

OVERVIEW OF BOOK OF DANIEL

INTRODUCTION

It has certainly been a momentous week in world history with the striking of peace agreements in the Middle East. When have you ever seen such unity expressed between the Arab nations and nation of Israel? But make no mistake. We continue to live in what the Bible refers to as the “*times of the Gentiles*” where Gentile nations dominate the world scene. Israel is still a minor player and does not wield the significance that she shall have in the end times. So as we look into the book of Daniel – the last of the OT major prophets whose life and ministry spanned the entire 70 period of the Babylonian Captivity (605 – 536 BC) and then some, I want to start with some background about the “*times of the Gentiles*.” God uses Daniel to reveal very detailed prophecies about what will take place in these Gentile kingdoms before God establishes His Messianic Kingdom of 1,000 years on earth (called the **millennial kingdom**) which will then transition into the **eternal kingdom**. Gentile nations and kingdoms will rise and fall according to God’s sovereign control but they cannot claim any lasting supremacy. Daniel in the OT corresponds to Revelation in the NT in terms of end times prophecy and apocalyptic focus.

Dan. 2:44 *"And in the days of those kings [pictured as gold, silver, bronze and iron – the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian and Roman empires] the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever."*

That is why God humbled King Nebuchadnezzar to get him to confess in **Chap. 4:17** --
"In order that the living may know That the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind, And bestows it on whom He wishes, And sets over it the lowliest of men."

The other kings featured in the book of Daniel (Belshazzar of Babylon and Darius the Mede) end up giving similar testimonies. This reminds us of God’s purpose expressed in **Phil. 2:10-11**
"so that, at the name of Jesus, every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

I found it interesting this week that President Trump was quoted as once again reflecting on his prospects of getting into heaven. He expressed reservations about being qualified – obviously expressing a works-based approach – not sure that he was good enough despite his great political accomplishments and how much in his words he has “helped so many people.” That is why there is such a disconnect between the faith of Erika Kirk who can forgive and pray for her enemies vs. the President who admits he is unable to do so. What a window of opportunity we have today to explain what **grace** in the gospel really means. I was listening to a conservative commentary Matt Walsh addressing Trump’s comments and Walsh clearly did not understand the biblical doctrine of grace. He was actually complimenting Trump for *working out his salvation with fear and trembling*. In other words he thought it was a statement of **humility** on the part of Trump not to think that he was going to heaven. People need to sit under Dr. Harmon’s Sunday morning teaching from the book of **I John** on how we can **know for sure** that we are saved and

have real **Assurance of salvation**. So use this window to discuss these topics with your friends and neighbors.

But now where do we get this phrase “*the times of the Gentiles*”? The only biblical reference is in **Luke 21:24** so let’s turn there.

21:6-7 “*the days will come in which there will not be left one stone upon another which will not be torn down.* ⁷ *And they questioned Him, saying, ‘Teacher, when therefore will these things be? And what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?’*”

Jesus provides an answer which relates to the near-term destruction of the temple and of Jerusalem by the Romans in AD 70 ... but then much of what he says jumps forward to the eschatological fulfillment in the last days when Christ shall return.

21:24-28 “*Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the **times of the Gentiles** be fulfilled.* ²⁵ *And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves,* ²⁶ *men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.* ²⁷ *And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.* ²⁸ *But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.*”

The first thing that we must note is that the **concept of Gentile nations** only exists by way of contrast to the ethnic nation of Israel, the Jewish people – God’s chosen covenant nation. This is not a spiritual contrast between unsaved Gentiles and the spiritual Israel of God = true believers. This is an ethnic, national contrast.

When did this time period begin?

Starting Point: Babylon's Destruction of Jerusalem (586 BC)

- In **586 BC**, **King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon** conquered Jerusalem, destroyed the **First Temple**, and exiled the Jewish people.
- This marked the **end of the Davidic monarchy** and the beginning of **Gentile political domination** over Jerusalem and the Jewish people.

This aligns with **Daniel’s prophecy in Daniel 2 and 7**, where a series of **Gentile kingdoms** (Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome) rise and rule during the period when Israel has **no sovereign rule over the land**.

