

# Lecture 1

## Why Daniel?

### The Purpose of Daniel: Daniel 12:4

But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

“Seal the book” – these words will be Preserved until they are fulfilled at the end of time.

“Many shall run to and fro” – many in that day will search the meaning of these words

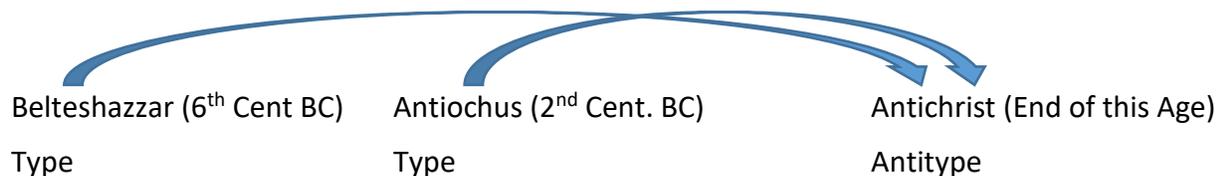
“Knowledge shall be increased” – their understanding of God’s plan will be enlightened

**Purpose of Daniel:** Daniel was written to strengthen and encourage the people who will be persecuted in the last days.

### Daniel’s Application to the Church: the Waves Theory

Daniel presents future events in light of a Pattern of activity in history. The occurrences of the past provide insight into the future because God guides these events in a cyclical form. This reoccurring pattern that can be compared to waves on a shore.

God uses the patterns of history to prepare people for the Climax of history.



The Church lives during an era of time called “the last days” in which many antichrist will arise who typify *the* antichrist of the tribulation period.

Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. **1 John 2:18**

The church will NOT experience the seven year tribulation period (Rev. 3:10) but will be Raptured before the tribulation (1 Thess. 4:17). Yet we are certainly not promised exemption from testing and tribulation (2 Tim. 3:12). Daniel teaches believers how to stand for God in our own wave of persecution so that they also may come through the fire purified!

The book of Daniel reveals that there is only One eternal kingdom! . . . And America is not that kingdom. Therefore, its time is ticking, and as believers, we must be prepared. We need truth that will sustain, encourage, and embolden us during times of suffering and persecution. We need the message of Daniel!

The message of Daniel teaches . . .

- That believers should not expect to be exempt from persecution and that in the last days tribulations will come.
- believers how to live in troubled days without being conformed by the influences of the world.
- the purposes of God in allowing His people to suffer.
- that there will be an end to their suffering that will bring about their exaltation.
- believers can stand for God with confidence no matter what the earthly consequences may be.
- believers can have peace in God's sovereignty no matter who our government leaders may be.

### **Daniel's Place in History: Historical Background**

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it. **Daniel 1:1**

### **God's Revelation Grounded in History**

Because God grounds His revelation in history, He makes His revelation verifiable. While many have attacked the veracity of the historical facts in Daniel, time and time again historical evidences prove the accuracy of the biblical record. The archeological evidence, therefore, points in only one direction – the trust-worthiness of God's truth!

### **World History: Babylon's Rise to Power**

Assyrian Empire dominated the region (745-612 BC)

Nabopolassar defeats Assyria in Babylon (626 BC)

The Assyrian capital of Nineveh falls to the Babylonians (612 BC)

The Babylonian Prince, Nebuchadnezzar, defeats the Egyptians at Carchemish (605 BC)

Nebuchadnezzar lays siege and conquers Jerusalem (605 BC)

Nabopolassar dies, and Nebuchadnezzar returns to be crowned king (605 BC)

### **Israel's History: A Record of Disobedience and God's fulfillment of His promise to punish**

David's reigns over Israel (1003 BC)

Kingdom divided between Israel and Judah (931 BC)

Jehoshaphat becomes king over Judah (873 BC)

Joash survives purge of Davidic Line and reigns over Judah (835 BC)

Hezekiah reigns over Judah (727 BC)

Assyrians conquer the Northern Kingdom of Israel (722 BC)

God destroys the Assyrian army surrounding Jerusalem (701 BC)

Manasseh reigns over Judah and turns them toward idolatry (695 BC)

Jeremiah begins prophetic ministry (627 BC)

        Daniel         is born (620 BC est.)

The last godly king of Judah, Josiah, dies at the Battle of Megiddo (609 BC)

King Nebuchadnezzar takes Daniel captive (605 BC)

Zedekiah reigns over Jerusalem (597 BC)

Nebuchadnezzar breaches the walls of Jerusalem and destroys the temple (586 BC)

**Daniel’s Place in Scripture:                     Theological                     Background**

The canonical arrangement of the Hebrew Bible differs from the ordering of our English Bibles. The Hebrew Bible was divided into three parts: the     Law    , the     Prophets    , and the     Writings     (Luke 24:44).

<b>The Law</b>	<b>The Prophets</b>	<b>The Writings</b>
Genesis	Joshua/Judges	Psalms/Proverbs
Exodus	Samuel	Job/Song of Solomon
Leviticus	Kings	Ruth/Lamentations
Numbers	Isaiah	Ecclesiastes/Esther
Deuteronomy	Jeremiah	<b>Daniel</b>
	Ezekiel	Ezra/Nehemiah
	The Twelve (minor prophets)	Chronicles

This was the ordering of the books in Jesus’ day, and He references this ordering when He refers to the blood of righteous     Abel     (Genesis) and the blood of     Zachariah     (Chronicles) in Matt. 23:35.

In this biblical ordering, Daniel occurs at the end of the Hebrew Bible. This enhances the significance of its contribution to the theology of the Old Testament. Daniel builds upon and summarizes many biblical themes. Biblical history in the Old Testament begins with

\_\_\_\_\_ Creation \_\_\_\_\_ (Genesis) and ends with the \_\_\_\_\_ Exile \_\_\_\_\_ of God's people in Babylon (Chronicles).<sup>1</sup> Being written from exile, Daniel provides insight into its significance by casting the exile against the backdrop of the earliest resistance against God in the land of Shinar (Gen. 10-11). Daniel also presents the most comprehensive look forward into Israel's history through the prophecies of the Babylonian, Persian, Greek, and Roman dominance of the region. God's revelation in Daniel does not focus solely on the immediate future for Israel but rather uses these "near-future" events as a prophetic telescope into understanding the "distant-future" events that will fall on the nation of Israel in the last days. The book of Daniel anticipates the climactic event of history: the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth that will destroy the ungodly nations and bring exaltation to God's saints!

The vast wealth of the entire Old Testament canon, therefore, becomes the basis for Daniel's theology. The covenant promises of blessing and cursing provide the reason for the exile (Lev. 26; Deut. 28), and the book of \_\_\_\_\_ Jeremiah \_\_\_\_\_ specifies its length (25:11-12; 29:10). Daniel's prayer reflects the hope of restoration promised in the Old Testament (Deut. 4:30-31; 1 Kings 8:47-53; Jer. 29:10). The Levitical laws of Sabbath years and the Years of Jubilee not only explain the duration of the exile (2 Chron. 36:21) but also form the foundation for understanding Daniel's vision of the 70 weeks.

The message of Daniel reveals God's desire to bring climactic redemption and final release from Israel's captivity to sin and its cyclical pattern of judgment. God will use their captivity and the future persecution of the tribulation period to accomplish His purpose of purging and purifying His people from sin. This deliverance from sin and captivity encompasses the coming of the \_\_\_\_\_ Messiah \_\_\_\_\_ (9:25) and the final resurrection of the dead (12:2). The message of Daniel, therefore, takes up the themes of \_\_\_\_\_ Sin \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ Judgement \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ Redemption \_\_\_\_\_ found in the entirety of the Bible and prophecies the ultimate fulfillment of God's plan in the last days.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> James M. Hamilton Jr., 41.

