

Daniel – Review

The main message of Daniel is that earthly kings and kingdoms will rise and fall but in the midst of these earthly kingdoms, God will build his kingdom which will not end. God's kingdom is the only kingdom which lasts forever. While we live in temporal earthly kingdoms, there will be times of trouble and persecution but God preserves his people to the end. We may be residents and citizens of various earthly kingdoms, but the most important citizenship is to be a citizen in God's eternal kingdom.

The book of Daniel covers many of the significant persecutions of God's people. When we think about the history of God's people after they possessed the Promised Land, there were two temples built and two temples destroyed. Daniel lived in the time of the Babylonian exile and the destruction of the first temple. God showed Daniel that even after the exile was over and the temple was rebuilt that there would be even worse times. The Greek little horn of chapter 8 would arise out of the third kingdom and kill many Jews, desecrate the temple, and forbid reading of the scriptures, the keeping of the Sabbath and circumcision. The seventy weeks / sevens of Daniel 9 spoke of the coming of the Messiah who would be killed and afterwards sacrifices would cease and desolation would come; the destruction of the temple in 70 AD. Finally, the little horn of chapter 7 will arise and make war with the saints and prevail over them and seek to change the times and the law. Amillennialists like Dale Ralph Davis believe that the little horn of chapter 7 is the man of lawlessness, the future antichrist. Through all the wars, destruction, and persecutions, God will preserve his people to the end. God's people shall possess his eternal kingdom (Daniel 7:18).

Daniel and his friends provided examples of how to stand for God in the midst of evil times. Daniel and his friends were among the first Jews to be taken into exile to Babylon. Daniel lived during the time when Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. Daniel lived long enough to hear that a number of exiles had returned to Judah and Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. Daniel saw the rise and fall of the Babylonian empire. He saw the rise of the Medo-Persian empire. Most importantly, Daniel was part of God's everlasting kingdom.

What the Earthly Kings Said About the One True God

- 2:47 Nebuchadnezzar: "Truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries"
- 3:28-29 Nebuchadnezzar: "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him ... Any people, nation, or language that speaks anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins, for there is no other god who is able to rescue in this way."
- 4:3 Nebuchadnezzar: "How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion endures from generation to generation"
- 4:34-35 Nebuchadnezzar: "his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation; all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and

he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, 'What have you done?'"

- 4:37 Nebuchadnezzar: "all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble"
- 6:26-27 Darius the Mede: "for he is the living God, enduring forever; his kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion shall be to the end. He delivers and rescues; he works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, he who has saved Daniel from the power of the lions."

God's Everlasting Kingdom

- 2:44 In Nebuchadnezzar's dream God revealed that God would establish a kingdom which would last forever and it would smash and destroy all the earthy kingdoms.
- 4:3, 34 King Nebuchadnezzar declared that God's kingdom is an everlasting and enduring kingdom and that his dominion is everlasting and enduring.
- 6:26 King Darius wrote that God has an indestructible kingdom and a dominion which shall not end.
- 7:14 The Son of Man who came to the Ancient of Days was given an everlasting dominion and a kingdom which will not be destroyed.
- 7:18 The saints shall receive and possess the kingdom which lasts forever and ever.
- 7:27 The Most High has an everlasting kingdom which he gives to his saints.

King Nebuchadnezzar – a Man of Contradictions

- In Jeremiah 25:9, 27:6, and 43:10, God called Nebuchadnezzar "my servant". God also called king David "my servant". Nebuchadnezzar and David were two very different people. David had a heart for God. Nebuchadnezzar believed in multiple gods. God called Nebuchadnezzar his servant because God used him to bring judgment on Judah for their long rebellion against God. Nebuchadnezzar ultimately destroyed Jerusalem and the temple in 586 B.C.
- In chapter 2, God revealed a dream to Nebuchadnezzar about things to come. God revealed to him that he was the head of gold on the image in his dream. After his empire, three other earthly empires were to arise. Nebuchadnezzar was impressed that Daniel could reveal and interpret the king's dream. In 2:47, the king said to Daniel, "your God is God of gods". Nebuchadnezzar recognized the power of God but it was not enough for him to worship Daniel's God as the one true God. That was evident in chapter 3.
- In chapter 3, Nebuchadnezzar seemed to focus on "the gold head" from his dream and ignore that God revealed to him that his kingdom would be replaced by a kingdom of silver. He made a 90 foot golden image and made his officials bow down and worship the image. While not stated explicitly, the implication seems to be that Nebuchadnezzar was saying that Babylon would last forever and that there would not be a silver kingdom which would replace Babylon. God revealed his power to save his people when the king cast Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into the fiery furnace for not bowing down to the image. The three came out of the furnace unharmed with no hint of them being in a fire. The king made a decree in 3:29. Nebuchadnezzar referred to God as "the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego". The king was still not willing to embrace God as his God. He recognized God's power but not to the point of worshiping God and putting away his idols.

- In chapter 4, Nebuchadnezzar recognized the “signs and wonders that the Most High God has done for me”. In 4:27, after Daniel had delivered bad news to Nebuchadnezzar about what was going to happen to him, Daniel exhorted the king to repent and show mercy to the oppressed. We are not sure if the king heeded his advice for a time, but one year later God’s judgment came on Nebuchadnezzar. He was filled with pride at all he had accomplished. He did not acknowledge that he prospered because God had raised him up. God took the kingdom from him and made him eat grass like an ox. After a time, Nebuchadnezzar lifted up his eyes and blessed and praised God. God restored the kingdom to Nebuchadnezzar. The king acknowledged that God was able to humble the king, or anyone else, at any time.
- Just because God called Nebuchadnezzar “my servant” doesn’t mean that Nebuchadnezzar was a godly man who sought to worship and obey the one true God. This is something to remember about our own leaders. Romans 13:1 says “Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.” The rulers’ authority comes from God but that does not mean that they are necessarily godly people. In the case of Nebuchadnezzar, God gave him authority to judge Judah by destroying Jerusalem and the temple. Sometimes God’s rulers bring judgment and not prosperity. These rulers are also judged by God.

The Son of Man

7:13-14a “I saw in the night visions, and 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. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him;

Edward J. Young said that among some Jews the Messiah came to be known as “Cloudy one” or “Son of a cloud”. John’s use of “son of man” in the Gospel of John (13 times, 9x Son of God, 19x Christ) is interesting in the context of Daniel 7:13.

- 1:51 “Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the **Son of Man**.”
- 3:13-14 No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the **Son of Man**. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the **Son of Man** be lifted up,
- 5:27 And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the **Son of Man**.
- 6:27 Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the **Son of Man** will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.”
- 6:53 So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the **Son of Man** and drink his blood, you have no life in you.
- 6:62 Then what if you were to see the **Son of Man** ascending to where he was before?
- 8:28 So Jesus said to them, “When you have lifted up the **Son of Man**, then you will know that I am he
- 9:35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, “Do you believe in the **Son of Man**?”
- 12:23 And Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the **Son of Man** to be glorified.
- 12:32-34 And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die. So the crowd answered him, “We have

heard from the Law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the **Son of Man** must be lifted up? Who is this **Son of Man**?”

- 13:31 When he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now is the **Son of Man** glorified, and God is glorified in him.