This period continues until Christ returns so we are presently living in a continuation of the **times of the Gentiles**. Note how the Apostle Paul confirms this in **Romans 11** as he again draws a contrast between Jews and Gentiles:

(11:25-27) “*For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the **fulness of the Gentiles** has come in;* ²⁶ *and thus all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, ‘The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob.’*” ²⁷ *And this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins.”*

We have not yet experienced this **fullness of the Gentiles** and the subsequent salvation of all Jews who are alive at that point in time in the last days.

Chuck Swindoll: Daniel is one of the few Bible books that takes place **during** a period of judgment (many books foretell it and a few look back on it) and in a foreign nation. Whether it's in the contrast between the culture's idol worship and Daniel's faithful purity or in the account of the arrogant Nebuchadnezzar and his humbling encounter with God, the **pagan backdrop** in Daniel makes the Lord's power shine through in a magnificent and majestic way that stands out in Scripture. The book of Daniel makes it clear that the true God is the supreme ruler over heaven and earth (**Daniel 4:17**), even when all seems lost and the consequences of sin seem overwhelming.

So what we see in the book of Daniel is the vast contrast between the kingdoms of human power and the kingdom of God's power. What we see in the person of Daniel is the ability to please God as citizens of both kingdoms. How are we to survive and please God in the midst of our pagan culture? Daniel provides the model for us.

John Walvoord: In the dark hour of Israel's captivity, with the tragic destruction of Jerusalem and its temple, there was need for a new testimony to the mighty and providential power of God. Such is afforded by the book of Daniel... The book of Daniel, like Esther, reveals God continuing to work in His people Israel even in the time of their chastening. In this framework the tremendous revelation concerning the times of the Gentiles and the program of God for Israel was unfolded.

BIG IDEA:

The Supreme God Reigns Over All and Is Working Out His Kingdom Program for Israel Down Through History

David Malick: Argument of the Book of Daniel: Even though Israel is experiencing judgment at the hands of the Gentile nations, the Lord encourages her, through numerous circumstances and visions, that he is sovereignly in control of her present situation, he will deliver those who faithfully trust in him, and in the end of time he will ultimately deliver her from the Gentiles by judging the prince to come and resurrecting all saints.

OVERVIEW:

Even the most powerful and wicked of earthly kingdoms remain under the sovereign control of the supreme God who is faithfully working out His kingdom agenda to eventually save and bless His elect nation Israel. For Daniel and those returning from the Babylonian Captivity to attempt to rebuild Jerusalem, the times could have been very disheartening. As the seventy year period of prophesied judgment reaches its conclusion, where are the fulfillment of all of God's covenant promises regarding a kingdom of righteousness and peace? Daniel was blessed with insight into coming historical events. In fact the level of detail regarding the prophecies down through Alexander the Great and then Antiochus IV Epiphanes is so specific that liberal critics can only conclude that the book of Daniel was written after the fact. But the God who controls all of history, the God who graciously provides insight into the future is also the God of miracles who

sustains and delivers His faithful servants who live in the midst of pagan secular society. Here we have some of the most famous stories of the bible – the fiery furnace, Daniel in the lion’s den, the handwriting on the wall, etc. But there yet remains the most troubling time of suffering for the nation Israel – under the wicked attacks of the Antichrist and satanic forces. God promises that this last day event will be limited and will ultimately purge and refine the nation in preparation for their ultimate salvation and future reward. So the exhortation is not to be anxious but to stay the course and pursue faithful living amidst a pagan culture in anticipation of a glorious future.

AUTHORSHIP:

The book clearly identifies Daniel [whose name means “*God is my Judge*”] who lived in the sixth century BC as the author. [8:15, 27; 9:2; 10:2, 7; 12:4, 5] [This was widely accepted until higher critics began leveling some serious attacks. Their charges were primarily motivated by theological bias: How could the author predict so many specific prophecies about coming events in world history? [Chap. 11 itself contains over 100 specific prophecies.] Just on that basis alone they claimed that the book had to have been written by an unknown individual after the events had already occurred. Of course that would make the book a complete fraud. They piled on with some other minor claims of linguistic problems (Greek or Aramaic terms that were supposedly of later origin) or even minor historical errors. But nothing that we need to spend time addressing.

Stephen Miller: When examining any issue, whether it is doctrinal or critical in nature, **Jesus’ view** is of paramount importance. Strong evidence for the traditional view of **authorship** and **date** comes from the testimony of Jesus Christ himself. In **Matt 24:15** (par. **Mark 13:14**) Jesus stated:

“So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ spoken of through the prophet Daniel.”

