

The Book of Daniel

[Taught by David DeWitt in Wisla, Poland, April 7-9, 2000]

INTRODUCTION

Daniel may be the only person in the Bible, besides Jesus Christ, of whom no sin is mentioned. Of course, Daniel was a sinner like the rest of us and saw himself as a sinner (9:20). Apparently, as a teenager, we're guessing that he was around 16 at the time, Daniel was taken into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar. The problem with dating Daniel's age is that this is the only framework we have to go on, but we'll use that to estimate his age as we go along. The common practice was to take teenagers into the king's service.

As far as we know, Daniel never married, and he never returned to the land of Judah after he was taken, even though he lived all the way through the captivity. There were some who lived all the way through the captivity who did return to Judah. Daniel was from the tribe of Judah. He may have been from the lineage of David (1:3). He was physically attractive and intelligent. He was a contemporary of Ezekiel, both having been taken captive. In Ezekiel chapters 14 and 28, Ezekiel refers to Daniel as a righteous man.

While Ezekiel lived among the captives, Daniel lived with the king. Daniel served at least 3 kings, and much like Joseph, was promoted over his contemporaries. He began by serving Nebuchadnezzar, the most powerful man in the world. He saw the fall of Babylon and the rise of the Medo-Persian Empire. He saw the world go through a major transition of empires.

He was a man of prayer and a student of Scripture. He was also skilled in the literature and wisdom of Babylon. He spoke and wrote Hebrew and Aramaic (the main Babylonian language). He changed from Hebrew to Aramaic in chapter 2 of the book.

Daniel wrote the book that bears his name (confirmed in the Gospels—Matthew 24). Daniel was not listed as a prophecy book when it was written. Daniel was not considered to be a prophet. He was not called a prophet during his life. His book was part of the Scripture, but it was considered under the sacred writings, not prophecy. Daniel demonstrated that it is possible to consistently live for God in the midst of a society ruled by pagans. The reason is, God is in control of those pagan societies. What we see repeatedly in the book is that God's sovereign hand is over the nations of the world.

THEME

The sovereignty of God, over ungodly societies, allows believers in God to live in those societies.

TIMES OF DANIEL

Babylon and Egypt are at opposite ends of the Fertile Crescent and had a hatred for each other, like mega-powers competing for control of the world. In May-June 605 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar ends that struggle by capturing Egypt. Then he began working his way back to Babylon by capturing Syria and Palestine. Then his father died, and he returned to Babylon to be crowned emperor. In September, he returned to Jerusalem and took Daniel captive. In 597 Nebuchadnezzar returned to Jerusalem again because of the rebellion of Jehoichin, and that's when Ezekiel and his wife with 10,000 others were taken captive. Nebuchadnezzar returned another time in 588 (fulfilling the prophecy of Ezekiel against Jerusalem), and he killed the remaining Jews and destroyed the temple (586 B.C.).

The 70 years of captivity of the Jews saw a lot of cultural changes for them. They took the Aramaic language as their own, which they were still speaking at the time of Christ. The other change was the creation of the synagogue. It became the center of worship, education, and their whole social life. When they came back from the captivity, they not only rebuilt the temple, they also built synagogues. After the war of the Maccabees, the Pharisees separated from the Maccabees because the Maccabees set up a non-levitical priesthood in the temple. When the temple was destroyed in 70 A.D., the synagogues were the only place left for worship, and they built them all over the world.

The first 6 chapters are in chronological order. The rest are not. In a sense, there are two books of Daniel overlaid on top of each other. One is the story of Daniel's life and his response and challenges. The other is the prophecy that is foretold through Daniel's visions and interpretations. Unlike other prophecy books, Daniel tells things in sequential order. There are three places in Scripture that prophecy is given in sequence: Daniel, Matthew 24, and Revelation 6–19.

Daniel's prophecies also differ from the others in that they give pinpoint detail about the future. Daniel's prophecies are so accurate, that until the recent discovery of the Qumran scrolls, liberals dated Daniel in 150 B.C. But it's been confirmed that Daniel was copied as early as 250 B.C., and most of the specific accurate prophecies that Daniel makes are after that time. Daniel predicts with detail the war with Antiochus Epiphanes and his abomination of desolation over the temple. But his predictions don't stop there. He also predicts a future 7-year tribulation, and expands this abomination of desolation into a future tribulation. Jesus confirms that what Daniel talks about is the time before His Second Coming (Matthew 24:15), but Daniel also predicts a future kingdom of the Messiah on the earth.

When Judah was besieged, Jehoichin was the oldest son of good King Josiah. He was made king in the place of his younger brother by Pharaoh Neco in 609 B.C. He had been a puppet king to Egypt for several years and then to Babylon. When Egypt fell (Jeremiah 22:13-19), Jehoichin wasted the state funds building a new palace for himself. He also destroyed Jeremiah's writings, which warned of his future judgment. He died in 598 B.C.. He is the king when Nebuchadnezzar conquers Jerusalem.

God's Sovereignty Over Daniel (chapter 1)

(1) Daniel's circumstances, character, and commitment (chapter 1)

v. 2—Along with Jehoichin, Nebuchadnezzar took many of the vessels of the house of God back to Babylon and put them in the houses of his own gods.

v. 3—Then the king ordered Ashpenaz to bring him some of the royal family and nobles.

v. 4—Youths in whom was no defect, to convert them to Babylonian ways and gods, i.e. to make Babylonians out of them.

v. 5-7—They tried to convert them with four things: (1) to think like the world (education of literature), (2) to speak like the world (the language of the Chaldeans), (3) to eat and drink like the world, and (4) to change their names to identify them with the world. Daniel was called Beltshazzar ("may Bel protect your life"). "Daniel" meant "God is your judge." In each case the Hebrew name contained the name of the God of Israel and the Babylonian name contained the name of a Babylonian god. What is compromise with the world and what isn't? God gave them knowledge of the world's wisdom (v. 17).

