

# One Bible One Year Daniel

Gn	Ex	Lv	Nu	Dt															
Js	Ju	Ru	Sa <sup>1,2</sup>	Ki <sup>1,2</sup>	Ch <sup>1,2</sup>	Ez	Ne	Es											
Jb	Ps	Pr	Ec	So															
Is	Je	La	Ek	Da															

## Summary

Daniel went as a young man into Babylonian exile in 605BC. He was a prophet but also worked in the courts of King Nebuchadnezzar through to the Persian King Cyrus.

The first 6 chapters tell the story of Daniel and three others, known by their Babylonian names of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who are taken into exile and placed into the Court of King Nebuchadnezzar. In the courts they were trained in Babylonian culture, but the four men stood faithful to God who blesses them and they become influential in the royal palace.

One day King Nebuchadnezzar has a dream, which nobody can interpret. Daniel prays and God gives him the interpretation, so Daniel and the other three gain further authority in the role of the empire. But because of their positions of power, people plot against Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and they are reported to Nebuchadnezzar for refusing to worship him and worshipping only Yahweh. They are thrown into a blazing furnace as punishment, but an angel of the Lord joins them in the furnace and protects them and they come out unscathed.

Under the Next King of Babylon, Belshazzar, during a banquet, a mysterious hand writes a message on the wall. Daniel is called in to interpret and give the message, which prophesies the oncoming downfall of the Babylonian empire. This comes to pass that very night when Darius of the Medes and Persians overthrows Babylon.

Under King Darius, Daniel is trapped by those envious of him into breaking a law about only praying to the king and he is thrown into the lion's den. But the Lord shuts the mouth of the lion and he is unharmed.

Chapters 7 – 12 are then a chronological telling of Daniel's prophecies of the coming turmoil of the rise and fall of empires, which comes to pass with the Babylonians and Persians within his lifetime and after his death with the Greeks and the Seleucids.

## Themes

Throughout Daniel's life and prophetic and apocalyptic visions of the turmoil of the future, it is clear that God is completely sovereign and in control. Daniel and his fellow Israelites trust in God and not only do they see him rescue them but also the Kings of Babylon and Persia see God's powerful actions and start to acknowledge the living God themselves.

A central theme of the story of Daniel is of living faithfully for God, against strong opposition, as Andrew Reid says of Daniel and his friends: *"They lived in a world set against them and somehow managed to maintain their distinctiveness. These men stand out in a crowd. They held onto their faith in God despite the temptations and persecutions the world they lived in thrust upon them and despite the fact that triumph sometimes eluded them. These men model the life of faith and become a source of great encouragement and inspiration for those who struggle with the same problems after them."*

In the book of Daniel we also see more of the promised Messiah, as William T. Arnold says: *"In Daniel, the concept of the Messiah was reinterpreted toward the universal, rather than being limited to a single nation, Israel. Thus there is a Davidic substratum, or ideological undercurrent in Daniel 7:13-14... Daniel sees the Messiah as the antithesis of personified evil. Eventually the Son of Man will lead his people ("the saints of the Most High") into triumph."*

The book of Daniel shows us that God is completely in control no matter what we might see in our circumstances, and that no matter what opposition, God is faithful to us.

## How does Daniel fit into the Bible storyline?

The Bible story is a promise by God to make a people who will live in his place with him, knowing his blessing and rule. Daniel is set in a time when the people of God were out of the place God had promised. Therefore the question is: how will they remain a distinct people and how will they return home and experience the fullness of God's promises again?

## Outline

- I. Prologue: The Setting (ch. 1; in Hebrew)
  - A. Historical Introduction (1:1-2)
  - B. Daniel and His Friends Are Taken Captive (1:3-7)
  - C. The Young Men Are Faithful (1:8-16)
  - D. The Young Men Are Elevated to High Positions (1:17-21)
- II. The Destinies of the Nations of the World (chs. 2-7; in Aramaic, beginning at 2:4b)
  - A. Nebuchadnezzar's Dream of a Large Statue (ch. 2)
  - B. Nebuchadnezzar's Making of a Gold Image and His Decree That It Be Worshiped (ch. 3)
  - C. Nebuchadnezzar's Dream of an Enormous Tree (ch. 4)
  - D. Belshazzar's and Babylon's Downfall (ch. 5)
  - E. Daniel's Deliverance (ch. 6)
  - F. Daniel's Dream of Four Beasts (ch. 7)
- III. The Destiny of the Nation of Israel (chs. 8-12; in Hebrew)
  - A. Daniel's Vision of a Ram and a Goat (ch. 8)
  - B. Daniel's Prayer and His Vision of the 70 "Sevens" (ch. 9)
  - C. Daniel's Vision of Israel's Future (chs. 10-12)
    1. Revelation of things to come (10:1-3)
    2. Revelation from the angelic messenger (10:4-11:1)
    3. Prophecies concerning Persia and Greece (11:2-4)
    4. Prophecies concerning Egypt and Syria (11:5-35)
    5. Prophecies concerning the antichrist (11:36-45)
    6. Distress and deliverance (12:1)
    7. Two resurrections (12:2-3)
    8. Instruction to Daniel (12:4)
    9. Conclusion (12:5-13)

## Further thinking

Read chapter 1: How did Daniel and his friends keep trusting God when the pressure to conform to other worldviews was so great? What pressures are there on you to conform to a different lifestyle and attitude? How can you take a stand that keeps a distinct lifestyle - be in the world but not of the world?

Read chapter 2: What are the glittering statues in our culture? How does the good news of God overpower them?

Read chapter 3: Why were they so angry about not joining in and making exclusive claims? How is that still true today? How should Christians respond to that anger and pressure?

Read chapter 4: Why did Nebuchadnezzar not accept the warning of the dream and Daniel? Why did losing everything bring him to his senses? What lesson does he learn? What warning and lessons should we learn? How would you warn a friend about the problem of idols?

Read chapter 7: Draw out the differences between the descriptions of the beasts and of God. How is the beast's style of rule different from the rule God gives Adam and Eve in Genesis 1 and 2? How does Daniel react to his dream? How does the life, death and resurrection of Jesus help us understand Daniel 7? What ways does Daniel 7 change our fears? How does Daniel 7 help us understand Jesus' use of the term 'son of man' to describe himself? What do we learn from Jesus' application of Daniel 7 in Mark 13:26,14:62; Luke 12:4-5; John 14:1-6; Matthew 28:16-20?