Four very important points concerning Christ's assessment of the authorship and date of Daniel's prophecy may be observed in this statement.

- First, Christ demonstrated his belief that Daniel was a **real, historical person** who was an instrument of divine revelation (“*spoken of through the prophet Daniel*”).
- Second, Christ held that the prophecies contained in the Book of Daniel (from which he quoted) **came from Daniel himself**, not a later anonymous individual.
- Third, Christ assured that this prophecy describes **future events**, for the context shows that “*the abomination that causes desolation*” to which Christ referred was yet future. This means that arguments based on the premise that the prophets never foretold the distant future are invalid.
- Fourth, apparently the only view in vogue during the time of Christ for the setting of the prophet Daniel was the **sixth century B.C.**; therefore if Christ treated Daniel as a historical individual, **he also assumed the sixth-century date.**

STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK:

2 different approaches: very similar

- 1) **Linguistic Approach** – based on which sections were written in Hebrew vs. Aramaic
Chap. 1 -- (Hebrew) Introduction – Personal Background of Daniel

Chaps 2-7 --	(Aramaic)	Prophecies related to Gentiles
Chaps. 8-12 --	(Hebrew)	Prophecies related to Jewish nation during the times of the Gentiles

2) **Traditional approach** – 2 halves to the book: Historical Stories and Prophetic Visions

Tremper Longman III: Daniel is a book of **paradoxes**. The first six chapters are deceptively simple stories of faith under pressure. Daniel and his three friends have been forced to leave their homeland, Israel, and settle in the Babylonian king's palace. They are compelled to learn foreign ways in preparation to serve the government, which has made a hostile incursion against Israel and looms dangerously over that country of their birth. Each chapter brings new challenges, and each time they rise to meet the crisis. Neither Daniel nor his three friends waver in their faith or ponder their actions. They certainly seek divine help, but they are confident in their God, even if God might not preserve their lives through a trial (cf. **3:16–18**). God, however, is up to the task, demonstrating his sovereignty, his power over evil human intentions, again and again. Clear and encouraging, these six stories have spoken forcefully to many believers, including the youngest of children. Many of us who grew up in the church remember the stories of Daniel as a staple of children's Sunday school programs and vacation Bible school lessons.

Not so with the second half of the book, however! The simple division between chapters 6 and 7 masks a radical shift in genre and complexity. While children resonate with the lessons of Daniel **1–6**, seasoned Bible scholars scratch their heads over **Daniel 7–12** with the move from simple stories to obscure apocalyptic visions. The first half of the book are stories about Daniel; the second half are visions of Daniel. Even though there is a dramatic contrast in genre between the two halves of the book, however, the overall message of the book is uniform: In spite of present appearances, **God is in control**. . .

As we study the book of Daniel, we expect to hear God's story. The book is filled with human characters and actions, but God is the subtle background character. We have also just argued that the Old Testament, including Daniel, is not just a theocentric book, but also a **Christocentric** book. Christ is anticipated in the Old Testament and proclaimed in the New. By emphasizing what might be called the theological message of the book, we avoid a common fallacy—a **purely moralistic approach** to the Old Testament. Most sermons and teaching on the book err by falling into the trap of simply turning Old Testament characters into heroes and villains: “Be like Daniel!” or “Don’t be like Belshazzar!” Such teaching removes the focus of the biblical book from the intended main point, **God**, and thus misses the power of the passage.

Chap 1 -- THE SOVEREIGN GOD RAISES UP LOYAL LEADERS AND EQUIPS THEM TO ACCOMPLISH HIS PURPOSES – DIETARY TEST

(;1-2) PROLOGUE – BACKGROUND OF BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY

“In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. 2 And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the vessels of the house of God;

and he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and he brought the vessels into the treasury of his god.”