Times are bad. The temple has been destroyed. The articles of the temple are taken to temples of foreign gods. The upcoming leaders are taken to be converted to the Babylonian ways. Their names are changed to honor the false gods. Yet in the middle of all this, we have the story of one of the most godly men of all history.

v. 8— "But Daniel." In a sense, this is the theme of the book: "but Daniel." First, Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king's food. Since "defile" was used, it may mean food contrary to the law. It was against Daniel's personal convictions. One of the characteristics of Daniel was that he had strong personal habits that disciplined his life by his own choice (but he didn't hold others to the same discipline—that's legalism). We see the same with his prayer life in 6:10, where he has the habit of praying on his knees three times a day toward Jerusalem. None of that was commanded in the Mosaic Law. And he was willing to stand up for those convictions. In this case, it has to do with his physical lifestyle. Daniel did not rebel. He wasn't making demands. He

asked for, made a request for, permission to continue to be a vegetarian.

v. 9—God honored Daniel's self-discipline with favor and lovingkindness in the sight of the officials. Daniel created a discipline which was not in Scripture, but God honored it.

v. 10-13—The commander says, "I'm afraid I will lose my head." Why? Because he assumed the king's food was better than Daniel's vegetable diet. Most people will assume that what is accepted by the general society is true. Daniel does not get his convictions from what others believe. Daniel says, "Test us. Gives us 10 days of vegetables, and see who looks better." In all Daniel's dealing with the pagan world, he never asks them to have blind faith or mysticism. Daniel proves everything. Everyone being a vegetarian is not a biblical virtue. The point is not that everyone eat only vegetables. Daniel had a diet that was stricter than the Mosaic Law.

v. 17—God gave them intelligence. Daniel and his 3 friends were in the world but not of the world, but that did not mean that they didn't learn the wisdom and ways of the world. They were not ignorant of the pagan world in which they lived. Yet they were godly in the midst of their knowledge of the ungodly. So the secret to godly character was not in avoiding knowledge of the world. The problem is not in not in knowing the world. The problem is in knowing that the world is wrong. Daniel was given special ability the others didn't have to understand visions and dreams.

v. 20—Actually, they knew the pagan world better than the pagans, 10 times better.

God's Sovereignty over Gentile Kings (chapters 2–6)

(2) Nebuchadnezzar dreamed about an image (chapter 2)

v. 1—From the context, Nebuchadnezzar had the same dream over and over. He was troubled.

v. 2—He called in the officials who served the king, sorcerers, and those idealizing n magic.

v. 3—"dreams" in v. 1, now "dream" in v. 3. The same dream over and over.

v. 4—The Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic (and the text remains in Aramaic through chapter 7). He says for Nebuchadnezzar to tell them his dream.

v. 5—Nebuchadnezzar was a realist. He wants them to tell him the dream and its interpretation. Anyone could come up with an interpretation. But can you tell him the dream?

v. 7—They want to know the dream.

v. 9—The king accuses them of conspiring together to come up with an interpretation. He says to tell him the dream now.

v. 10-11—They say: (1) There's not a man on the earth who could tell the king the dream. (2) No king has ever asked this of their magicians. (3) Only the gods could do this.

v. 12—The king becomes very furious, and he gave orders to destroy all the wise men of Babylon, which would include Daniel and his friends.

v. 14—Daniel replied "with discretion and discernment" instead of magic and mysticism. His discernment was totally dependent on God.

v. 15—Daniel was not in the group who had talked to the king. Therefore, we can conclude that Daniel was not involved with the magicians. So Daniel was known as a wise man (v. 12) but not involved in mystical religion.

v. 16-18—First Daniel asks for time. Then he goes to his friends to ask them to pray to God.

v. 20-23—What Daniel says about God when his prayer is answered:

(1) Let the name of Elohim be blessed forever.

(2) Wisdom and power belong to Him, He is the source.

(3) It is God Who changes the times (from v. 1:28, He also changes political times, i.e. kingdoms, also see Romans 13:1-4).

(4) He gives wisdom to wise men and knowledge to men of understanding. (No matter how wise and knowledgeable you are, you should be humble because it doesn't come from you, it comes from God.)

(5) It's God Who reveals the hidden things. He is the source of revelation. There are no secrets from God. He knows what is in the darkness (i.e., to us it is darkness). Light dwells in Him. He brings light to the darkness. He doesn't bring opinions or political perspective. When Jesus comes back, He's not going to take sides, He's going to take over!

(6) He gives thanks, for God has given him the wisdom and power to make known what he requested.

v. 24—He went to his immediate superior, who was to destroy them, and said to take him to the king.

v. 25—He has found a man among the exiles to make the dream known.

v. 27—The king asks if Daniel can make known the dream and interpretation. Daniel says, "No." If he would have said, "Yes," he'd be guilty of pride, taking the credit. His answer is almost the same as the answer of the other wise men. These men are right. No man can do that.

v. 28—However, there's a God of revelation Who brings light to darkness Who can help, Who reveals mysteries (another theme in Daniel). God made known to Nebuchadnezzar what will take place in the latter days.

v. 30—Not because of Daniel's wisdom was this made known to him. The reason was so the interpretation would be made known to the king. All the training, wisdom, etc. that the king has done with all these people will not get Nebuchadnezzar the knowledge of this dream. There are certain things we cannot know, no matter how much wisdom we have. General revelation comes through nature (Romans 1) and through our conscience (Romans 2). You can know about God through general revelation, but it will not lead you to special revelation (the specific words of God and the person of Christ). You can't go from general to specific.

v. 31-35—You were looking and saw a statue. The head was refined, processed gold. The arms and breast were silver, the belly and thighs were bronze, the legs were iron, and the toes were partly iron and clay. A stone came which was not cut out with human hands, and it hit the image in the feet, and the feet dissolved into dirt. The stone grew into a mountain. Daniel has Nebuchadnezzar's attention!

v. 36-38—Nebuchadnezzar is the head of gold. Each of these segments are a kingdom.