<sup>2</sup> James M. Hamilton Jr., 41-49

# Lecture 2

## Structure of Daniel

Structure is a God-given tool by which He directs us to His thoughts.

A tone of voice, an emoji, or an emphasis marker in the text (e.g., **highlighter**, underline, or **bold font**) are additional ways to communicate emphasis in modern communication. Because God chose to communicate through the form of written words that would be copied from one generation to the next, He had to provide context clues through structure to guide readers to what is important and ensure that they do not miss the big theological idea. A Bible student ought to seek the structure of a sentence, a paragraph, a story, or even an entire book.

Because Daniel records the dates for each revelation but does not order his material chronologically (chapters 7 and 8 occur before chapter 6), another intentional organizing principle must provide the key to its structure. Two interlocking characteristics reveal the overall structure of Daniel: genre and language.

### Genre

Genre is the categorizing of literature into similar groupings based on similar content. Daniel contains two main genres: **Narrative** (stories with characters and a plot) and **Prophetic Vision** (recounting of prophetic information given through an encounter with a divine messenger).

Narratives (1-6) in Chronological order

- (1) Daniel's Captivity and Promotion
- (2) Daniel's Interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's Dream
- (3) God's Rescue of Daniel's friends from the Fiery Furnace
- (4) The Humbling of Nebuchadnezzar by madness
- (5) The Humbling of Belshazzar through God's Handwriting on the Wall
- (6) God's Rescue of Daniel from the Lion's Den

Prophetic Visions (7-12) in Chronological order

- (7) Daniel's Vision of Four Beasts
- (8) Daniel's Vision of Two Beasts
- (9) Daniel's Prayer and Vision of the 70 Weeks
- (10-12) Daniel's Vision of Persecution and End Time Salvation

### Language

Daniel is a rare book in that it is written in two different languages: Hebrew and Aramaic. Hebrew was the language of the Jewish people and would have been the native tongue of Daniel. Aramaic was the *lingua franca* (a language that unites people from distinct regions) of the Babylon Empire. Hebrew was unique to the Jewish nation, but Aramaic was universally known in the Fertile Crescent and beyond.

## Hebrew

(1-2:4) Introduction of Foundational Principles for Suffering Persecution

## Aramaic

(2) God reveals the future destruction of four-fold structure of man's kingdom

(3) God rescues His people (Fiery Furnace)

(4) God reigns over human kings (Nebuchadnezzar humbled and restored)

(5) God reigns over human kings (Belshazzar humbled and deposed)

(6) God rescues His people (Lion's Den)

(7) God reveals the future destruction of four beasts and antichrist

## Hebrew

(8) Vision of Antiochus Epiphanes/antichrist

(9) Vision of 70 Weeks for the Jewish people

(10) Introduction to Climactic Vision

(11) Vision of Antiochus Epiphanes/antichrist

(12) Vision of Final Resurrection and Conclusion to the Book

The Aramaic portion of Daniel gives a message to the world of God's ultimate and universal sovereignty over all men. God proves His sovereignty through His ability both to reveal the future and to humble the kings of the earth. The trademark of His sovereignty is the salvation His people from destruction that ultimately falls on those who hate them. The Aramaic section demonstrate that God knows the future, provides salvation for His people, and reveals His complete sovereignty over the nations of the earth. The themes of the Aramaic portion (1<sup>st</sup> half) inform the Hebrew portion (2<sup>nd</sup> half). In the Hebrew section, God again reveals the future, promises salvation to His people, and demonstrates His complete sovereignty over all the events that will impact the nation of Israel both in the "near-future" and in the "distant-future" of the last days. The Hebrew part warns the Jewish nation of coming persecution both in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC and in the coming tribulation period. Daniel also reveals in both sections not only the certainty of persecution but also God's sovereign purpose in allowing it, the proper, God-honoring response to suffering, and the hope that God has promised first to limit their suffering and to ultimately deliver them through it!

## Combined Structure

Both the organizing principles of genre and language split the book into two halves, yet they do not divide the book at the same place! Chapter 7, therefore, becomes the hinge for the entire book. Chapter 7 is connected to the first half because it was written in Aramaic and is connected to the second half because it is a prophetic vision. The structure, therefore, point to chapter 7 as the structural center of Daniel! The content of chapter 7 provides the most detailed revelation of God's plan for the end with the principal figures being a theophany of

God sitting upon His throne and the Son of Man coming in the clouds to receive the Kingdom of God.

The theological center of the book, therefore, is **God sitting on His throne** – judging the antichrist and delivering His people.

The meaning of Daniel's name is "my God is Judge." In biblical times, the judge was the king. Daniel's name, therefore, captures the central theme of the book as carefully arranged in its structure: God is the Sovereign King!

- (1) Foundational Principles
- (2) Narrative introduces four-fold structure of man's kingdom
- (3) God rescues His people (Fiery Furnace)
- (4) God reigns over human kings (Nebuchadnezzar humbled)
- (5) God reigns over human kings (Belshazzar deposed)
- (6) God rescues His people (Lion's Den)
- (7) Vision of four beasts and antichrist before God's throne/Saints in the Kingdom**
- (8) Vision of Antiochus Epiphanes/ The Antichrist
- (9) Daniel's Prayer and God's Vision of 70 Week prophecy of Redemption
- (10) Climactic Vision of Christ
- (11) Vision of Antiochus Epiphanes/ The Antichrist
- (12:1-4) Saints in the Kingdom
- (12:5-13) Concluding Principles

## **Biblical Theology - Themes of Daniel**

The Foundation for all theology is a method of Bible investigation called exegesis. Exegesis is the drawing out of the text what God has put into it. The opposite of exegesis is the importing of one's own ideas into the text (eisegesis). The danger of eisegesis is that even if an imported idea is scriptural, it covers up God's idea in the text. The Biblical text and its context must govern all interpretation.

Exegetical Theology is the starting point for understanding God's Word. It deals with the meaning of individual words and sentences in their context. Most verse-by-verse commentaries provide examples of exegetical theology.

Biblical Theology builds off of a careful exegesis of the text and arranges that text according to themes. Biblical theology answers the question, "What did God reveal?" with a limiting focus on the theological issues and conclusions addressed directly in the text.

Systematic theology answers the more general question, "What is true about God?" and with the text addresses theological issues and conclusions beyond the text.

An example should help illustrate the differences. Take a subject within the discussion of God's sovereignty – Does God sovereignly choose men to go to hell?

Exegetical Theology would examine the meaning of the words sovereignty, choose, and hell in the Bible and would seek to determine their meaning within the context in which they are found.

Biblical Theology would only address this topic only where the text specially addresses this subject (e.g., Romans 8).

Systematic Theology would combine all the data (Biblical Theology data + logically valid data such as the Love of God) available to try to answer this question.

The main tool of Biblical Theology in determine the message of a specific book of the Bible is an examination of repeated words, ideas or key themes throughout the book.

This class presents a Biblical Theology of Daniel. While utilizing the data of exegetical theology to understand each chapter, the primary focus will be on key themes throughout the book to discover its overall message.

## Central Themes

**God's Sovereignty** – God reveals that He is controlling the future to bring history to its climax in the Kingdom of God on earth.

**Divine Revelation** – God reveals Nebuchadnezzar's dreams and writes Belshazzar's future on the wall, and gives Daniel 4 visions of the future.

**Wicked Opposition** – Those who oppose God's people are the Babylonians who capture Daniel and His three friends, those who attempt to kill Daniel and his three friends, the demons who oppose Michael and the divine messenger, Antiochus Epiphanes, the Romans who destroy Jerusalem, and the Antichrist.