6 QUALIFICATIONS FOR SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP:

I. (:3) YOUNG MEN OF POTENTIAL

“Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, the chief of his officials, to bring in some of the sons of Israel, including some of the royal family and of the nobles,”

- A. Their Nature -- young men of the royal family
- B. Their Advantages -- the best environment and training
- C. Their Age -- the timing was right to develop these men for leadership

II. (:4a) YOUNG MEN OF PROVEN WORTH

- A. Physical Excellence – no defect / good looking
- B. Intellectual Excellence
 - “showing intelligence in every branch of wisdom, endowed with understanding, and discerning knowledge,”*
- C. Summary of Overall Ability –
 - "and who had ability for serving in the king's court"*

III. (:4b-5) YOUNG MEN OF PREPARATION

IV. (:6-7) YOUNG MEN OF PROVIDENTIAL PURPOSE

V. (:8-16) YOUNG MEN OF PURITY -- Refusal to compromise convictions

VI. (:17-21) YOUNG MEN OF PROSPERITY

Chap. 2 -- MAN'S INABILITY VS GOD'S SUFFICIENCY – GENTILE KINGDOMS TRUE WISDOM AND POWER COME FROM THE SOVEREIGN GOD

I. (:1-18) MAN'S INABILITY

- A. (:1-3) The Inability of Man's Power
- B. (:4-13) The Inability of Man's Wisdom
- C. (:14-18) The Inability of Genuine Spiritual Leaders (in themselves)

II. (:19-30) THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE SOVEREIGN GOD – OUR SOURCE FOR TRUE WISDOM AND POWER

III. (:31-45) DREAM OF THE GREAT STATUE AND ITS INTERPRETATION DELIVERED BY DANIEL

God sovereignly allowed Gentiles to dominate Israel – Stages of Gentile domination:

- | | | |
|--------|-------------|-----------------|
| Gold | Babylon | (605–539 B.C.), |
| Silver | Medo-Persia | (539–331 B.C.), |

Bronze Greece (331–146 B.C.),
Iron Rome (146 B.C.–A.D. 476),
 and all the way to the Second Advent of Christ

Progression: Decrease in Value / Increase in Strength

Remember, these future kingdoms have not yet come on the world's stage. It is remarkable the level of detail this book provides to future historical events.

(:46-49) EPILOGUE – RESPONSE OF KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR

“Surely your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries”

Chap. 3 -- THE SUPREMACY OF GOD VS PAGAN IDOLATRY – FIERY FURNACE

I. (:1-12) IDOLATRY CHALLENGES THE SUPREMACY OF GOD AND CREATES INTENSE PERSECUTION

II. (:13-23) THE SUPREMACY OF GOD DESERVES UNSWERVING LOYALTY REGARDLESS OF THE COST

A. (:13-15) The Loyalty of Men of Faith (in God's Supremacy) Bothers Men of Pride (in Their Own Supremacy)

1. (:13) Proud Rulers Are Angry When Their Supremacy is Challenged

“Then Nebuchadnezzar in rage and anger gave orders to bring Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego; then these men were brought before the king.”

2. (:14) Proud Rulers Are Mystified When Confronted with Faith

“Nebuchadnezzar responded and said to them, ‘Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up?’”

3. (:15a) Proud Rulers Are Bullies at Heart

“Now if you are ready, at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, and bagpipe, and all kinds of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, very well. But if you will not worship, you will immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire.”

4. (:15b) Proud Rulers Are Arrogant about Their Own Power and Skeptical about the Power of God

"and what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?"

B. (:16-18) Idolatry Should Never Be an Option for Those Who Understand the Supremacy of God

C. (:19-23) The Price of Loyalty May Be Intense Persecution – Circumstances May Look Hopeless

III. (:24-30) THE SUPREME GOD IS ABLE TO SAVE HIS LOYAL SERVANTS

Different ways God can deliver His faithful servants

- Protect them from even having to experience the suffering
 - Deliver them thru the trial so that they experience the suffering but remain protected
 - Deliver them via death
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Chap. 4 – Who’s In Charge? DEALING WITH NEBUCHADNEZZAR THE MOST HIGH IS RULER OVER THE REALM OF MANKIND AND BESTOWS AUTHORITY ON WHOMEVER HE WISHES

(:17) Humbling Lesson

*“This sentence is by the decree of the angelic watchers
And the decision is a command of the holy ones,
In order that the living may know
That the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind,
And bestows it on whom He wishes
And sets over it the lowliest of men.”*

(:29-30) Consumed with Pride and Arrogance

*“Twelve months later he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of
Babylon. 30 The king reflected and said, ‘Is this not Babylon the great, which I
myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the
glory of my majesty?’”*

Doesn’t this sound like a press conference from our President today? These lessons are so applicable to the **times of the Gentiles** in which we live today.