v. 39—Another kingdom, which will be inferior to you. Two arms = Medes and Persians. A third is bronze = Greek kingdom of Alexander the Great.

v. 40—A fourth kingdom as strong as iron. Two legs = Roman Empire, with one leg in Rome and one in Constantinople.

v. 41—The fifth kingdom are the feet and ten toes. Daniel emphasizes the ten later in the book. This is going to be a divided kingdom.

v. 42—The toes were part iron and part clay. These kingdoms seem connected to the legs yet separated from the legs. These ten toes represent the ten nations under the antichrist. Therefore, his kingdom comes from the same place as the Roman Empire.

v. 44—The sixth kingdom is set up by the God of kingdom:

- (1) It will never be destroyed.
- (2) It will not be left for another people.
- (3) It will crush and put an end to all the other kingdoms.
- (4) It will endure forever.

v. 45—The dream is true and the interpretation is trustworthy.

v. 46—The king is impressed.

v. 47—Your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings.

v. 48—The king still sees the ability in Daniel. He promotes Daniel to rule over Babylon, the main providence, and made him head over the other wise men. Why did Daniel accept the promotion based on the false assumption that Daniel had some special ability beyond ordinary men, which Daniel had already denied? I suggest (speculation) two reasons:

- (1) Because Daniel saw it as an act of God, not a promotion of Daniel. Not only is everything in the sovereign plan of God, every good thing comes from God.
- (2) There was no sin involved in the promotion.

Application: If you are given wealth or a position of prominence, accept it as from God. There is no sin in having or enjoying wealth.

v. 49—Daniel makes a request that his friends become ministers over the other providences of Babylon.

(3) Nebuchadnezzar built an image (the fiery furnace incident) (chapter 3)

v. 1—Nebuchadnezzar made an image 90 feet high. It could have had a stand with a statue on it. The width is 9 feet at the base. It was set on the Plain of Dura, about 4 km southeast of Babylon.

v. 2-3—The king assembled everyone for the dedication of the statue.

v. 4—A gathering apparently from different languages in Babylon, probably for the same reason the Hebrews were there, people the Babylonians had conquered and brought there as captives.

v. 5—When they hear the sound of the instruments, they were to fall down and worship the golden image.

v. 6—Whoever didn't do that would be thrown into the fiery furnace.

v. 7—All the people did that, just as the people will accept the mark of the beast in the tribulation.

v. 12—There are certain Jews, whom Nebuchadnezzar has appointed over provinces, who refuse to bow down. Where's Daniel? No one knows. Maybe he was away on a trip for Nebuchadnezzar.

v. 13—Nebuchadnezzar doesn't take the word of the others. He brings in the Jews and talks to them personally. He tells them if they now bow down to the image, he'll forget the whole thing. Nebuchadnezzar's character: (1) willing to give them another chance, prove it to him, not based on someone's accusation. Even though the Babylonian gods were not all-powerful (apparently Nebuchadnezzar had more power than they did), he believed the gods had some power, and he didn't want to irritate those gods. (2) From v. 19, he had a lot of pride.

v. 16—The Jews said they didn't need to give the king an answer. They said that the God they serve is able to deliver them from the furnace and from the king's hand. If He does not, they still will not worship the king's gods or

image. God's faithful people believe that God could, but not necessarily would, deliver them. They did not expect God to deliver them from the furnace. They believe God will deliver them out of the hand of Nebuchadnezzar (v. 17) either through death or deliverance from the furnace. Therefore, Nebuchadnezzar never did have control over them. He just thought he did.

v. 19—The king made the fire 7 times hotter than normal. Archaeological discoveries of furnaces the Babylonians used for making bricks were like a huge cylinder with a ramp going up to the top. It had an opening near the bottom. The men throwing them were killed from the intense heat (v. 22).

v. 23—A fourth man appeared with the Jews at the bottom of the furnace, "one like a son of the gods." A divine being.

v. 28—It could have been an angel, as Nebuchadnezzar thought. It is more likely a preincarnate appearance of Christ. He recognizes this God is greater than his gods, who could never deliver anyone from the furnace. He doesn't think God is the only God but only the best of the other gods.

v. 29—A decree similar to the one to worship the image, i.e., it is safest to worship all the real gods and not to anger any of them.

Progress in Nebuchadnezzar's thinking:

- (1) Unbelief
- (2) Belief that there is a God (2:47)
- (3) That God is a God of revelation (2:47)
- (4) That God is involved in the lives of His people (3:28; 4:3)
- (5) That God is sovereign over an earthly kingdom (4:3)
- (6) At the end of chapter 4, you come to God in humility, not pride, from faith and not works.

(4) Nebuchadnezzar learned humility (chapter 4)

v. 1—Written by Nebuchadnezzar but included by Daniel. Ten years after chapter 3. Written to let everyone know about the God of Israel.

v. 3—God's kingdom is everlasting.

v. 4—His dream. Then he brought in all the wise men of Babylon. This time he asks them for an interpretation only.

v. 7—He told them the dream, but they could not make the interpretation.

v. 8-9—Then Daniel, the chief of the wise men (magicians) came in, and Nebuchadnezzar told him the dream.

Why did Nebuchadnezzar call the magicians in the first place, since they couldn't do it before? And why did he tell them the dream this time? The text doesn't say. But a guess is that he still believed in the power of his own gods and didn't want to anger them by only asking Daniel's God. He probably told them the dream because he knew they couldn't tell him but thought they might be able to interpret if he told them the dream. They knew it would be false, so they didn't make anything up.

v. 10—A dream about a tree.

v. 11—A large tree.

v. 12—The leaves and fruit of the tree were very beautiful. The beasts and birds could live under it.

v. 13—A holy one from heaven came.

v. 14-17—And chopped down the tree. He said:

(1) Chop down the tree and cut off its branches.

(2) Leave the stump with the roots and put an iron band around it.

