

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 7-8-12 PM NOTES  
DANIEL  
#29 in Series, "The Glory of God in the Old Testament"

**Daniel 1:8a (ESV)** "But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself..."

**Daniel 1:8 (HCSB)** "Daniel determined that he would not defile himself..."

"God does not unfold the future to us in specific detail. He does not tell your individual future or mine. What He does show us in the prophetic books of the Bible is the general trend of events, the outline of His program, and the way His program is sure to end. Anyone who investigates prophesy in a careful, objective way will find significant and helpful information about both future and present events in the world. Everything that is happening is working out God's purposes on earth. We can understand the present only in light of God's prophetic program."

- Ray Steadman

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Greece (330-150 BC) – Thigh of Brass (2:32, 39)

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**Revelation 11:15b (NKJV)** "The kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"

A. The Vision of the Four Beasts (Chapter 7)

Babylon (606-539 BC) – The Head of Gold (2:36-38); The Lion with Eagles' Wings (7:4)

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B. The Vision of the Ram and the He Goat (Chapter 8)

C. The Seventy Weeks (Chapter 9)

D. The Final Vision (Chapter 10-12)

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#29 in Series, “The Glory of God in the Old Testament”

The book of Daniel has two distinct parts. The first six chapters focus on Daniel’s life and character. Chapters 7-12 focus on prophesy. From Daniel’s life, we learn that God greatly uses a man of deep commitment to God. Daniel was indeed a man of great commitment. There are two paths we can walk in our journey with the Lord. We can walk the path of commitment or the path of preference. Let me describe these two paths. The word preference means to regard or esteem one thing, one path, or one way over another. The path of preference esteems obeying God over disobeying God. To be more specific, a life on the preference path prefers sexual purity, marital faithfulness, and refusing divorce. A life on the preference path esteems and prefers honesty, integrity, and loyalty. A life on the preference path esteems tithing, sacrificial giving and frugal living. However, when the heat is turned up, the consequences seem painful, and the price is high, a person on the preference path will abandon their preferences in these areas. When their spouse is no longer meeting their needs, when they are no longer “happy”, when they find another person appealing to their flesh, they will “reluctantly” cheat on their spouse or initiate divorce proceedings, because a preference won’t stick out the tough times. When acting with integrity and honesty might cost them their job or lost wages or to forfeit a promotion, they will abandon honesty and integrity. When money gets tight or there is something they really want, they will stop tithing, sacrificial giving, and frugal living. A preference won’t stick out the tough times. The second path is the path of commitment. The Christian on this path prefers the same thing the person on the preference path prefers, but here is the difference. The person on the commitment path who looks to God for strength, and is motivated by the longing to glorify God will make whatever sacrifices are necessary to live in obedience to God. Even when their marriage is disappointing and unfulfilling, they continue being faithful to their spouse and acting in love toward their spouse because divorce or seeking fulfillment in a relationship with another person is not an option to be considered. When being honest and acting with integrity and loyalty carries a high price tag, the person on the commitment path is willing to pay the price – even if it means the loss of wages, loss of reputation, or the loss of a job or career. When finances are tight, the person on the commitment path does not abandon the minimum standard of giving – the tithe. They are willing to live even more frugally to be able to keep giving to the causes or ministries God has led them to. In the section of the book of Daniel that deals with Daniel the man, we see what a life on the commitment path looks like. It is best described by the phrase in **Daniel 1:8a (NKJV)** “But Daniel **purposed in his heart** that he would not defile himself...” That phrase “purposed in his heart” is translated “resolved” and “determined” in some other translations. It means that Daniel had committed ahead of time that with God’s enabling and for God’s glory he would not even consider compromising or disobeying God’s commands. Daniel multiple times faced death and would not flinch from this purposed heart. What path are you on? Is it the preference path or is it the commitment – the purposed heart path?