(:34) Lesson Learned – Praise for God’s Sovereignty and Everlasting Dominion

*“But at the end of that period, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven
and my reason 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 endures from generation to generation.”*

(:35) Inability of Man to Thwart or Even Question God’s Purposes

*“All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing,
But He does according to His will in the host of heaven
And among the inhabitants of earth;
And no one can ward off His hand
Or say to Him, ‘What have You done?’”*

Chap. 5 – The Handwriting on the Wall – Numbered, Weighed and Rejected DEALING WITH BELSHAZZAR

I. (:1-4) PARTY ATMOSPHERE OF THE WORLD OBLIVIOUS TO IMPENDING DOOM

This is how the world is currently living as people deny divine accountability and mock the promise of the Lord’s return (**2 Pet. 3:3-4**).

“Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts,⁴ and saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.’”

II. (:5-9) PANIC ATTACK OVER THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL

III. (:10-16) PERSONAL APPEAL TO DANIEL AND HIS GOD FOR INSIGHT

IV. (:17-28) PROPHETIC APPLICATION OF THE DIVINE INSCRIPTION

Rebuke of pride and arrogance; you have not learned from God’s judgment on Nebuchadnezzar; call for repentance

(:22-23a) Pride and Arrogance

“Yet you, his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, even though you knew all this, ²³ but you have exalted yourself against the Lord of heaven;”

(25-28) – The interpretation of the inscription

“Now this is the inscription that was written out: ‘MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.’²⁶ This is the interpretation of the message: ‘MENE’ -- God has numbered your kingdom and put an end to it. ²⁷ ‘TEKEL’ -- you have been weighed on the scales and found deficient. ²⁸ ‘PERES’ -- your kingdom has been divided and given over to the Medes and Persians.”

(:29-31) POSTSCRIPT

A. (:29) Elevation of Daniel

“Then Belshazzar gave orders, and they clothed Daniel with purple and put a necklace of gold around his neck, and issued a proclamation concerning him that he now had authority as the third ruler in the kingdom.”

B. (:30) Execution of Belshazzar

“That same night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was slain.”

C. (:31) Exaltation of Darius the Mede

“So Darius the Mede received the kingdom at about the age of sixty-two.”

Chap. 6 -- THE GOD WHO DELIVERS – DANIEL IN THE LIONS’ DEN

I. (:1-9) CONSPIRING AGAINST DANIEL – GOD’S FAITHFUL SERVANTS COME UNDER ATTACK

II. (:10-15) CATCHING DANIEL IN VIOLATION OF THE DECREE – GOD’S FAITHFUL SERVANTS MUST REMAIN LOYAL IN THE FACE OF DANGER

III. (:16-18) CONFINING DANIEL IN THE LIONS’ DEN – GOD’S FAITHFUL SERVANTS CAN FIND THEMSELVES IN THE LIONS’ DEN

IV. (:19-24) CELEBRATING DANIEL'S DELIVERANCE – GOD'S FAITHFUL SERVANTS TESTIFY TO GOD'S DELIVERANCE

V. (:25-28) CATECHIZING DANIEL'S GOD – GOD'S FAITHFUL SERVANTS IMPACT OTHERS FOR GOD WHILE ENJOYING UNPRECEDENTED FAVOR

A. (:25-27) Salvation Belongs to the Sovereign God

“Then Darius the king wrote to all the peoples, nations, and men of every language who were living in all the land: ‘May your peace abound! 26 I make a decree that in all the dominion of my kingdom men are to fear and tremble before the God of Daniel; For He is the living God and enduring forever, And His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed, And His dominion will be forever. 27 He delivers and rescues and performs signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, Who has also delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.’”

B. (:28) Success Enjoyed by Daniel

“So this Daniel enjoyed success in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.”

Chap. 7 -- DREAMS OF THE FOUR GREAT BEASTS, THE ANCIENT OF DAYS, THE SON OF MAN AND THE ANTICHRIST

SUCCESSIVE EVIL EMPIRES DOMINATE THE WORLD SCENE UNTIL GOD REIGNS VICTORIOUS WITH HIS SAINTS IN HIS KINGDOM

Repeats and expands upon the image of **Chap. 2** with the 4 Gentile kingdoms
Chronologically, **Chap. 7** represents a flashback to 553 BC, 14 years before the feast of Belshazzar in **Chap. 5**. The dream of **Daniel 7** moves far beyond Daniel's day to the end times events. There is a type of both near and far term fulfillment in much that is revealed in these later chapters.