(3) Let Nebuchadnezzar be changed and eat grass like a beast, and his mind would be changed to be like a beast, for 7 years,

(4) in order that the living may know that the Most High is ruler over mankind.

v. 18—Nebuchadnezzar asks Daniel to tell him the interpretation.

v. 19—Daniel is troubled. He liked the king. He said, "If only the dream applied to those who hate you instead of to you."

v. 20-22—Nebuchadnezzar is the tree.

v. 23—The chopping down of the tree, etc. are all things that are going to happen to Nebuchadnezzar.

v. 25—Nebuchadnezzar will be driven away from mankind and dwell with the beasts of the field, and his hair grows long as eagles' feathers, until 7 years (used in Daniel 9 of years) pass. Until you realize the Most High rules over mankind. But his kingdom will endure.

v. 27—Daniel's advice? Repentance (breaking away from your sins and doing righteousness, i.e., show mercy to the poor in the hope of prolonging your prosperity). So for 7 years, Nebuchadnezzar would be insane.

v. 29—It doesn't happen for a year. Why? Nebuchadnezzar perhaps listened to Daniel and took his advice for a while. Or he may have been away for a year.

v. 30—One of greatest statements of pride in the Scripture.

The city of Babylon had walls 60 miles long and about 15 miles wide. They were 80 feet thick and 300 feet high. It had a 100 gates. It was filled with roads and canals with boats. The River Euphrates flowed through the city. His palace was on the wall. He looked at his city and said, "By my greatness I built it."

v. 31—While the words were in his mouth, a voice came from heaven, saying, "Your sovereignty has been removed from you."

v. 33—"Immediately the word concerning Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled." He became insane, thinking he was an animal. He was probably kept within the city, hid from the public for 7 years.

v. 34-37—At the end of the 7 years, he raised his eyes to heaven, and his reason returned to him. He recognizes the sovereignty of God over all the kingdoms. "He does according to His will, both with the hosts of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth."

v. 37—A contrast to v. 30. "Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt, and honor the King of Heaven." "He is able to humble those who walk in pride." The key for serving God is humility, not pride. Pride is never good. Humility is always good. Pride is the root of evil. Humility is the root of good.

(5) Belshazzar saw the handwriting on the wall (chapter 5)

Nebuchadnezzar died in 562. He was succeeded by his son Amelmarduk (lit. "evil Marduk"—Jeremiah 52:31). Nebuchadnezzar also had a daughter, who with her husband murdered Amelmarduk, enabling her husband (Nargel-sharezer) to be king for awhile. He was succeeded by his son Labashi-Marduk, who was murdered by a group of people led by Nabonadus. Then Nabonadus became king. (We don't know the relationship between Nabonadus and Nebuchadnezzar, though most believe he was a grandson of Nebuchadnezzar in some way, pos-

sibly the son of Amelmarduk). Nabanadus retired to Arabia and left his son Belshazzar in charge of Babylon. So Nabanadus is first ruler, Belshazzar is second ruler, and he promises the third ruler spot to whoever can interpret the handwriting on the wall.

As this chapter opens, Babylon is being besieged by the Persians, who surrounded the city and had been for some time. Probably the purpose of this great feast was to give encouragement to the nobles, that they had plenty of food, etc. and didn't have to worry about the army.

v. 3—They were drinking out of the vessels taken from the Temple in Jerusalem.

v. 4—They praised the gods of gold and silver.

Three sins: (1) they were disgracing the vessels designed for worshipping God, (2) they were praising the gods of gold and silver, and (3) they were living in luxury (which was offered to Daniel, and he turned it down in verses 16-17).

v. 5—The finger of a man's hand began writing on the plaster of the wall.

v. 6—The king's face became pale and his knees began knocking together.

v. 7—The king yells out in the middle of the party that anyone who can interpret the inscription will be given luxury and the third rulership of the kingdom.

v. 8—But no one could interpret it.

v. 9—The king is even more afraid.

v. 10—The queen (not his wife, as mentioned in v. 2). Most likely she is a queen mother or queen grandmother (such as the wife of Nabonadus or the daughter of Nebuchadnezzar). She was aware of things back in the time of Nebuchadnezzar.

v. 11—There is a man in the kingdom who has the spirit of the holy gods. Belshazzar seems unaware of him.

v. 12—She uses his Hebrew name of "Daniel."

v. 13—The king explains the situation to Daniel.

v. 16—Repeats the promise of luxury to Daniel. But, of course, this is worthless because the city was about to fall to the Persians.

v. 17—Daniel says for the king to keep his gifts. But he would make known the interpretation.

v. 18-21—Daniel gives the history of Nebuchadnezzar from God's point of view. God gave him his position, he became proud, and God removed it from him until he recognized that God is sovereign.

v. 22-24—Daniel gives theological perspective and a context in which to understand the inscription. The point is that Belshazzar has not learned anything (humbled his heart) from what happened to Nebuchadnezzar. Humility is hard for people living in luxury. (1) He exalted himself against the God of heaven, (2) he is drinking wine, etc. from vessels of the Temple, which were meant for worship, (3) he has praised the gods of gold and silver, and (4) he has not glorified the God Who has Belshazzar's very life breath in His hands (see Romans 1).

v. 25-27—The inscription: "Mena" means numbered (God has numbered Belshazzar's time), "tekel" means weighed (God has judged Belshazzar and has found him guilty), and "upharsin" means divided (a figure of speech meaning that his army has been divided and therefore defeated).

v. 28—God has given Belshazzar and the Babylonians over to the Persians.

v. 29—He gives Daniel purple clothes and the third rulership of the kingdom. That lasted only a few hours. That night, the Persians diverted the Euphrates River which ran under the city walls (by digging a canal and draining the water into a lake—the Babylonians had a gate that went down into the water. By lowering the water below the level of the gate, they could go under the gate) and entered the city. One of the greatest kingdoms of the world came to an end in one night.

v. 30—That night Belshazzar was killed.

v. 31—Darius the Mede became king of Babylon.