**Divine Judgment** – God judges the kingdoms of men with His Stone, humbles the kings of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar, has wicked men cast into the lions' den, and promises the judgment of Antiochus Epiphanes and the Antichrist.

**Divine purification** – Israel is purified through captivity in Babylon and through the persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes and the Antichrist.

**Divine Deliverance** – God delivers from defilement, from execution, from fire, from lions, from exile, from persecution, and from transgression.

**God's Glory** – Pagan kings testify to God's sovereignty and authority in the Aramaic portion of the book. Daniel praises God, and Daniel, his three friends, and believers reflect well upon God by their testimony of faithfulness and unyielding, uncompromising stand.

**Importance of Prayer** – Daniel and three friends pray for deliverance; Daniel refuses to stop praying to God; and a lengthy prayer of national repentance that precedes God's deliverance.

**A Divine Deliverer** – The Stone cut without hands, the fourth man in the flames like unto the Son of God, the Angel in the Lion's den, one like the Son of Man descending in the clouds, the Anointed One, and the Man in white linen.

### **Central Theme**

God reveals His sovereignty by delivering a purified people from wicked oppression.

or

An omniscient and omnipotent God exercises His sovereignty to deliver His suffering people.



## Lecture 3

### Daniel 1

#### Structure

- Historical Introduction (vv. 1-2)
  - Introduction of Main Characters (vv. 3-7)
    - Main Plot (vv. 8-16)
  - Success of Main Characters (vv. 17-20)
- Historical Conclusion (v. 21)

Daniel 1 sets the stage for the message of Daniel by emphasizing the Sovereignty of God in the midst of terrible tragedy, cultural pressure, and personal weakness. Through it all, God's people stand triumphantly and prove that God is the King!

Structurally, the phrase "the Lord gave" occurs three times in Daniel's first chapter (vv. 2, 9, 17).

#### Historical Introduction: The Context of the Exile

God's people were defeated by a militarily superior force who was rising to be the dominant power of their day: Babylon. Yet Scripture directly attributes this triumph of evil over good to the sovereign hand of God. "The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand" (1:2). The Lord is sovereign over the good and the evil. He is directly responsible for all that is good in this world (James 1:17), but though not responsible for, He also controls, limits, and utilizes that which is evil for His own purposes.

**Amos 3:6b** shall there be evil [calamity] in a city, and the LORD hath not done it?

The Babylonian exile was a humiliation of God's people. God had promised that if they would refuse to obey His Word and would forsake His covenant, He would exile them from the land (Lev. 26:28-39; Deut. 28:36-37, 41; Jer. 22:24-27). The exile marks the faithfulness of God to His covenant promises in chastising His people for their sin.

From the first words of Daniel, we see a conflict between two peoples – the people of God and the heathen nations. This conflict is much deeper than its temporal manifestation in Daniel's life. The Scripture indicates this by referencing the destination point of Israel's captivity as the land of Shinar. The term "Shinar" is an ancient way to refer to Babylon that goes back to Genesis 10-11 and the tower of Babel. Shinar was the place where the first organized rebellion against God takes place. The conflict in Daniel, therefore, manifests the greater conflict that pits God and His people against the rebellious world system organized and militant and the demonic powers behind their false gods.

The Babylonian exile was also a humiliation of God. The victors took trophies of the holy vessels of God’s house and placed them in the house of their gods as a sign of triumph over God (v. 2). Because Israel wore the “team colors” of Yahweh, their defeat dishonored Yahweh. God, therefore, is willing to allow the temporary humiliation of His name and reputation in order to accomplish His plan. The ultimate example of this strategy is God allowing the crucifixion of His own Son to accomplish God’s plan of salvation (Acts 2:23). God is willing to suffer shame in order to save His people from their sin!

[The Irony is that the very tokens of their triumph would become the instruments of their doom in Daniel 5. God will get the last laugh (Psalm 2:4)!]

Daniel inserts a definite article before the word “God” in verse 2 (Lit. the vessels of the house of **the** God) to contrast Yahweh with the Babylonian gods as the superior God of gods. Daniel narrates the captivity to indicate that God is still actively sovereign and that He has a plan to chasten His people and deliver them from their sin.

**Introduction of the Main Characters: The Exemplary Stand of Daniel**

The opening words of Daniel inform us that in the drama of history God is the director. But at the center of His story are His people. Daniel is the central character of the narrative portion of the book and plays a primary role in the second half of visions as the man through whom God brings His revelation. The narrative introduces the character Daniel as a promising young man of talent and nobility who is torn from his parents in Jerusalem and exiled from his homeland and the temple of His God. He was marched across the Fertile Crescent to be held captive in Babylon, the center for idolatry. Daniel in exile functions as a prototype for the persecuted nation of Israel of the latter days so that his actions are exemplary not only for all believers, but especially for those who will have to endure the tribulations prophesied in this book.

<b>Application Time-Line</b>				
Background	Historical	Prophetic/Historical	Current	Prophetic
OT History	Daniel	Greek/Roman	Our Day	Last Days

**The Pressure on Daniel**

It is important to understand Daniel’s situation. Daniel was held as a helpless hostage in the hands of ruthless kidnapers upon whose mercy his life depended. The text emphasizes Daniel’s position of helplessness by stating that he was given to the “master of the eunuchs” which indicates that in one day, Daniel was robbed of his masculinity (v. 3). The King of Babylon wanted “politically elite, physically impressive, intellectually astute, and socially poised” young

men to serve in the courts of Babylon (v. 4).<sup>3</sup> By robbing nations of their best and brightest, Babylon would insure its own superiority. By holding the children of the influential hostage, they thought to discourage open rebellion to their authority.

The Babylonians used their position of power to put pressure on the captives to assimilate into the Babylonian culture and way of life. They gave them a thorough education in the Babylonian tongue and their “learning” (v. 4), which would have included Babylonian history with its source in pagan mythology, the science of astronomy in conjunction with idolatrous astrology, mathematics, medicine with its use of omens, and dream interpretation. They would have been taught the arts of divination and exorcism along with prayers to foreign gods. The Babylonians were trying to conform these children of God into adopting the Babylonian culture and value system.

Part of the plan was to allure these men into adopting this lifestyle by giving them access to all the luxury of the King’s table (v. 5). To eat meat was rare for the common people and was a sign of wealth and prosperity. Wine was an amenity that was associated with pleasure. They were going to be wined and dined for three years with Babylon’s finest to insure their fitness and their cooperation.

To symbolize the complete transformation of these young men’s thinking and way of life, the Babylonians gave them a new identity in giving them new names (v. 6-7). While there is some debate over the exact meaning of each Babylonian name, the chart below represents a general consensus.

Name Changes			
Hebrew Name	Meaning	Babylonian Name	Meaning
Daniel	God is my Judge	Belteshazzar	Bel guards his life
Hananiah	Yahweh is gracious	Shadrach	The command of Aku
Mishael	Who is what God is?	Meshach	Who is what Aku is?
Azariah	Yahweh defends	Abednego	Servant of Nebo

The new identity that Babylon was giving these men was distinctly a religious one. They were dropping the name of the God of Israel from their names and giving them names that identified them with a new allegiance to their pagan gods of Bel, Aku, and Nebo.

The picture is the ungodly world putting pressure on beleaguered servants of God to compromise with their surrounding culture and thereby adopt a new identity that denies their allegiance and association with their God (Rom. 12:2).

### **The Purpose of Daniel**

Daniel takes a stand against the pressure of assimilation by rejecting the king’s meat and drink.

---

<sup>3</sup> Dale Davis, 30.

Many have wondered why Daniel picked this ground on which to take his stand. Several reasons have been offered as explanation of Daniel's motivation.

