are eaten by those very lions.

6 – A Supernatural Crisis. Ch 7

The new king, Belshazzar has a dream about four beasts which Daniel interprets.

Daniel 7:9-10 - *As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days took his seat; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire. ¹⁰ A stream of fire issued and came out from before him; a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened.*

**This is HIStory book!
His history book, the book of His story**

- a) Lion

- b) Bear
- c) Wing leopard
- d) Super beast with many horns (symbols of kings)
- e) One particular horn that exalts itself above God
- f) “The Son of man” represents God’s people and their leader]
- g) The Ancient of Days appears who sets up the Son of Man at his right hand

In cast you missed the point, and God has to repeat things for us, **this again, is the point of the book!**

Daniel 7:13-14 - *I saw in the night visions, behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. ¹⁴ And 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 one that shall not be destroyed.*

7 – A Time Crisis. Ch 8

During Belshazzar’s reign, Daniel receives a vision of the last two kingdoms from ch 5.

- A ram from the north and south represents the Medo-Persian Empire
- A male goat from the west represents the Greek Empire, (‘one strong horn broken and divided into four smaller horns’ is an exact description of what happened to Alexander the Great).

Vs 9-14 - Out of the goat’s horns rise a larger, stronger horn who attacks Jerusalem and sets himself up as God but is destroyed by the true God

This vision made Daniel sick for several days and he never understood it. (But it’s all about time)

8 – A Faith Crisis. Ch 9

- During Darius’ rule, (same Darius of ch 6), Daniel is very confused so he consults the book of Jeremiah and
- finds that in chapter 25, God said that Israel’s captivity would last only 70 years.
- In response, Daniel sets himself to pray.

9 – A Crisis of the Unknown Ch 8-10

During Cyrus’s reign, Daniel has one final vision of the same sequence of kingdoms: Babylon, Greece, Rome, the King of the North who invades Jerusalem and sets himself up as God.

Note: Many people see

- the King of the North as the Syrian King Antiochus who defiled the Temple in 160 BC.
- The Romans who crucify Jesus and destroy Jerusalem in 70 AD
- In the future when Jesus returns

There is a sense in which each of these interpretations is right. We know this is true because

- * Jesus used Daniel to confront the Romans of his day
- * John adapted Daniel for his generation

In every generation, God's people face kingdoms and kings gone awry, suffer under sin and must choose to have faith and hope in God.

In the process we get a glimpse of spiritual warfare –

Daniel 10:12-14 - *Then he [an angel?] said to me, "Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words. ¹³ The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia, ¹⁴ and came to make you understand what is to happen to your people in the latter days. For the vision is for days yet to come."*

Wow! Isn't that fantastic? What visions! WE could spend weeks interpreting

Second: The Cure

1 – God's Providence - Nebuchadnezzar's statue dream

- g) Babylonians
- h) Medo-Persians
- i) Greeks
- j) Romans

The stone represents Jesus whose kingdom

2:31-35 - *You saw, O king, and behold, a great image. This image, mighty and of exceeding brightness, stood before you, and its appearance was frightening. ³² The head of this image was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its middle and thighs of bronze, ³³ its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. ³⁴ As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. ³⁵ Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them*

could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

2. – God’s Protection – The Fourth Man in the Fire & the King of Kings

- a) 3:19-25 - *Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with fury, and the expression of his face was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He ordered the furnace heated seven times more than it was usually heated. ²⁰ And he ordered some of the mighty men of his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. ²¹ Then these men were bound in their cloaks, their tunics,^[e] their hats, and their other garments, and they were thrown into the burning fiery furnace. ²² Because the king's order was urgent and the furnace overheated, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. ²³ And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell bound into the burning fiery furnace. ²⁴ Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up in haste. He declared to his counselors, “Did we not cast three men bound into the fire?” They answered and said to the king, “True, O king.” ²⁵ He answered and said, “But I see four men unbound, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods.”*
- b) 6:16-22 - *Then the king commanded, and Daniel was brought and cast into the den of lions. The king declared to Daniel, “May your God, whom you serve continually, deliver you!” ¹⁷ And a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet and with the signet of his lords, that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel. ¹⁸ Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; no diversions were brought to him, and sleep fled from him. ¹⁹ Then, at break of day, the king arose and went in haste to the den of lions. ²⁰ As he came near to the den where Daniel was, he cried out in a tone of anguish. The king declared to Daniel, “O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?” ²¹ Then Daniel said to the king, “O king, live forever! ²² My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm.”*

c) God’s Promises

Daniel consulted Jeremiah to discover God’s timetable for Israel in Babylon.

d) God’s Prophecies – the Visions

When people and governments turn their backs on God, they become like animals. We see this today in the abortion industry, and But God is building a kingdom that will one day rule all kingdoms.

Conclusion:

- Daniel demonstrates that God's people can be faithful to him even when
- They suffer because human kingdoms have become unfaithful to God
- The visions/prophesies are intended to encourage patience as God's people wait for the Lord to prove himself the King of Kings

Daniel presents a pattern of problems and the promise of providence and protection. That's the point of the book.

Sin causes degradation of people and countries. As a result, everyone suffers. But we endure it all in hope and that changes our attitude in it all.

We see in Daniel that kingdoms come, and kingdoms go. We don't put our ultimate hope in any of them.

Instead, like Abraham, we look for city whose builder and maker is God (Hb 11:10).

**You won't get worked up by this world
if you don't get caught up in this world.**

The point of Daniel is that in every generation, God's people face kingdoms and kings gone awry, suffer under sin and must choose to have faith and hope in God.

We must -

- Maintain our identity as citizens of God's kingdom
- Maintain our hope in the King of God's kingdom

Community Groups:

1 – How are you doing?

2 – Where are you suffering?

3 – How are you growing spiritually?

4 – What do you find most interesting about the book of Daniel?

5 – What do you find most challenging about the book of Daniel?

6 – Demonstrate God's providence in the various visions.

7 – Discuss God’s protection in the various crisis.

8 – How does God prove himself the ultimate King and his kingdom the ultimate one?

9 – Which chapter and verses discuss God’s promises to and about Israel in Babylonian captivity?

9 – What might we learn about spiritual warfare in Daniel 10:12-14?

10 – What is your primary take-a-way from the book of Daniel?