(6) Darius put Daniel in the lions' den (chapter 7)

v. 1—It seemed good to Darius to appoint 120 satraps over the kingdom.

v. 2—With 3 commissioners over the 120. We do not know exactly who Darius is. Three theories: (1) what most people believe, he is a man named Gabaro who governed Babylon under Cyrus, the king of Persia. (2) Darius is another name for Cyrus himself. (3) Another name for Cambysis, Cyrus' son.

v. 3—Daniel was increasing over the other commissioners, and the king planned on appointing him over the others. (Some think it was because Daniel had predicted the Persian victory over Babylon). Daniel is about 80 years old now. The others are jealous and look for a way to accuse Daniel, but they can't find anything wrong with him.

v. 4—Four things said about Daniel: (1) they can find no ground for accusation, (2) no corruption, (3) he was faithful to the king, and (4) no negligence. These 4 things, I suggest, should describe our job performance.

v. 5—They conclude that they need to find something against him with regard to Daniel's God. So (5) Daniel was loyal to God, which was greater than his faithfulness to the king.

v. 7—The commissioners and others come to the king with the idea that no one could pray to anyone else for 30 days. They lied to the king, saying "all the commissioners" had agreed, obviously without Daniel's permission. So the king agreed to it, thinking Daniel also agreed to it.

v. 8—He had the power of Cyrus, but in v. 28 the two seem separate. Darius ruled Babylon for only one year, under Cyrus (539-538 B.C.). After that, Cyrus appointed his son Cambysis as king of Babylon. Cyrus was king until 530, which is 6 years after Daniel died.

v. 10— "When Daniel knew the document was signed," he intentionally broke the law. This was no accident. He intended to do it. Civil disobedience is required when the laws demand that we break the Word of God. Daniel's breaking the law reveals a hierarchy of values—Loyalty should ultimately be given only to God. Five prayer principles of Daniel: (1) he prayed in his own house, (2) he opened his windows toward Jerusalem, (3) he was kneeling on his knees, (4) he prayed three times a day, and (5) as he had been doing previously, it was his habit. Apparently he prayed out loud, because they caught him doing it.

v. 14—After they reported it to the king, the king was distressed and tried to do something to get Daniel out of trouble, but it didn't work. You cannot break the law of the Persians. The law is more important than the dictator. It prevents overthrow of the dictator because he's not the one with the power, the law is. He also had no god that was greater than the law. The problem of the legalist (and the heathen of Romans 1) is that they worship the creation instead of the Creator. The legalist worships the law created by the Creator rather than the Creator. Legalists always add laws, then they evaluate others and themselves by the laws they've created. They worship the law of God rather than the God of the law. Laws show you something of God, but God is much greater than the law!

v. 16—Darius couldn't get beyond his law. So Daniel is thrown into the lions' den, with the words, "Your God Who you constantly serve will deliver you."

v. 20—But he's not sure, because in the morning he said, "Has your God delivered you?"

v. 22— God shut the mouths of the lions because "I was found innocent before Him," and he was also innocent before the king. He said he committed no crime. However, he did break the law, if the law is the final word. But he didn't commit a crime against the heart of God or the heart of the king. Daniel did nothing horizontally against the satraps. People do not cause your problems. God does. The resolution of your problems is not other people changing. It's God.

v. 23—The king is happy Daniel is alive.

v. 24—The king ordered that those who accused Daniel to be thrown into the lions' den, along with their wives and children.

God is revealed to unbelievers through the ministry of God to believers, as they see that ministry in the flesh, in believers. It's the theme of the book of Acts. Ministry is first and foremost incarnational. People will identify God as your God and see your faith. Whether you like it or not, you are a representative of God. Darius identified God as the God of Daniel not the God of Israel.

This ends the chronological story of Daniel.

The Sovereignty of God Over the Nations (chapters 7–12)

(7) Daniel saw a vision of four beasts and the Ancient of Days (chapter 7)

v. 1—14 years before the fall of Babylon described in chapter 5 and before the lions' den of chapter 6. Daniel is about 68 years old here. Daniel now tells us about a dream that he had.

v. 2—First of all, the winds were stirring up the great sea (probably the Mediterranean).

v. 3—Four great beasts come up out of the sea. Each beast conquers the one before it. So each kingdom conquers the kingdom before it. The beasts of chapter 7 parallel the status of chapter 2.

The lion is Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians.

v. 5—The bear is the Medo-Persians (raised on one side because the Persians are more powerful than the Medes). 3 ribs represent 3 conquests: (Babylon, Egypt, Lydia [Asia Minor]).

v. 6—The leopard with four heads and wings is Alexander the Great and the Greek Empire. The 4 wings indicate how fast his campaign was. The 4 heads represent the 4 generals who divided up his kingdom when he died. They are over Asia Minor, Egypt, Syria, and Macedonia (Greece itself).

v. 7—A fourth, dreadful beast, devours, crushes, and tramples down. But it is "different" in that it had ten horns. It has a little horn that comes up among the ten horns. It has eyes like a man, and a mouth that utters great boasts.

(In v. 24 it is expanded.) This is the transition between the Roman Empire and the Empire of the Antichrist. The little horn represents the Antichrist. It's different from the other kingdoms in that: (1) His kingdom is global, not just Mediterranean. (2) It's directly related to Satan. (3) It includes a global religion. None of the other kingdoms did that. (4) It focuses on destroying all the saints. There has been nothing in history like this little horn, so it is still a future kingdom.

v. 9-10, 13-14—Very similar to Revelation 4-5. One like the Son of Man, the Lamb Who was slain. This is the second appearance of Christ in Daniel. The first was in the fiery furnace of chapter 3. Jesus often refers to Himself as the Son of Man. To Him was given glory, dominion, and a kingdom (1000-year millennial kingdom of Revelation 20). It will not be destroyed. The believers in that kingdom will be ushered into the New Jerusalem. This is One Who is equal to God, greater than the angels, referred to as God, worthy of worship, same in essence but separate from and in submission to God the Father.

v. 16—Daniel asks the exact meaning of these things.

v. 17—The beasts are kingdoms on earth.

v. 18—The saints will receive the kingdom.

v. 19—Daniel wants to know more about the 4th beast that was different.

v. 21—The Tribulation (Matthew 24, Revelation 6-18)

v. 22—The Second Coming (Revelation 19) and the Millennial Kingdom.

v. 23—The fourth kingdom is different because it devours the whole earth.

v. 25—(1) He will speak out against God. (2) He'll wear down the saints (in the tribulation). (3) He'll try to change the times and the laws. (4) He has power for 3 1/2 years called the Great Tribulation.

v. 26—His judgment. He is devoured and destroyed forever.

v. 27—Start of the Millennial Kingdom, extended to the everlasting New Jerusalem.

v. 28—The revelation now ended. Daniel's thoughts were greatly alarmed. He kept the matter to himself.