1. **The food was unclean** according to Old Testament dietary laws. No doubt Babylonian food would not be kosher, but wine was not forbidden in the law.
2. **The food was offered unto idols**. But what would hinder the pulse and water to be offered to idols as well?
3. **The food was a symbol of dependence on the king**. Yet the alternative food was supplied by the king as well.
4. **The food was a luxury** unfit for their circumstances as God's people in exile.

The emphasis of the text is on the word "defile" which highlights the specialness of Daniel and his friends because of their holy relationship to God. They did not want to hinder their relationship with God nor their testimony as distinct, peculiar people to His name. The first option, therefore, seems to be the primary reason, but since Daniel would later fast from wine (10:3), which indicates that he did drink wine at a later time, a secondary reason seems to be an exchange of a rich man's diet for a poor man's diet as a means of self-denial and resistance against the most alluring aspects of their temptation.

He stood alone – Daniel and his three friends were among other captives of the tribe of Judah (v. 6), but they stood out because of their decision to stand for God.<sup>4</sup>

He stood against – What is missed in English translations is that the Hebrew word for "give" is the very same word used for Daniel's decision of purposing in his heart. The English word "set" gets close to the meaning. The prince of the eunuchs "set" names on Daniel and his three friends, but Daniel "set" in his heart that he would not defile himself.

He saw the attack of the enemy for what it was and directly opposed the molding influences of this world. He would stand in contradiction to them. He would take a stand, and thereby would stand out!

He stood for – Because his concern was his relationship with God, he demonstrates that his willingness to lose the best food, or his position, or even his life was motivated by his love for God.

The book of Daniel here lays the foundation for a proper response to suffering and persecution. For those who will honor God in the last days or in our day, one must love God enough to be willing to resist the pagan influences with enough tenacity and determination to even sacrifice one's life for God's name (Mark 8:34-35). This will become more evident in Daniel 3 and 6.

### **The Main Plot: Daniel's Appeal**

Daniel's determination and request precede the narrator's comment about God's granting favor in the eyes of their superior. Daniel demonstrates that God is the deliverer of His people

---

<sup>4</sup> John Goldingay, 18.

as He controls the hearts of men to accomplish His purposes (Prov. 1:21), but the sequence of the text indicates that believers must take their stand for God *before* any deliverance seems possible. From the beginning of Daniel, God establishes one of the main reasons He exercises His sovereign power: to provide salvation for His people.

Daniel made a respectful appeal. God indeed granted Daniel favor in the eyes of his abductors (v. 9), but God used the attitude, compliance, and respectfulness of Daniel to secure that favor. Daniel did not use his superior, moral principles as an excuse to be haughty and belligerent. Once Daniel understood that the concern of Ashpenaz, the prince of the eunuchs (v. 10), he set out an alternative plan that would accommodate their desires without compromising his convictions.

Daniel makes a reasonable appeal. Daniel goes to his immediate overseer (Melzar means overseer) who was under the prince of the eunuchs with a proposal (vv. 11-13). He requests a reasonably short period of time (ten days) that would not endanger his superiors but would allow for results to be seen. Daniel's requests for **[roze** (pulse) was a request for anything grown from a seed (vegetables, fruit, grain etc.). The context indicates that the Hebrew children's health came from God. God blessed their faith in His ability to better nourish them on a poor man's diet than those who ate at the king's table. (Those who use this passage to propose a biblical basis for a vegetarian diet are in danger of missing the point of the passage!)

At the end of the test, they appeared better and "fatter of flesh" than all the other young men (vv. 15-16). This is the beginning of an important theme: when God's people are willing to stand out *for God's principles*, they will stand out *for His glory!*

### **Success of the Main Characters: God's Blessing**

For the third time in this chapter, the narrator informs the readers of God's active role in the lives of His people (God gave, v. 17). He blesses them with the ability to learn and understand. In foreshadowing of the coming events and prophecies, the text identifies God as the source for Daniel's wisdom and ability to understand dreams.

Notice that the narrator uses Daniel and his three friends Hebrew names (later their Babylonian names are used only in relationship to the king's court). Their temporary designations may have changed, but Babylon had not changed their loyalty to God or compromised their character. God would use them to proclaim His sovereignty and His salvation to all the nations of the world and would use Daniel to mediate the salvation of His people through prayer.

Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers of Nebuchadnezzar's realm (v. 20). This also foreshadows the conflict of chapter 2 that emphasizes the futility of Babylon's false religion in contrast to the superior God of the Hebrews.

At the beginning of Daniel 1, God's people were humiliated and were helpless captives, but by the end they are exalted to the presence of the king as his trusted advisors (v. 19). This is the hand of God on behalf of his people.

In the end, they resisted the luxury of the king's house, and God helped them preserve their identity and gave them wisdom that far exceeded the learning that came from the culture of Babylon

### **Historical Conclusion: God's Man Still Stands through It All**

The final verse of Daniel 1 calmly remarks that Daniel lived and remained influential all the way until the days of Cyrus. Cyrus was the Persian king who defeated Babylon in 539 BC. This would indicate that Daniel lived at least 66 years in Babylon. But it is also a theological statement. God will triumph in the end! The mighty nation of Babylon who subjugated God's people and looted His temple would not survive, but one lone servant of God would see it fall! The enemies of God will rise and fall but God's servants will see their demise. The future generations of sufferers should take comfort from God's dealing with Daniel knowing that they too will stand in the end (12:3, 13)!

# Lecture 4

## Daniel 2

### Structure

- \* Introduction (1-2)
  - \* Rising Action – King’s Interrogation (three exchanges)\* (2-11)
    - \* Rising Action – King’s Decree (12-13)
      - \* Rising Action – Daniel to Arioch and request to the King (14-16)
        - \* Rising Action – Prayer with Friends (17-18)
          - \* Climax – God Reveals Mystery\* (19a)
        - \* Falling Action – Daniel’s Praise to God\*\* (19b-23)
      - \* Falling Action – Daniel to Arioch and audience with King (24-25)
    - \* Falling Action – King’s Question (26)
  - \* Falling Action – Daniel’s Revelation (three parts)\*\* (27-45)
- \* Resolution (46-49)\*

\* indicates that there is a theological significant statement in this section

**The repetition of key vocabulary** [dream (18x), interpretation (13x), show (11x), reveal (7x), tell (4x), make known/know (18x), secrets (8x), wisdom (5x), wise men (9x)] **and the balanced structure of the chapter** (see above) both signal that the main theological emphasis of this chapter is that **God reveals the future**. Another reoccurring word is the root for ruler at 68x (king, reign, kingdom). God reveals to a sovereign (Nebuchadnezzar) who is the Sovereign over the future. The basis for God’s ability to *reveal* the future is God’s *control* over it.

### A Portrait of a “sovereign”: Introduction (vv. 1-2)

The King of Babylon was the greatest man in the world, and yet he is a man who has no peace. He was deeply troubled because he had a dream. Those who are powerful often live in the fear of losing that power. The nature of life is that the more you have the more you have to worry about. The greater the power the greater the striving to retain that power from all challengers. This dream confronts Nebuchadnezzar with his weakness and inability, and at this moment he becomes more tyrannical and stubborn. It is not unusual for men of power to lash out at others when they are forced to face the reality that they are not sovereign.

Believers should not envy the wicked because, although they may seem successful by all appearances, they are filled with the ravaging ruin of sin within (Pss. 37:1, 35-36). God gives to His beloved sleep (Pss. 4:8; 127:2).