Stephen Miller: Why is this chapter so significant?

➤ First, Dan 7 marks the literary turning point of the book from historical accounts to visions. **J. J. Collins** correctly understands **Dan 7** to be “a transitional chapter” bound to the preceding stories “by the use of the Aramaic language and by affinities with **ch. 2**, but tied to the following visions by its subject matter.” Thus this passage effectively **joins the two parts of the book together**.

➤ Second, the chapter is important because of its enormous impact on subsequent Jewish literature. As a matter of fact, the whole body of **apocalyptic material** that followed was influenced by this vision.

➤ Third, it is of extreme significance **prophetically**. **Walvoord** rightly maintains: “As interpreted by conservative expositors, the vision of Daniel provides the most comprehensive and detailed prophecy of future events to be found anywhere in the Old Testament.”

I. (:2-8) DREAM OF THE FOUR GREAT BEASTS AND THE LITTLE HORN

II. (:9-14) DREAM OF THE ANCIENT OF DAYS AND HIS MILLENNIAL DOMINION DELEGATED TO THE SON OF MAN

III. (:15-27) INTERPRETATION OF THE DREAMS OF DANIEL

(:28) EPILOGUE – END OF THE VISION

Ken Boa: Remaining Chapters:

Focus in **Chap. 8** narrows to a vision of the ram and goat – looking at Israel under the Medo-Persian and Greek empires

8:21 – Alexander the Great is the big horn;

8:23 – Antiochus Epiphanes is the little horn

Chap 9 – Chronology of God’s redemption of His people

Chaps. 10-11 – amazing details about future events

Chap. 11 – chronicles the coming kings of Persia and Greece; the wars between the Ptolemies of Egypt and the Seleucids of Syria and the persecution led by Antiochus

Chap. 12 – God’s people will be saved out of tribulation and resurrected

Chap. 7-8 – Antiochus IV vs. Antichrist

Stephen Miller: Antiochus IV seems to be a type of the eschatological Antichrist. By examining the life of this ancient king, believers are instructed concerning the character and career of the future ruler. Many parallels exist between the two individuals, suggesting that **Antiochus prefigured the Antichrist:**

- Antiochus (**8:9**) and Antichrist (**7:8**) are symbolized by horns that were “*little*” or “*small*” at the beginning. Representing both kings as little horns supports the idea that one king prefigures the other.
- Antiochus was “*a stern-faced king*” (**8:23**), and Antichrist will have an “*imposing*” look (**7:20**). Both of these descriptions imply cruelty and harshness.
- Antiochus was “*a master of intrigue*” (**8:23**), and the brilliance of the Antichrist is suggested by the “*eyes*” of the horn (**7:8, 20**). The ability to offer seemingly correct solutions to the world's perplexing problems may be one factor that will catapult Antichrist to power.
- Antiochus had great power (**8:24**); Antichrist will have greater power (cf. **11:39; 2 Thess 2:9; Rev 13:7–8**). Yet **8:24** says that it was not Antiochus's “*own power*.” His power was that of **Satan**, who controlled him, and this satanic inspiration was the reason he attempted to destroy God's people, the Jews. Antichrist also will be energized by Satan (cf. **2 Thess 2:9; Rev 13:2**), and this is one reason he will attack God's people as well.
- Antiochus destroyed thousands (**8:24**); Antichrist will destroy more (**Rev 13:15; 16:13–16**).

- Antiochus prospered for a short while (8:24), and Antichrist will prosper for a brief time (11:36; Rev 17:12).
- Antiochus persecuted the saints (8:24); Antichrist also will oppress believers (7:21, 25; Rev 13:7).
- Antiochus was a deceiver (8:25); Antichrist will be the master deceiver (2 Thess 2:9; Rev 13:4, 14; 19:20).
- Antiochus was proud (8:25). He called himself Epiphanes (“the illustrious one” or “God manifest”), although the Jews called him Epimanes (“madman”). Antichrist, however, will be one of the most arrogant individuals the world has ever known (7:8, 11, 20, 25; 2 Thess 2:4; Rev 13:5).
- Antiochus blasphemed God (8:25); Antichrist will blaspheme God (7:25; 11:36; 2 Thess 2:4; Rev 13:5–6).
- Antiochus was not killed by human hand (8:25), nor will be the Antichrist (2 Thess 2:8; Rev 19:19–20).