(8) Daniel saw a vision of a ram, a goat, and a small horn (chapter 8)

v. 1—In the 3rd year of Belshazzar, 2 years after chapter 7. Now we return to the Hebrew language.

v. 2—Daniel has another vision. He's in a citadel of Susa (Esther 1:1-9), by a canal.

v. 3—He sees a ram with 2 horns, one longer than the other (representing the Medo-Persian empire). It was butting in all directions.

v. 5—A male goat comes along, from the west, travelling over the surface of the whole earth (great speed). The goat had one prominent horn. This is the Greek Empire, with Alexander the Great.

v. 7—Alexander comes against Persia. He's enraged against Persia. Alexander hurled the Persians down and trampled them (334-331 B.C.).

v. 8—Alexander magnifies himself. As soon as he becomes mighty, he becomes broken, and is replaced by 4 horns (four generals: Cassander in Macedonia, Lycimicus in Asia Minor, Seleucus over Syria, and Ptolemy in Egypt).

v. 9—Out of them comes a small horn, which is not the same as the little horn of chapter 7 (the Antichrist), which came out of the Roman Empire. This comes out of the Greek Empire (Antiochus Epiphanes), toward Egypt, Babylon, and Palestine.

v. 10—The hosts of heaven are probably the Jews.

v. 11—The commander probably refers to God. Antiochus removes the regular sacrifice in Jerusalem.

v. 12—The regular sacrifices are transgressed.

v. 13—Daniel hears the holy ones (angels) ask how long this interruption of the sacrifices will take place.

v. 14—The answer is—for 2300 evenings and mornings (days), and the holy place will be restored.

Antiochus Epiphanes stopped the sacrifice on September 6, 171 B.C.

The sacrifices were restored on December 25, 165 B.C. (Jewish Hanukkah).

$171 - 165 = 6$ years times 365 days a year = 2,190 days

September 6 to December 25 is $30 + 30 + 31$ (October) + 19 (25th - 6th) = 110 days

$2,190$ days + 110 days = $2,300$ days (just as Daniel says in 8:14).

v. 15—Daniel sought to understand the vision. There was one like a man standing nearby.

v. 16—He heard a voice by the canal (Jesus) calling to the angel Gabriel to come give Daniel an understanding of the vision.

v. 17—Gabriel says it pertains to the times of the end (the end of the times of the Gentiles ruling Israel) but not the end of the world (v. 19, 23).

v. 21—The goat represents Greece and Alexander the Great. The four generals got power after fighting for it for 23 years. So they are not as powerful as Alexander.

v. 23—A description of Antiochus IV Epiphanes [glorious manifestation of God] (see 1 Maccabees 1, which covers this history.) The point is that worldly sinful behavior succeeds in the world! (1) He is insolent (insulting) and (2) he is skilled in intrigue.

v. 24—(3) He is powerful and (4) he will destroy.

v. 25—(5) He is shrewd, causing deceit to succeed. (6) He magnifies himself in his heart. (7) He opposes the Prince of Princes (may refer to Christ—extending this description of Antiochus on to the Antichrist). (8) He will be broken without human agency. He died of insanity and a disease of the bowels.

v. 26—Daniel is exhausted and sick for days because of this vision. There was none to explain it to him.

(9) As an answer to prayer, Daniel learned of the future 70 sevens from Gabriel (chapter 9)

v. 1—In the first year of Darius, son of Ahasuerus (538 B.C.), 2 years before Daniel's death (82 or 83 years old here).

v. 2—Daniel was studying the number of years written by Jeremiah the prophet. Daniel studied prophecy and took the numbers literally.

v. 3—He prayed: (1) It was accompanied by fasting and (2) in the context of humility (sackcloth and ashes).

v. 4—(3) He first addresses God theologically, mentioning several attributes of God (His greatness, He keeps His promises, His lovingkindness toward those who love Him and keep His commandments).

v. 5—(4) He confesses his sin and the sin of his people, listing them specifically: acted wickedly, turned aside from God's commandments.

v. 6—We have not listened to Your servants, the prophets.

v. 7—(5) God is the source of all good, and humans are all sinners.

v. 8—(6) He acknowledges the reason they are sinners because they sin against God.

v. 9—(7) He recognizes that forgiveness needs to come from God, not from other people (see Psalm 51).

v. 12, 14—(8) Daniel recognizes that God is a God of judgment. Justice is another attribute of God.

v. 13—(9) Daniel says the judgments of God are according to the revealed Word of God, namely, the Law of Moses. (10) The purpose of the earthly judgment of Israel and the biblical announcement of our judgment is to bring about our repentance.

v. 15—(11) Daniel reviews something of the history of God's work with His people. He says that God is not only involved with His people, He has made a name for Himself. He left us with proof of Who He is, a God of history and revelation.

v. 18—(12) An essential part of our prayer life—Daniel makes a strong appeal for God to respond, not based on our works but on God's compassion.