## **The King's Interrogation: A Threefold Exchange (vv. 3-11)**

**King:** I have problem: I want to understand a troubling dream

**Chaldeans:** You give us information and we will give you understanding

**King:** No, I have spoken (gone from me ≠ forgot). You must supply both dream and interpretation. If not, you will die in pain and shame and if so, you will be greatly honored!

**Chaldeans:** You must give us information so that we can give you the interpretation!

**King:** I know you are just stalling for time. You will die if you don't reveal the dream. You will just give me lying, worthless words until the times change. I will know that your interpretation is correct when I see that you know the dream.

**Chaldeans:** No mere man can do this! No reasonable king asks this! No man can do this rare thing except the gods, and they do not live among flesh.

The Chaldeans were the religious representatives of paganism. The king had placed them in a difficult place. Nebuchadnezzar knew that the dream was foreboding to his power, but he did not understand what it meant. He needed to know its true meaning and could not trust his soothsayers because they did not have integrity. As unbelievers, their loyalty was ultimately to themselves and not to the king. The king, therefore, sets the challenge: you tell me what I know, and I'll know that you can tell me what I don't know. This is a call for true revelation which the Chaldeans admit can only come from God. Pagan religion must admit defeat in the face of this challenge, which sets the stage for the One True God to demonstrate His uniqueness as the Revealer of Secrets.

Ironically the Chaldeans deny God's dwelling with flesh (v. 11), yet God's intention was exactly to accomplish this: a restoration of His dwelling with man as it was in the Garden of Eden. He dwelt with Israel through the tabernacle and temple and sent His Son dwelling in human flesh to bring the greatest revelation to mankind (Heb. 1:1-2; John 1:18).

## **The King's Command: The Threat of Death to Daniel (vv. 12-13)**

In this section, the conflict of the story dramatically rises as the reader learns that Daniel's life is in jeopardy because of the King's decision to execute all the wise men of Babylon. The theme of God's people needing deliverance from foreign oppression, therefore, starts from the beginning of the book of Daniel. Some surmise that Daniel may still have been in the three year training period, because he was not called to go before the King (it was in the second full year of the king Nebuchadnezzar, 2:1). This setting then would probably take place near the end of his training program and helps to explain what vaulted Him and his friends into the spotlight of the king's favor.

## **A Cry for Mercy: The Actions of Daniel and His Companions (vv. 14-18)**

This section parallels chapter 1 with Daniel responding with wisdom to his authorities and gaining unexpected favor from unbelievers in Babylon (2:14-16; see 1:17). An interesting literary device of this section is the double use of the verb “make known.” Arioch makes known to Daniel (2:15), and Daniel makes known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah (2:17). This verb prepares the reader for Daniel’s praise to God for making known the dream and its interpretation (2:23)!

Amazingly, Daniel finds favor with the executioner, Arioch, and then again with the king, who grants him more time (which he would not grant to the Chaldeans, 2:9). The only explanation for this is the one already given in 1:9 – God’s gracious sovereignty.

The role of prayer in the theology of Daniel should not be overlooked! The first occurrence of prayer in Daniel indicates that prayer is the means by which God grants His people’s deliverance! This was a passionate group of young men praying for their lives. Since a vision takes place while one is awake in contrast to a dream that occurs when one is asleep, one could surmise that Daniel and his three friends prayed deep into the night until God answered their prayer! Their salvation came through God’s revelation just as our salvation comes through the Word (John 1:1).

### **God Reveals: A Climax of Praise (vv. 19-23)**

The climax of the structure of Daniel 2 points to this theological reality – God reveals the unknown. The effect of this revelation and the content of this revelation have the same message: God delivers His people from ungodly men.

Here we find that revelation and salvation culminate in praise and benediction! One might expect Daniel to run to the king immediately because his life is on the line, but he takes the time to give God praise and glory. In this culmination of praise, the theme of the present chapter as well as the major themes of the book find reference. This worship sets the foundation for the theology of the entire book.

It can be divided into a formal prayer (vv. 20-22) and an informal prayer (v. 23).

Then was the **secret revealed** unto Daniel in a night vision.

Then Daniel blessed **the God of heaven**. Daniel answered and said,

Blessed be **the name of God** for ever and ever:

for **wisdom and might** are his:

And he changeth the times and the seasons:

he removeth **kings**, and setteth up **kings**:

he **Giveth** wisdom unto the wise,

and knowledge to them that know understanding:

He **revealeth** the deep and **secret** things:

He knoweth what is in the darkness,  
and the light dwelleth with him.

I thank thee, and praise thee,  
 O thou God of my fathers,  
 who hast **Given** me **wisdom and might**,  
 and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee:  
 for thou hast now made known unto us the **king's** matter.

Daniel blesses God's name which is comprehensive of God's nature as He has made it known to man. Daniel praises the character of God which He reveals through His actions on behalf of His people. God's name is worthy of being blessed and praised "forever and ever." What man desires for itself (eternal life, 2:4), can only rightfully attributed to God (2:20)!

The formal prayer can be organized under the two attributes that God possesses: wisdom and might. God's power is His unrestricted ability to accomplish all that He desires. He uses His power to **change** the times and seasons and to **set up** and to **take down** kings. God's wisdom is God's skill in using His vast knowledge to accomplish the best possible result. He **gives** His wisdom to others and by it **reveals** what is hidden to man but what God alone **knows**. God is the subject of three verbs in each section.

<b>Power</b>	<b>Wisdom</b>
Changes	Gives
Removes	Reveals
Sets up	Knows

Another way to organize the prayer is around three main verbs that are followed by 3 sets of parallel ideas. The central, main verb (# 2) of the three, "**give**," forms the connection with the informal part of Daniels' prayer (give, 2:23) and relates back to chapter 1 (give, 1:2, 9, 17).

- (1) He Changes Times and Seasons  
 He removes Kings  
 He sets up Kings
- (2) He Gives  
 wisdom to the wise  
 knowledge to those who know understanding
- (3) He Reveals the Deep and Secrets Things  
 He knows what is in darkness  
 And the light dwells with Him

The first action that Daniel praises God for is His ability to change the times and seasons. The phrase "the times changed" means when the situation turns (2:9). It references the turning points of stories and the dramatic reversals of plays. God, therefore, controls the turning points of time. This verb "changed" is used in every chapter of the Aramaic section of Daniel (chapters 2-7) as a reminder of God's Sovereignty over all these events. God steps into His story and directs it to His purposes.

While the King was intent on destroying God's people, God changed the King's word (3:18)  
When Nebuchadnezzar was filled with pride, God changed his heart to that of a beast (4:16)  
While Belshazzar was partying, God changed the countenance on his face to terror (5:9-10)  
While the law of the Medes of the Persians cannot be changed, God renders it void (6:15)  
The attempt of the antichrist to change times and laws is an attack on God's glory (7:25)

God's ability to depose kings demonstrates His sovereign power, and He exemplifies this in the message of the dream. The kingdoms of man come and go, but only God's kingdom will reign forever! God deposes Nebuchadnezzar for a brief time, and brings Belshazzar to an untimely end (Daniel 4-5). God will bring down every proud human ruler, especially that one who boasts great things against God: Antiochus Epiphanes and ultimately the antichrist. Not only does God depose rulers but God also appoints ("sets up") them as well (Rom. 13:1). In Daniel, God exalts the Stone cut out of the mountain, the Son of Man who comes in the clouds, the saints of the most high God, and the persecuted people of God. These He appoints as kings in His kingdom!