While chapters 1-6 of the book of Daniel deals with Daniel’s personal life and purposed heart to obey God, chapters 7-12 deal primarily with things to come (from Daniel’s perspective). For our time, some of what Daniel prophesied has already happened, but much of this section is still future even for us. We will not have time to go in depth in examining these prophesies, but my goal is to present to you the big picture of what Daniel prophesied. Many people have a fascination with prophesy related to future things. The word “prophesy” simply means to speak forth for God. Much of what the Old Testament prophets said had to do with how God viewed what was going on in the present. Even when the prophesy focuses on future events, God’s purpose is not only to inform us about the future, but to instruct us about the present. God gave us prophesies so that we would know how to live today with tomorrow in mind. He gives us prophesy so that we would learn to trust Him and not fear the future. He is sovereign over the future. He lifts up world rulers and puts them down. ***He is in control!*** I love what Ray Steadman says about biblical prophesy: “God does not unfold the future to us in specific detail. He does not tell your individual future or mine. What He does show us in the prophetic books of the Bible is the general trend

of events, the outline of His program, and the way His program is sure to end. Anyone who investigates prophesy in a careful, objective way will find significant and helpful information about both future and present events in the world. Everything that is happening is working out God's purposes on earth. We can understand the present only in light of God's prophetic program" [Ray Steadman, *Adventuring through the Bible*, page 352].

## I. The Personal History of Daniel (Chapter 1-6)

I delight in studying biblical prophesy, but my favorite part of Daniel is these first six chapters. From the life of Daniel we learn so many principles related to righteous living in a sinful world. The story of Daniel and his three friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah is the story of committed, purposed lives lived out in the fiery crucible of a hostile world.

### A. The Selection of Daniel (Chapter 1)

Daniel and his three friends were conscripted from Judah and deported to Babylon in about 605 BC. In this first of three deportations from Judah (remember that Ezekiel was taken in the second deportation), the Babylonians took the brightest and best young Israelites back to Babylon to make Babylonians out of them. Listen to a description of these young Jews in Daniel 1:3-4 [Read]. "Chaldeans" as it is used here is another name for Babylonians. As a part of their preparations, they were given food and wine from the King's delicacies. The problem was that this food and wine had been dedicated to the Babylonian deities and to eat and drink the food and wine was seen as a way of honoring these deities. Daniel had earlier purposed in his heart that he would not eat of the King's food (Daniel 1:8). Daniel lived by commitment to his convictions and not by preference. To refuse the food was a real risk. Nebuchadnezzar was the most powerful man in the world. Not only was he the most powerful man in the world, he was also one of the cruelest men in the world. Let me give you just one example of that. A few years later, Nebuchadnezzar would kill the sons of Judah's King before their father's eyes and then put the father's eyes out so that the last thing he ever saw was the death of his sons. Nebuchadnezzar was a master of torture. His word was absolute law. This is the man Daniel and his three friends were defying in refusing to eat the king's food and drink the King's wine.

There are some great lessons and principles that we can learn from how Daniel refused a command of this King. How do we respond when we are commanded to do something by someone in authority over us that would involve disobeying a direct command of God? First we see that Daniel was kind and respectful to the one the King had appointed over him. There is no prideful defiance or arrogant refusal. Secondly, Daniel proposes an alternative [Read 1:13-14]. This test took the pressure off the one in authority over Daniel. It gave him an "out". The Hebrew word translated "vegetables" is a little broader than our word for vegetables. It probably included grains and fruit. At the end of 10 days, look at the results [Read 1:15]. After the three year crash course in the University of Babylon, Daniel and his three friends graduated at the top of their class [Read 1:17-20].

### B. The Secrets of God (Chapter 2)

Daniel and his three friends were classed among the Chaldeans which sometimes just means Babylonians, but in chapter two they seem to be a class of wise men, magicians, astrologers and soothsayers who taught Babylonian culture. Daniel and his friends did not participate in these activities that the law of God prohibited, but the Babylonians clumped them all together. In chapter two we find out that Nebuchadnezzar had a dream that he couldn't understand. He called in some of the Chaldeans to give him the interpretation, but there was something that the King threw in that threw the Chaldeans for a loop! The King wanted an interpretation, but he wouldn't tell them what the dream was. Scholars differ over whether he forgot the dream or did this as a test to see if these so called "wise men" were faking. I believe that he remembered the dream, but suspected these "wise men" were phonies. When Nebuchadnezzar would not tell them what the dream was, they basically said, "We can't help you". We see the King's response in Daniel 2:12-13 [Read].

This decree of the King moves Daniel into action. Notice what he does first when he is facing certain death [Read 2:16-19]. The King knew that Daniel was no fake because he told the King exactly what he had dreamed. Notice to Whom Daniel gave the glory [Read 2:27-28].

Let's focus on the dream itself. God is revealing the great empires to come on this earth until the final Kingdom of the Messiah. The image is really a picture of world history from the time of the first world empire – Babylon. The following is a summary of the vision with the dates attached when the prophesy was fulfilled.