Gabriel's Fantastic Revelation

v. 20—In the middle of Daniel's prayer, the angel Gabriel, whom he saw in a vision previously, now comes to him.

v. 21—Gabriel comes to interrupt Daniel's prayer.

v. 23—Those in heaven say Daniel is highly esteemed.

v. 24—70 periods of 7 have been decreed to finish up everything for your people (Jews).

v. 25—From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Messiah, the Prince, there will be 69 periods of 7.

v. 26—After the total of 69 periods of 7, the Messiah will be cut off, and a prince who is to come will destroy Jerusalem and the Temple. There will be a flood of trouble.

v. 27—The prince who is to come will make a firm covenant for one period of 7. In the middle of the 7, he will put a stop to sacrifice. Then on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, until a complete destruction is poured out on the one who makes desolate.

Jewish calendar—

$69 \times 7 = 483$ years \times 360 days a year (Babylonians established 360 degrees to a circle, 360 days to a year, and 60 minutes to an hour)

$483 \times 360 = 173,880$ days

Decree to rebuild Jerusalem was March 5, 444 B.C. (Nehemiah 2:1-8)

March 30, 33 A.D. is Triumphal Entry of Christ into Jerusalem, which is 173,880 days from the decree

Gregorian Calendar—

476 years x 365.24219879 = 173,855 + 7 hours
plus 25 days from March 5 to March 30 = 173,880 days

(10) Daniel was visited by an angel caught in spiritual warfare (chapter 10)

v. 1—In third year of Cyrus, King of Persia, a message was revealed to Daniel, but we're not told what the message is (except for the vague description in v. 14). It's one of great conflict. Probably the future tribulation period.

v. 2—Daniel had been fasting and mourning for 3 weeks, probably because he saw the destruction of the 70th week (Matthew 24, Revelation 6-18).

v. 4—After 21 days of fasting, he was on the banks of the Tigris River. He looked and saw a man (who is an angel).

v. 5—Here's some observations about angels: (1) He looked like a man and was called a man. (2) He had clothes on, dressed in linen, with a belt of pure gold around his waist. Very simple dress.

v. 6—(3) His physical description—bright, eyes like torches, arms and feet like polished bronze, words like the sound of waters.

v. 7—(4) Daniel, alone, saw the vision. They restrict their appearance to whom they choose.

v. 9—(5) At the sound of his words, Daniel fell asleep on the ground.

v. 11—(6) The angel was aware of Daniel's situation and Daniel's being considered of high esteem. Therefore, angels know spiritual condition of people.

v. 12—(7) Angels are messengers from God in answering our prayers.

v. 13—(8) The demons of the kingdom of Persia were withstanding him for the 21 days Daniel was praying, so the angel couldn't get through. They can't sin but they are not all-powerful. They're not omniscient or omnipotent. He wrestled for 21 days before he went back to get help to overcome them. He miscalculated their power. (9) There is different power among the angels. Michael had more power than the other angel. There was a hierarchal difference between the two. (10) "One of the chief princes," i.e., a plurality of leadership. (11) Angels watch out for and help each other. "Michael came to help me." (12) Some demons or combinations of demons are stronger than some angels or combinations of angels. But altogether, the angels are stronger than the demons because they send them out of heaven in Revelation 9.

v. 19—(13) Angels are able to strengthen humans, using words of encouragement, as well as physical strength.

v. 21—"I will tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth," some heavenly writing of truth the angels have access to.

(11) Daniel receives a vision about Alexander (the Great), Antiochus IV, and the Antichrist (chapter 11)

v. 1—In the first year of Darius (3 years before chapter 10), Daniel arose to be an encouragement to Darius the Mede.

v. 2—He will tell Darius the truth. Now is a detailed description of the whole inter-testament period.

DANIEL 11 (these prophecies given in 536 B.C.)

PERSIA

Verse 2	<p>4 kings of Persia: Cambyses (529-522 B.C.) Cyrus' son Pseudo-Smerdis (522-521) Darius I Hystapes (521-486), see also Ezra 5 and 6 Xerxes I (486-465), see also Ezra 4:6 (had army of hundreds of thousands—may be Ahasuerus of Esther 1, therefore his attack on Greece is the four years between Esther 1 and 2) Persian rule is covered in Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi</p>
GREECE	
Verse 4	<p>Alexander conquers Persia (334-331) and dies at age of 32. Empire divided among his 4 generals: Cassander (Macedonia and Greece) Lysimachus (most of Asia Minor) Seleucus (Syria, Babylon, and eastward) Ptolemy (Egypt and Arabia)</p>
Verse 5	<p>King of South=Ptolemy I Soter (323-285) in Egypt Prince=Seleucus I Nicator (312-281) in Syria (murdered in 281 by his son Antiochus I Soter)</p>
Verse 6	<p>Egypt-Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246)-Ptolemy I's son alliance Bernice (Ptolemy's daughter and Antiochus' wife) Syria-Antiochus II Theos (261-246)—son of Antiochus I and grandson of Seleucus I Nicator Antiochus divorces his wife Laodice to marry Berenice to form alliance with Egypt. Ptolemy dies two years later, so Antiochus took back Laodice as his wife. Laodice revenges him by murdering Berenice, Antiochus, and their infant son, and makes her own son, Seleucus Callinicus king.</p>
Verse 7	<p>Berenice's brother (Ptolemy II Philadelphus' son) assumes the throne and becomes Ptolemy III Euergetes (246-221). He conquers Syria (Seleucus Callinicus—247-226, son of Laodice and Antiochus) in revenge for killing his sister</p>
Verse 9	<p>Seleucus tries to conquer Ptolemy in 240 but is defeated and returns to Syria</p>
Verse 10	<p>His sons=older son Seleucus III (226-223) who dies in a battle in Asia Minor and Antiochus III the Great (223-187)=younger son one of them=Antiochus III drives Egyptians south out of Palestine</p>
Verse 11-12	<p>king of south=Ptolemy Philopator (221-203) battle in 217 B.C., 70,000 soldiers on each side, victory of Egyptians but Antiochus is not captured.</p>
Verse 13	<p>king of north, still Antiochus III advances to India in east and Caspian in North and raises great army (212-204) Meanwhile, in 203 Ptolemy dies and his infant son Ptolemy V Epiphanes reigns</p>
Verse 14	<p>the Jews revolt against Egypt (in control of Jerusalem) therefore allowing Syrians to come to power and thus fulfill vision of chapter 8 of Antiochus persecuting them</p>
Verse 15-16	<p>Antiochus captures Sidon (203 B.C.)=fortified city and therefore Israel comes under his con-</p>