The fact that Daniel praises God's ability to depose kings before He exalts kings (rather than the other way around) seems to indicate that the kings that are (sinful earthly rulers), need to be deposed before God can exalt His anointed King (Psalm 2:6) and make His people kings in His Kingdom (Dan. 7:27; Rev. 5:10)

The second main verb of Daniel's prayer is "give." This connects this narrative with the previous in its emphasis on the God's sovereign control. In this chapter, God exercises His sovereignty to give wisdom and knowledge to those in need. Everyone who is wise has been given wisdom from God, and everyone who understands has received their knowledge from God! Those who need wisdom, therefore, should make God their source of wisdom (James 1:5).

The third main verb in Daniel's praise is "reveal." In Daniel's subsequent conversation with the king, it becomes clear that "to reveal" is an act that God alone can do. It demonstrates that He is Sovereign and that He is God. This theme of revealing of secrets (= the unknown) features prominently throughout the book of Daniel. In chapters 2 and 4, God reveals Nebuchadnezzar's dreams and in chapter 5 God reveals the encoded message that He wrote on the wall. This theme is also the key to the second half of the book in which Daniel receives four visions that pertain to the immediate (near) and eschatological (distant) future (7, 8, 9, 10-12).

The prayer compares lack of knowledge to darkness, but for God darkness is as light (Psalm 139:12). Darkness is also a symbol for evil as well (John 1:5; 3:19-20) so that a double understanding is possible. God is the source of light, and no darkness is in Him (1 John 1:5), yet He is completely aware of darkness and can and will certainly meet the powers of darkness with a crushing blow (2:44).

Formal prayer is an appropriate vehicle to communicate the worthiness of God; informal prayer expresses the intimacy of a close, personal relationship with God. Daniel's informal prayer gives thanks to God in personal terms as the God of his fathers. God's giving is central to Daniel's personal prayer as well. God's giving marks His supremacy but also signals His salvation; it

demonstrates His control and His compassion; it shows His governance and His grace! He gives what was true of Himself to His people; He gives His wisdom and His might. The final two lines stress in a grouping of two the central aspect of this narrative – God makes known in accordance with their prayer and the king's request.

### **Setting the Stage: Daniel goes before the King (vv. 24-26)**

This transition section that narrates Daniel being brought to the king highlights again the central theme of making known. Ariel announces that he found a man who would make known the dream (2:25); Nebuchadnezzar asks Daniel if he could make known the dream (2:26).

The king goes from a man in charge handing out death warrants to a man in need of another who can answer his question!

This section also highlights Daniel's kindness: Daniel does not want the other wise men killed, and in going first to Ariel, Daniel allows him to get credit for finding him.

There is also a contrast between Ariel's bravado "I have found a man" and Daniel's humility "not . . . for any wisdom that I have."

### **The Meat of the Story: Daniel declares the King's Dream (vv. 27-46)**

This section can be clearly divided into 3 sections: Daniel explaining the source of wisdom; Daniel recounting the dream; Daniel giving the interpretation.

#### **Daniel's Wisdom Explained (vv. 27-30)**

"Daniel's answer [to the king's question] is a masterpiece of setting the matter in its proper light and giving God the glory."<sup>5</sup>

Daniel places the final dagger in the heart of pagan impotence by asserting that not one of the king's wise men could discover his dream. The God of heaven, which emphasizes His universal authority, is the victor over all ungodly rebellion because He can reveal the secret.

The narrator continues to use the verb "to make known" in the final portion of Daniel 2 to form a symmetrical portrait of God's ability to reveal. The pattern of doubling the use of the verb in each section of the story (see table below) makes the repetition of the verb three times (an odd number) in short succession (vv. 28, 29, 30) a clear deviation from the established pattern that creates a note of suspension that is finally resolved when the final occurrence at the end of the story brings the running theme to a climactic summary (v. 45).

2:1-11	vv. 12-18	vv. 19-23	vv. 24-26	vv. 27-30	vv. 31-49
2x	2x	2x	2x	3x	1x
vv. 5, 9	vv. 15, 17	v. 23	vv. 25, 26	vv. 28, 29, 30	v. 45

<sup>5</sup> J. F. Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation* (Chicago: Moody, 1971), 59.

Before telling the king his dream, Daniel explains the purpose of the dream. It is to both reveal what is to come to pass in the near future (four successive kingdoms) but primarily what will happen “in the latter days” (eschatological events of the distant future, v. 28). God’s purpose in revealing these things to Nebuchadnezzar (“as for thee” – a singular address) seems to be a gracious invitation to the king to humble himself before God. Daniel reveals what the king had been wondering and pondering on in his heart as he went to bed on the night of the dream: what would happen in the future after he was gone (v. 29; see Eccl. 3:11). God had graciously decided to answer him. In the setting of the purpose, Daniel exemplifies humility that is not a fabrication of his own insignificance but focuses on God and His purposes (v. 30). True humility acknowledges God and His kindness and delights in being a tool in the hand of God to bless others. Daniel seeks not personal prestige, but the opportunity to do the job God had given him to do: to give God glory!

### **The King’s Dream Retold (vv. 31-35)**

Daniel declares that the king’s dreamed of a colossal image that was brilliant and terrifying to look upon. The organization of the statue can be worked out as follows:

Head	Chest and Arms	Belly and Thighs	Legs	Feet
Fine Gold	Silver	Bronze	Iron	Part Iron and clay

The action of the dream starts when a stone strikes the feet of the image and breaks in pieces all five parts of the statue. These pieces are so small that like chaff a simple wind blows them away. The Stone then becomes a great mountain that fills the entire earth.

### **The King’s Dream Interpreted (vv. 36-45)**

In Daniel’s interpretation, he focuses first on God’s gracious sovereignty over the events of time by using the key word from opening narrative (Daniel 1) and his prayer of praise: give. Twice Daniel tells Nebuchadnezzar with holy boldness (John 19:11) that the king owes his great kingdom that he possessed over all the known world to God and His grace (vv. 37-38). The expressions of the subservience of birds and beasts is reminiscent of God’s dominion mandate to man (Gen. 1:26; Ps. 8). Nebuchadnezzar is a king above all other kings and is therefore the head of gold. The second and third parts of the statue are the successive kingdoms of Persia and Greece, which are passed over with no interpretive comment. They will be discussed in more detail in the visions of chapters 7, 8, and 11.

The fourth part of iron speaks to Rome as the fourth kingdom who would possess great military strength and power to break into pieces and to bruise. The fifth part is not another kingdom but the fourth kingdom divided so that it possesses a mixture of strength and weakness. The incompatibility of clay and iron yet mixed together symbolizes a confederation of nations that possess a limited degree of true unity among them. The toes symbolize (ten) kings (2:44; see

Dan. 7 and Rev. 17:12), and it is in the days of these kings (who must rule simultaneously rather than in succession), that the Stone of God strikes to demolish their authority and establish God's kingdom on earth.

Some general observations are that the quality of the medals decreases in value through the passage of time and reflects the degeneration of human glory (the result of sin and the curse) in contrast to an evolutionary mindset of man as ever, upwardly ascending.<sup>6</sup> While the quality decreases, the hardness of the metals increase. This suggests that man's military might would grow as would his willingness to use severity and cruelty to subjugate others. Based on density, this statute would be very top-heavy standing on a precarious foundation, which is precisely where the rock strikes the statue. Whereas man may assume that the last kingdom of iron is the strongest, from God's perspective it is the weakest.

The final kingdom of God comes with a climactic blow to the other kingdoms that signals their demise and end (Where as these kingdoms do not operate concurrently but rather successively, there is a continuity seen between all these different expressions of man's sinful dominion of this world). Because God's kingdom stands in parallel relationship with the four other kingdoms, the most natural interpretation is that God's kingdom will be a physical, earthly, universal kingdom (v. 35). This kingdom, in contrast with man's kingdoms, is an eternal kingdom that cannot be destroyed nor will its authority be passed on to another people because all the other kingdoms that would fight against God will have been destroyed. This passage promises a state on the earth in which God is the final ruler over mankind. Man's rebellion against God comes to an end because of the rise of a Stone that does not have human origin (cut without hands, v. 45). This stone refers to Jesus (Luke 20:18) who is not from below but from above (John 8:23).