Chap. 9 -- PROPHECY OF SEVENTY-SEVENS UNFOLDS ISRAEL’S FUTURE

9:24-27 – This prophecy pinpoints the chronology of the coming of the Messiah – Note that this prophecy was directed to the Jewish nation

*"Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy place. ²⁵ So you are to know and discern that **from** the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem **until** Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress."*

- starting point = decree – 444-445 BC
[there are several other decrees issued earlier]
 - Decrees by Cyrus (**Ezra 1**) and Darius I (**Ezra 6**) – these focus on the temple
 - Artaxerxes I’s First Decree (457 BC) – Given to Ezra (**Ezra 7**)
 - Artaxerxes I’s Second Decree (444/445 BC) – Given to Nehemiah (**2:1-8**)
- 483 years (69 X 7) or 173,880 days using 360 day prophetic years –
this leads to the date of the **Triumphal Entry** = the ending point
[Some calculations have the ending date as the baptism of Jesus when He entered public ministry]

We are living in the gap between Week 69 and Week 70 = the Church Age

Chap. 12:1-3 -- THE CLIMAX OF GOD’S PROGRAM FOR ISRAEL INVOLVES

- RESCUE FROM SEVERE TRIBULATION,
- RESURRECTION TO ETERNAL LIFE AND
- REWARD FOR FAITHFUL SERVICE

I.(1) RESCUE FROM SEVERE TRIBULATION

"Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued."

II. (:2) RESURRECTION TO ETERNAL LIFE – CONTRAST IN RESURRECTION DESTINY

"And many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt."

III. (:3) REWARD FOR FAITHFUL SERVICE -- CAPACITY TO SHINE AS STARS – RADIATING THE GLORY OF GOD

"And those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever."

John MacArthur: I really believe what you have here is this, the concept that in eternity we will be rewarded by the capacity to manifest the blazing glory of God. There are little stars and there are big stars as we look in the sky, right? They're all stars and they're all beauty – beautiful, but all of them have a different beauty.

And I believe in eternity we will shine as stars. And I believe that the capacity to glorify God will be dependent upon our faithfulness. We'll all shine like the brightness of the firmament. In other words, we will all have the capacity to eternally radiate the glory of God. We'll all be blazing suns in eternity. But there's a special glow for they that turn many to righteousness. They shall shine as the stars forever and ever.

Chap. 12:4-13 -- FINAL INSTRUCTIONS TO DANIEL REGARDING THE LAST DAYS GOD EXERCISES CONTROL OVER THE NATIONS UNTIL THE VERY END WHEN HE WILL SAVE AND PROSPER ISRAEL SO REMAIN FAITHFUL NOW IN ANTICIPATION OF FUTURE REWARD

Wayne Barber: There are six instructions that Daniel gets for the final days. Things that God wants him to be informed about, things that He wants him to do up until the time of the prophecy:

1. Daniel is to preserve his book for the people of the last days
2. Daniel is told the tribulation is necessary so that Israel might be saved
3. Daniel is to stop asking questions that don't concern him
4. Daniel is not to worry about Israel
5. Everything God told Daniel has a timetable to it
6. Daniel was told to stay faithful to the end and he will be rewarded

Vs. 12-13 *"How blessed is he who keeps waiting and attains to the 1,335 days! ¹³ But as for you, go your way to the end; then you will enter into rest and rise again for your allotted portion at the end of the age."*

REASONS TO STUDY THE BOOK:

- We need heroic examples of **uncompromising faith and courage** in standing up for God against the pressures of a Satanic dominated culture. How can we be holy and yet still have an impact on the world around us?

Chorus: Refrain:

Dare to be a Daniel!

Dare to stand alone!

Dare to have a purpose firm!

Dare to make it known!

- We need insights into **spiritual leadership**. How does God prepare a man for leadership? How does leadership manifest itself?
 - We need to be reminded of **God's sovereign control** over all the nations, over history and over our individual lives so that we come to rest in His Providential care.
 - We need to be **warned against pride** so that our confidence is not in our own adequacy but in the God who enables and delivers us.
 - We need the prophetic sections and the Messianic sections to give us confidence in God's faithfulness to His promises and **hope for the coming future manifestation of the kingdom of God**.
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APPENDIX:

Andrew Hill: The book of Daniel presents a “**theology of history**.” Theology is understood as the portrayal of the person and work of God as revealed in the Bible. History is considered the chronological record of significant events affecting a nation or institution (and often including an explanation of their causes). In one sense, God is always both “cause” and “effect” in biblical history since he “acts” in history so that Israel and the nations might know that he is the Lord (e.g., **Eze 5:5, 13**). The specific historical referent here is the nation of Israel as the people of God and the Hebrew institutions of Yahweh's temple and the Davidic monarchy.