trol

- Verse 17 Antiochus makes false peace with Egypt by giving his daughter Cleopatra to Ptolemy V Epiphanes (7 years old) in marriage in 192 but she sides with Ptolemy against her father.
- Verse 18 Antiochus tries to capture coastland (Greece) in 191-189 and scorns Rome by saying he would not be subject to their orders, so Rome defeats him there.
- Verse 19 So Antiochus returns to Syria and is killed there in 187 B.C.
- Verse 20 Antiochus III's son, Seleucus IV Philopator, died (poisoned by his treasurer Heliodorus) shortly after removing treasures from the Temple to help pay 1000 talents for tax to Rome
- Verse 21 Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164) (Antiochus III's son), also the "little horn" of Daniel 8:9-14,23-25. Antiochus was Seleucus's brother. When Seleucus died, Antiochus posed as guardian of Seleucus' young son (Demetrius Soter) and comes in peace. He then has the son murdered and secures the throne for himself.
- Verse 22 Military conquests and murder of "prince of covenant" (Israel), Onias the high priest, who was de facto head of the theocracy at that time.
- Verse 23 Peace arrangements with other nations and with his nephew in Egypt, Ptolemy Philometor, only for his own gain
- Verse 24 Antiochus attacks during times of peace. Did not use booty for personal use as his fathers did but used it to buy cooperation from others
- Verse 25-26 He defeats Egypt (in 170 B.C.) because those close to Ptolemy turn against him to help Antiochus
- Verse 27 Syria and Egypt break peace treaties—end will come as prophesied
- Verse 28 Antiochus returns to Syria with plunder but still desires treasures of temple in Israel
- Verse 29-30 Antiochus fights Egypt again only loses this time because Rome comes to the defense of Egypt
- Verse 30 Antiochus returns to Syria and takes out his wrath on Israel
- Verse 31 He slays pig on altar, does away with sacrifices, and sets up an idol (to Zeus) in Holy Place of Temple (abomination) December 16, 167 B.C.—Jews were made every month on 25th to sacrifice pig on altar to celebrate Antiochus IV Epiphanes' birthday
- Verse 32-35 Separation of believers from unbelievers in that those who are faithful to God are martyred or taken captive (2300 days of 8:14, 23-25, from 170 B.C. in verse 25 to restoring the Temple in 164, Hannakah, about 6 years
- Verse 36-45 Description of the Antichrist to come: He will do as he pleases, exalt himself above every god (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4), speaks monstrous things against God (Revelation 13:6), shows no regard for any god, or for the desire of women, his god will be military power, he will give honor to those who acknowledge him and will parcel out land for a price (see 666 of Revelation 13:16-18), armies come against him (such as Revelation 9:13-21 and 16:12), he will camp between the sea (Mediterranean) and the Holy Mountain (in Jerusalem), yet he will come to his end (the Second Coming and Battle of Armageddon (Revelation 19).

(12) Daniel receives a vision about the future of Israel and his own future (chapter 12)

v.1—“at that time,” apparently at the same time as chapter 11. Michael, the guard of the people of Israel. Michael will arise to carry out the tribulation. The tribulation is a time of distress which has never happened before. Therefore, the tribulation has to do with Israel, not the church. Those rescued are the sealed 144,000 mentioned in Revelation 12 and 14, those (Jewish) believers who are written in the Book of Life. They are in this book in heaven at the writing of Daniel when they won't even be born for thousands of years.

v. 2—Resurrection of Old Testament believers and the believers from the tribulation period, taking place at the Second Coming of Christ (Revelation 20). The resurrection of the church happens at the Rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, 1 Corinthians 15:50f).

v. 3—The rewards of those people who are resurrected in verse 2. Those who are rewarded “have insight” and “lead many to righteousness.” Their shining brightly has something to do with eternal rewards.

v. 4—Tells Daniel to conceal the words and seal them up until the end times. It is the opposite of what John was to do in Revelation (1:3 and 22:10). So the idea of Daniel's writing is that the time is not near. At John's writing, the time is near. At the time of Daniel, the events of the tribulation will not take place in Daniel's age. For John, the tribulation will take place in his age. At the end time, “many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase.” We go back and forth all over the earth now, and knowledge is increasing exponentially.

v. 5—Two other angels were standing on the bank of the river.

v. 6—Then there is another one, dressed in linen, standing above the others, probably Michael.

v. 7—How long will this tribulation last? He swears “by Him who lives forever,” that it will last 3 1/2 years (Revelation 12:14).

v. 8—Daniel says that he heard it but he doesn't understand it. He asks what will be the result of these things?

v. 9—These words are to be sealed up.

v. 10—Two kinds of people—those who will be purged, refined, these are the ones who have understanding, the ones who are rescued in verse 1 and shine brightly in verse 2. The others are the wicked who will not understand. Tribulation tends to make good people better and bad people worse.

v. 11—From the time the sacrifice is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up (middle of the Tribulation) and the end is 1260 days (Matthew 24:15; Revelation 12:6—Daniel says 3 1/2 years in verse 7). Daniel says there are 30 days after this that the sacrifices are not restored.

v. 12—How blessed are those who attain to 1335 days, 75 days after the Second Coming. I suggest that the Millennial Kingdom starts 75 days after the Second Coming of Christ. 30 of those days are the judgments of Matthew 25, separating the sheep from the goats (see Revelation 19:17-19).

v. 13—Daniel didn't understand it. We understand it more because we have Matthew and Revelation, but we don't see it very clearly either. As for Daniel: (1) go to the end (live out the rest of your life), (2) then you will die, enter your rest, (3) but you will rise again, and (4) and you will be rewarded (allotted a portion) at the end of the age. Optimistic end for Daniel. He has security of salvation! Not good news for the wicked.