The postmillennial interpretation of Daniel 2 understands the stone "becoming" a mountain over a great period of time, but this disregards the imagery that reveals the catastrophic demise of the rebellious kingdoms at the arrival of the Stone. The premillennial interpretation only requires a time gap between the legs of iron and the feet of iron and clay. This time gap, although not inherent to this narrative, does fit the reoccurring pattern that takes place in the subsequent visions of Daniel. A time gap in this passage is not primarily system-driven but is a conclusion based on the other passages of Daniel.

God's has graciously granted to Nebuchadnezzar and to all men knowledge of what will take place in the future. A future that is certain and firm in the hand of a Sovereign God. Through this revelation, He invites of all men to submit to this coming King in faith and trust (Ps. 2:10-12). The Kingdom of God, it is coming!

---

<sup>6</sup> John Walvoord, 66.

## **Conclusion: God's Praise and His People's Glory (vv. 46-49)**

The narrative climaxes with a final word of praise to God on the mouth of a pagan king! Nebuchadnezzar knew that Daniel had spoken the truth and that he had been brought near to the presence of God through the revelation that he had received. He demonstrates what all men everywhere must do: bow down and worship God (v. 46, Daniel merely being His representative)! Those outside God's covenant promises (Gentiles) will reveal their heart attitude toward God through how they treat His people (Matt. 25:40). The king acknowledges God as the unique God above all gods. This God is the ruler of kings (Rev. 1:5) and demonstrates His sovereign ability through His knowledge of the unknown (v. 47, key words: reveal and secret). Subsequent narratives will reveal that the king has not truly submitted his heart to God in humility yet, but he is one gigantic step closer to that end!

The king exalts Daniel (v. 48), and Daniel remembers his three friends (v. 49). God's people go from the threat of experiencing death to being honored by their unbelieving authority to the highest places of exaltation. Daniel refused the king's food, retained his identity, and was promoted not on the basis of Chaldean teaching on dream interpretation but because of God's gracious revelation. Daniel's stand culminates in his ability to stand in high places!

## Lecture 5

### Daniel 3

#### Structure

There are chiasmic elements again to Daniel 3 that emphasize the central confession of the 3 Hebrew children and the King's final proclamation.

- ✘ King's Decree – Worship the image
  - + Accusation by foreign rulers against the Hebrews
    - ✘ King's Wrath – a second chance
      - ★ Hebrew Confession of God
    - ✘ King's Wrath – punishment by fire
  - + Deliverance of the Hebrews in the presence of foreign rulers
- ✘ King's Decree – Worship of God and no mistreatment of Jews

Another form of outline can be made around the 3 decrees of Nebuchadnezzar.

Decree to worship the image (3:1-15) with a repudiation of God's ability to save.

Decree to execute the prisoners (3:16-27) with God's saving His servants

Decree to worship God alone (3:28-30) with a declaration of God's ability to save.

In determining the theological emphasis of Daniel 3, one must consider the significant amount of repetition: king (18x); Image (12x); Set up/Made (11x); Fall Down (7x); Worship (11x); Burning (8x); Fire (14x) Furnace (10x); Deliver (5x).

#### Decree to worship the Image (vv. 1-15)

The obvious connection that ties chapters 2 and 3 together is the image. Nebuchadnezzar dreams of an image and then creates an image. God revealed to him that man's glory would fade and that his kingdom would be supplanted by another. By creating of an image that is entirely of gold, Nebuchadnezzar expresses his rebellion and pride against God. Man foolishly believes that his universal rule will never end and that his accomplishments will last forever. Sinful man impotently rejects that he is a finite creature under the authority of an eternal God. This symbol of rebellion (the image) fits the symbolism of Babylon itself as the location of mankind's total opposition to God (Gen. 11; Rev. 18).

The image was a monstrosity at 9 stories tall and was constructed in a plain with mountains surrounding it. The text repeatedly reminds the reader that Nebuchadnezzar set up the image (10x), and thereby emphasizes its man-made origins. It is an object of worship (10x) that

represented the gods of Babylon and the king himself (x12). This image foreshadows the abomination of desolation and the image that the antichrist will force the world to worship (Dan. 9:27; Rev. 13:15). The purpose of the story of Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah’s courage is to give strength to those who, during the days of Antiochus and the Antichrist, will be forced to choose between worshipping the image of another god or paying the ultimate, earthly sacrifice.

Throughout this chapter, there *seems* to be a lot of needless repetition. The 8 different positions of rank are listed twice (vv. 2-3) and the 7 descriptive phrases of the musical instruments are listed four times! This gives a sense of the pomp that surrounded this grand ceremony, but a vocal reading of the repetitive lists begins to sound silly to the ear. If this is purposeful, the text mocks the empty attempts of man at self-importance.

Description	Repetition	Verse
King sends for a gathering	Positions of Rank	v. 2
All officials gather	Positions of Rank	v. 3
Command to Worship	Musical instruments	v. 5
Call to Worship	Musical instruments	v. 7
Accusation	Musical instruments	v. 10
Repetition of Command	Musical instruments	v. 15

There is a threefold emphasis on the phrase “all people, nations, and languages” that is repeated twice initially (first in the command to worship, v. 4; and then in the act of worship, v. 7) to point to the universal nature of the false worship that was taking place. The final use of the phrase occurs climactically at the end of the narrative (v. 29) and contrasts this “universal” mandatory worship of false gods (which is not realized) and the universal obligation of all men to worship the true God (which will be realized, Phil. 2:10).

The repetition of the burning fiery furnace underscores the cost of disobedience. The text does not narrate the exact moment when Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah took their courageous stand in defiance of the king’s decree in the face of overwhelming peer pressure and at the pain of death. The reader only finds out through the mouth of some of the Chaldeans who, probably chafing at their own failure to interpret the king’s dream and envying the exaltation of the Hebrews, were more than happy to remind the king of his words and point out the offending party. They slyly craft five descriptions of the three Hebrews in such a way to insure the king’s anger toward these despised people (v. 12).

1. They note their Jewish identity – playing on feelings of racial superiority
2. They remind the king of their positions of prominence – highlighting their dependence on and responsibility to the king.
3. They interpret their actions as a rejection of the king – appealing to the king’s pride
4. They highlight their religious distinction (lack of pluralism) – appealing to religious zeal

5. They end with their refusal to worship the golden image that the king had set up – their rebellious non-compliance with the king’s allegiance and unity program.

Because God places the narration of their stand on the mouths of others, this story too emphasizes that there are those who hate God’s people and will seek their destruction.

The choice was simple – bow or burn.<sup>7</sup>

What was at stake in this moment? To bow would be to deny the glory of God’s exclusive right to be worshipped. Would they compromise their integrity to save their lives? The first commandment was to have no other gods before Yahweh and the second was a prohibition against making a graven image or bowing down to it (Exod. 20:1-5). They would have denied God, if they had worshipped that which was not God.

The pressure mounts as Nebuchadnezzar calls the three Hebrew children before him to inquire after the truth of this accusation and to give them a second chance to obey the command. The boiling rage and passion of this king match the threat of execution in a burning fiery furnace!

Human nature can furnish plenty of excuses as to why there should be an exception to absolute obedience to God. Hananiah, Michael, and Azariah could have reasoned . . .