Naturally this study of history spills over to include other nations since biblical Israel existed in a particular time and space continuum (cf. **Dt 7:6–8**). Beyond this, the destinies of Israel and all other people groups are entwined because God chose one nation to bless all nations (**Ge 12:1–3**). Daniel's “theology of history” is summarized in **Nebuchadnezzar's confession** that God lives forever, his dominion is eternal, he rules the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth, and nothing can prevent him from accomplishing his purposes in the world (**Da 4:3, 34–35**).

A theology of history was essential for the Israelites exiled in Babylonia because they suffered from an intense condition of theological shock. The four pillars of divine promise that undergirded Israel's confidence in Yahweh have been identified as: the irrevocability of God's (Sinaitic) covenant with Israel, Yahweh's ownership of the land of Canaan, Yahweh's eternal covenant with David, and Yahweh's residence in Jerusalem. How were the captive Hebrews to understand the reality that Jerusalem had been sacked, Yahweh's temple razed, the Davidic dynasty terminated, and a substantial population of Israelites deported to Babylonia?

The several distinct components comprising Daniel's theology of history may be outlined as follows:

- God is sovereign over his creation as the God of gods and Lord of kings (2:47), and he determines the destiny of nations (1:2), dispenses knowledge and understanding (1:17), possesses all power and wisdom (2:20), appoints and deposes kings (2:21), reveals deep and hidden things—including the future (2:22; 7:17–18; 8:19; 10:14)—exercises eternal dominion (4:3; 7:14), controls the fate of individuals (5:23), performs signs and wonders and rescues and saves (3:28–29; 6:27), and keeps his covenant of love (9:4). Davies summarizes that as the God of history Yahweh knows all, controls all, and rescues.

- The people of God living under his sovereign rule must trust in his control, accept responsibility for their actions, and look to the future in hope. Prayer is the vehicle for this hopeful outlook and the catalyst for change. Daniel's example and message assure the Hebrews that despite the fact that the Jerusalem temple—Yahweh's house of prayer—is destroyed, he still hears and answers prayer. Prayer to Yahweh may or may not bring deliverance (as the testimony of Daniel's three friends acknowledges; 3:16–18). That is not the point, however, but rather the posture of faithfulness toward God in the face of trial, whether that posture results in deliverance or martyrdom. It is through prayer that Israel maintains covenantal relationship with God (1Ki 8:30), and prayer is one means by which order is recovered out of chaos (1Ki 8:34, 36, 39, 43, 45, 50; cf. Jas 5:16).

- God's people living under his sovereign rule must discern that not all suffering is retributive -- based on the blessings and curses of covenantal relationship with Yahweh (cf. Dt 28). Daniel warns God's people of times of persecution and oppression ahead inflicted by the nations ruling over Israel (Da 7:25; 8:24; 11:16, 24). Unlike the divine judgment of the Babylonian exile, they need to know that this suffering is not necessarily punishment for sin but divine discipline for purification (11:35). Daniel makes it clear that this "*time of distress*" is temporary (11:32) and that the true people of God will persevere and experience deliverance (12:1). Death itself proves to be no barrier to God's sovereignty or faithfulness, as the promise of resurrection will bring vindication to the righteous who die as a result of the persecution (12:2–3).

- God's people living under his sovereign rule must recognize that a series of empires must rise and fall and that an interim period of "waiting" must elapse before the kingdom of God breaks into history (12:4, 9–13). This means God's promises for Israel's restoration after the exile, as forecast by Jeremiah (e.g., Jer 31:31–34) and Ezekiel (e.g., Eze 34:23–25; 37:24–25), have not failed but will be delayed until God's purposes are accomplished through the historical process of the rise and fall of nations. This ability to make known to his people such things pertaining to the future is both a mark of God's omniscience and an act of his grace (cf. Isa 41:21–22; 44:26–27).