

# Daniel: Revealer of Secrets (Part 1)

By PAUL J. SCHARF

I have a friend and counselor in ancient Babylon.

I have turned to him countless times for wisdom, strength and direction. In fact, he has foreseen the future, and has instructed me carefully regarding “days yet *to come*” (Dan. 10:14).

I am always amazed at his dedication, courage, faithfulness and prayerfulness. What an example he offers of trusting God during incredible difficulties!

His Hebrew name means “God is my judge,” and it is a name that has become common in our own culture. His name is Daniel.

Many faithful Bible teachers believe that Daniel did not compose his book until the ninth decade of his life. But what a treasure he gave us when he did! It contains the revelation “of secrets” (Dan. 2:47)—some of which are found nowhere else in all of God’s Holy Word.

We could not understand the prophetic Scriptures—even the book of Revelation itself—without essential passages in Daniel such as Daniel 2:31-45 and Daniel 9:24-27. Yet, these treasures were “revealed to” (Dan. 2:19, 30; 10:1) him alone.

But these are not the only “secrets” (Dan. 2:28, 29, 47) that Daniel had the privilege of announcing to the world for the first time. He also declared the following by means of predictive prophecy:

- the identity and timing of the antichrist and his kingdom (Dan. 7:7-8, 23-25)—who may have been introduced in an obscure reference in Isaiah 26:20-27:1;
- unique prophetic material describing the ascent of Alexander the Great and the Greek empire (Dan. 8:5-8, 21);
- the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, who would torment the Jewish people by committing “the abomination of desolation” (Dan. 11:31) during the dark days leading up to events behind the institution of Hanukkah (Dan. 8:9-14; 11:21-35); and, finally
- many more exceptional details relating to events that will unfold during the coming tribulation and future kingdom (Dan. 11:40-12:13).

Daniel also gave us the most vivid description of spiritual warfare as it transpires in the unseen world (Dan. 10:10-11:1). He certainly bore a heavy burden in receiving and transmitting such awesome revelations (Dan. 7:28; 8:27; 10:9, 16-17).

All of this is more amazing when we realize that Daniel was probably a teenager when the book opens, and he is ripped from his home in Jerusalem and transported to

Babylon (Dan. 1:3-7). He becomes an old man by the time we arrive at the end of his account (Dan. 6:38; 10:1)—truly making this a book for all ages.

Daniel's writings are not only prophetic, but also very personal. As Dr. John Whitcomb stated, "In attempting to master the message, let's not miss the man."<sup>i</sup>

It is, in fact, easy to recognize why Daniel was a "man greatly beloved" (Dan. 10:11). God used him to convey "light and understanding and wisdom" (Dan. 5:11) to the world. In addition, his intrepid faith combined with his winsome example make him a magnetic character who "(shines) like the brightness of the firmament" (Dan. 12:3) all the way down to our time.

The thing that made Daniel so special—in addition to his tremendous natural abilities (Dan. 1:4) and his spiritual giftedness (Dan. 1:17)—was his steadfast commitment to the spiritual training that he had doubtless received as a very young boy. You can take the boy away from the temple, but you can't take the temple out of the boy! He remembered the temple as it was before the captivity began—before "the glory of the LORD departed from the threshold of the temple" (Ezek. 10:18), thus before it was destroyed in 586 B.C. After more than six decades in Babylon, he was still conducting his life on *temple time* (Dan. 9:21).

Yes, I realize that Daniel is no longer alive and residing in Babylon. But to me, his example is just as dynamic as if he were. I know that one day I will see him and be able to fellowship with him in person. Until then, I have the wonderful joy of telling others about his story and all the "deep and secret things" (Dan. 2:22) that he was privileged to share with us—as a true "prophet" (Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14) of God, who imparted these truths by Divine inspiration (2 Pet. 1:21).

Recently, a Bible study group that I teach asked me to lead them through the book of Daniel. Returning to this book once again has caused me to realize just how vitally connected my ministry has been to my friend in ancient Babylon. And I will look forward to sharing more about that in the concluding installment.

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<sup>i</sup> Class lecture from "Daniel" module; Oct. 30, 1995 (Ankeny, IA: Faith Baptist Theological Seminary).