Babylon (606-539 BC) – The Head of Gold (2:36-38)

Media-Persia (539-330 BC) – The Arms and Chest of Silver (2:32, 39)

Greece (330-150 BC) – Thigh of Brass (2:32, 39)

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Christ's Kingdom (Date - ?) – The Stone That Smites the Image (2:34-35, 44-45)

Let's look at the Antichrist's kingdom. IT will be somewhat like the Roman Empire, but the iron mixed with clay indicates that it will be weaker. It will be a loose confederation of nations (likely 10 that is pictured by the toes on the image) in the territory of the old Roman Empire. Notice how world history is brought to a conclusion in Daniel 2:44-45 [Read]. The initial form of Christ's Kingdom is the Millennial Kingdom for 1,000 years, but after the thousand years and some final activity by Satan who has been bound during the millennium Christ will continue to reign forever and ever. Notice that Christ is pictured as a stone that breaks to pieces the world's kingdoms. The mountain pictures God's sovereign government that stands over all earthly powers and rulers. The Messiah is cut out of this mountain by God and not human hands. That pictures the fact that the Messiah is from God and not of human origin.

#### C. The Steadfastness of God's Servants (Chapter 3)

In chapter three we see this powerful King become so enamored with himself after understanding that the head of gold represented him and his kingdom. He makes a huge statute probably designed after the one in his dream. This one however is all gold – 90 feet high. Likely that height included a large stand on which the statute was placed. This ego-maniac of a King demanded that when the music played, everyone should bow before the statute. Time does not allow us to go over one the greatest events in the Old Testament – the deliverance of Daniel's three friends from the fiery furnace after they refused to bow. Nebuchadnezzar learned that not only would they not bow, they also would not budge and they would not burn.

#### D. The Sovereignty of God (Chapter 4)

According to The Voice of the Martyrs, the # 1 ranked nation for persecution of Christians is North Korea. How would you respond if you heard that the new president of North Korea, Kim Jong-un, had confessed Christ and had given a clear testimony of salvation? I have no knowledge of that happening, though I pray for it. What we read in Daniel 4 that did happen would cause the salvation of the president of North Korea to pale in comparison. Nebuchadnezzar the King of Babylon came to know the one true God! [Read 4:1-3; 34b-37]. In between these two passages we see how God humbled this arrogant king and how God used Daniel to draw this wicked king unto Himself. The details are interesting and I encourage you to read them. Ah, but we must move on.

#### E. The Sin and Fall of Babylon (Chapter 5)

When we get to Chapter five, the King of Babylon is Nebuchadnezzar's grandson (son and grandson can be the same word), Belshazzar. The fortified city of Babylon is surrounded by the Persian armies, but the Babylonian King is throwing a party. The King, his wives and his concubines are drinking and partying oblivious to the fact that in a few hours they would be dead or captured. For his final insult against the one true God that his grandfather had embraced, Belshazzar calls for the sacred vessels taken from Solomon's temple in Jerusalem. He then uses these sanctified vessels to toast and praise the false god's of Babylon. Suddenly, a disembodied human hand appears and begins writing on the white

plastered walls [Read 5:4-7a]. The magicians could make nothing of the writing on the wall. By this time, Daniel was a much older man who was probably retired from government service. The Queen Mother told Belshazzar of Daniel and he was called in to interpret the writing on the wall. The words were simply Babylonian words for different weights and the word that simply means to divide. It wasn't that the Babylonian magicians couldn't read the words; it was a problem of knowing what they meant. When Daniel comes in, he reminds Belshazzar of his grandfather's testimony and uses the occasion to rebuke Belshazzar for his ungodliness. Next, Daniel gives the interpretation of the words written on the plastered wall [Read 5:26-28]. An ancient account tells us how Babylon fell to the Mede and Persian armies that very night. The Persian General Ugbaru had troops to build a huge trench to divert the Euphrates River. Since that river flowed under the massive walls of Babylon and through the city, the lowered water level allowed the enemy troops to come into the city under the gates and the guards and King Belshazzar were killed on October 16, 539 BC.

There is some confusion between the names Darius and Cyrus as to who was the King of the Persians. There are two possible solutions. Darius could be a title for the king (such as Pharaoh was for the Egyptian kings) or it is also possible that Darius was King Cyrus' military leader. The phrase in 5:30, "received the kingdom" can be translated "took the kingdom".

#### F. The Supplication and Deliverance (Chapter 6)

Daniel was now likely in his 80's, but Cyrus recognized his value and called him back into service. Daniel was influential in Cyrus' reign. This is the same Cyrus that signed the edict to allow the captured Jews to back to Jerusalem. It has been suggested that Daniel was influential in this edict being issued and some have speculated that Daniel even wrote it for Cyrus to sign. I will have to skip the story of Daniel being thrown into the lion's den because of time, but he was put there because of his refusal to stop praying. The purposed heart of a teenager is still purposed to obey God whatever it costs. Daniel is supernaturally delivered from the lion's den and his integrity is still intact.

## II. The Prophetic Revelations to Daniel (Chapter 7-12)

We read in **Revelation 11:15b (NKJV)** "The kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" Daniel 7-12 show us how this prophesy in Revelation 11:15 comes to pass. In fact neither Revelation nor Daniel can be fully understood without the other.

### A. The Vision of the Four Beasts (Chapter 7)

The message of chapter 7 is basically the same as chapter 2 and the dream Nebuchadnezzar had of the image with the head of gold. Chapter 2 gives the history of the world from man's perspective and chapter 7 gives the history from God's perspective. Nebuchadnezzar saw the kingdoms of this world as a shining metal man. God describes them as raging beasts. What follows is the description of chapter with the beasts of chapter 7 added.

Babylon (606-539 BC) – The Head of Gold (2:36-38); The Lion with Eagles' Wings (7:4)

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The winged lion was a commonly used symbol in Babylon. The bear is the Medo-Persia Empire. The bear's greater side represented Persia which was the stronger of the two aligned countries. Often this empire was simply called the Persian Empire. The Leopard is known for its swiftness and it was used to represent Greece and the swiftness of its conquest. The fourth beast with iron teeth is of course the Roman Empire. The little horn is the antichrist who rises to power out of a ten nation confederation. The picture in 7:9-10a is of the Messiah who will rule and reign.

## B. The Vision of the Ram and the He Goat (Chapter 8)

This vision takes us back into the time of the Grecian Empire (which was future for Daniel). The ram represents the Medo-Persian Empire and its two horns the two parts of the Empire. The goat in verse 5 represents Greece and its great horn represents Alexander the Great who with his army of 35,000 moved so swiftly to conquer that it seemed they hardly touched the ground. The broken horn is Alexander and his death. The four horns are generals who became who became kings over four sectors of the Grecian Empire (8:8). The little horn that grew out of one of the four in 8:9 is Antiochus Epiphanes. He is not the antichrist of the last days, but is definitely a type or picture of the coming evil one. Antiochus invaded Palestine ("The Glorious Land" of 8:9). There he desecrated the rebuilt Jewish temple and history tells us that he even sacrificed a pig on the altar of sacrifice.

## C. The Seventy Weeks (Chapter 9)

The first part of chapter nine records one the prayers of Daniel. It is one of the greatest prayers recorded in the Bible. I hope you will study it because it gives us a great pattern for seeking the Lord when we are seeking to understand His plans. What follows the prayer is one of the most amazing predictions in the Bible. From this prophesy, we can see the exact time that Christ will make His triumphal entry into Jerusalem and then in verse 26 it tells of His being "cut off, but not for Himself" (the crucifixion and the substitutionary atonement). The events of the 70<sup>th</sup> week of years (7 years), there will be a great tribulation aimed at primarily the Jews. Remember that Daniel is looking at the future primarily as it relates to the Jews. Between the 69<sup>th</sup> and the 70<sup>th</sup> week of years is the time of the church where God calls a bride for His Son – that bride being the church. We are now in that time between the 69<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel 9.

## D. The Final Vision (Chapter 10-12)

In these final chapters, we see more details especially about this end time prince or world ruler called the Antichrist, and the time of tribulation just before the return of the messiah to begin the Messianic Kingdom.

## CONCLUSION

In no way would I ever want to imply that that the prophesy section of Daniel is not all that important. I will say the it is more difficult to understand than the first 6 chapters on the man Daniel and his purposed heart to honor and obey the Lord whatever the cost. Focus on the lessons from Daniel first, and then delve into the prophesy. You will have affirmed in your heart that indeed our God is sovereign over all nations and rulers.