- We would only be offending God for a few seconds – then we could ask for forgiveness!
- God surely would not want us to die for something so small!
- We would not want to lose our opportunity to use our positions for good. Think of the people counting on us.
- We have great evangelical possibilities before us; the good outweighs the compromise!
- No one else will care!
- Everyone else is doing it!
- We don’t want to stand out – better to blend in and make a difference!
- We owe it to the king to show him gratitude and not offend him!
- How is this the loving thing to do? It seems cantankerous and contentious!
- Why should I serve God? He has only exiled me to this horrible place, and does He mean to see me burn alive?

If they had chosen to disobey God, they would have been spared death, but they would have missed the opportunity to display God’s glory to an unbelieving world! God glorifies Himself when He delivers His people (Psalm 50:15, “And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.”)! This is the challenge that Nebuchadnezzar throws down before them – “who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?” The names of the three Hebrew children answer the king’s question – Yahweh shows favor, who is like our God, Yahweh helps!

---

<sup>7</sup> I’m indebted to a chapel message by Craig Hartman at Bob Jones University for the concise contrast of “bow or burn” and the idea of listing excuses to their obedience.

This is the kind of dedication that the people of God must have! A willingness to die before they dishonor or disobey God! This was the spirit of Daniel in chapter 1, and this is the kind of saint that God uses to demonstrate His glory!

## **The Decree to Execute the Prisoners (16-27)**

The central portion of this narrative focuses on the response of the Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and provides the exegetical bricks for our theological foundation.

**(16)** The Hebrew children acknowledge that there is no decision for them to make. To dishonor God for a few seconds or to burn to death in the fiery furnace was a simple decision – they’d rather burn! They are resolute in their obedience to God.

**(17)** They first answer the king’s second question as to who is able to deliver (v. 15)!

*If our God exists whom we are serving, he is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace—and from your hand, O king, he can deliver.*

This part of their answer deals with the ability of God; they are not so certain about his pleasure: *But if not ...* (18a). They are sure of God’s ability (17), they are not so sure about his purpose (18a). It’s as if they said: ‘We don’t know what our God will do, O king; you may turn us into puddles of carbon; but in one sense it doesn’t matter; the bottom line is that we will not serve your gods or worship your image.’ So they were unsure of God’s circumstantial will (whether they escape) but were sure of God’s revealed will (‘You shall have no other gods besides me’).<sup>8</sup>

They place confidence in God, yet they do not demand God to answer in any way but what pleases His sovereign will! There is a humility here that leaves their lives in God’s hands. This is true faith that allows God freedom to do as He chooses.<sup>9</sup> Faith in faith binds God to our will, but faith in God submits to His will.

**(18)** Then they answer the king’s first question (v. 14)! Even if it meant death, they would not bow down to the king’s image! They were not focused on their own escape but on their obedience! They would trust God even if it cost them their lives (Job 13:27)! The Hebrew children never lost sight of the fact that what really matters in life is whom we worship! They would not fear king Nebuchadnezzar but they would fear God (Matt. 10:28).

Below is a presentation of the balance between the King’s decree (v. 15) and the Hebrew’s response (vv. 17-18)

---

<sup>8</sup> Dale Ralph Davis, 55–56.

<sup>9</sup> “These men give us then a full-balanced picture of faith: faith knows the power of God (*he is able*, 17), guards the freedom of God (*but if not ...*, 18a), and holds the truth of God (*we will not serve your gods*, 18b).” Ibid., 56.

### **King's Decree**

- + **Worship the image** (but if you do not), you will burn in the Furnace, because *no god can deliver you*

### **Hebrew's Response**

- + *God is able to deliver us* from the Furnace  
(But if He does not) **We will not worship the image**

They have answered in a way that parallels the king's speech to them but countered it on both points! God is able to deliver, and they will not worship the image!

Application: Don't minimize obedience. It is what demonstrates whom you are worshiping and whom you are loving (Exod. 20:6; John 14:15). Obedience is what glorifies God (John 17:4) and was central to the life of our Savior (John 15:10).

### **The King's Decree for Execution (19-23)**

The emphasis in this section is on the flame and the furnace. Nebuchadnezzar's countenance changes (a connection with Belteshazzar in chapter 5) as his face turns from red to purple. He explodes in irrationality and has the furnace heated to seven times its normal temperature. He commands them to be bound with their royal clothing on (v. 20), and has them cast into the furnace with such haste that the fire consumes the men who brought them to the furnace (v. 21)!

They were dropped into the furnace from an opening in the top, and the king sat back to have his fury appeased by watching those who dared to oppose him writhing in pain.

### **God's Deliverance (24-27)**

The king, however, witnessed the astonishing. He startingly notes three things: (1) they are unbound, (2) they numbered four and not three, and (3) they are unharmed.

When the king identified the fourth individual in the furnace as a supernatural figure like a son of God, he spoke more than he knew. The text later identifies this fourth figure as God's angel (3:28) so that the companion of the three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace was none other than the angel of the Lord (see also 6:22) who protects God's people (Ps. 34:7). The best explanation of the OT data on this mysterious figure who represents God and yet is regarded as God is that this was a manifestation of the pre-incarnate Son of God.

A powerful truth emerges from this story: the furnace of affliction is transformed into a sanctuary by the presence of God.

The Old Testament uses references to fiery furnaces to describe the oppression in Egypt (Deut. 4:20), captivity (Ezek. 22:22), and affliction in general (Isa. 48:10). This thematic emphasis

provides a clue that this story pictures what God will do for His people in affliction and trial. Those who will take the greatest comfort from God's delivering presence will be those who suffer during the last days under the persecution of the antichrist. The fiery furnace is, therefore, a prophetic symbol of what Israel must yet face.

In Daniel, God demonstrates His ability to save but also reveals that God often chooses to deliver not from the fire but through the fire.

God's purpose for having His children go through the fire is illuminated by the Old Testament connection of fire and the divine presence. God appeared to Abraham, Moses, and Israel as a consuming fire (Gen. 15:17; Exod. 24:19; Deut. 9:3; Heb. 12:29). God is a fire that destroys the wicked (Mal. 4:1), but is a purifying fire to the righteous (Mal. 3:2-3). From this perspective, one does not choose whether they will go through fire only whether it will be the fire of purification or the fire of destruction (Ps. 9:17; Rev. 21:8).

God's presence ensures that the fire will not consume them (Isa. 43:2) and that they do not need to fear (Psalm 23:4). The flame does not have any power over them. The text notes four descriptions of the delivered saints from the astounded witnesses. (1) The fire had no power on their bodies; (2) not even a hair was singed; (3) their coats were not changed; and (4) there was not even the smell of smoke about them (v. 27)!

The only thing that the fire consumed was the cords that bound them. The fire had set them free. The Song, *Walking Through the Flames* by Jeanine Drylie, enthusiastically captures this glorious reality of divine deliverance:

Many years ago in a time of woe  
Three young men faced a bitter test.  
For the king decreed that they not be freed,  
But instead he had bound them fast  
Because they would not bow the knee except to God on high.  
Into the flames they fed the same, these men were bound to die

But who would have thought that the flames would set them free?  
And who would have thought that they'd gain the victory?  
When with God our lot we cast,  
We have more than we could ask  
We'll go walking through the flames with the Son of God.

The fire of affliction, therefore, can only purify the saints of God and remove what is holding them back from serving God. Their faith shall come forth purified as gold (Zech. 13:9; 1 Pet. 1:7). The purpose of God in persecution and trial is for the good of His people and the glory of His name!

[Don't miss the irony of a king who was powerless to kill the Hebrew children with his decree to throw them into the fiery furnace now is commanding them to come out! A command he certainly had no power to enforce.]

### **Conclusion: The King's Decree of Protection (28-30)**

The story concludes with a benediction of God's ability to save and thereby communicates the main theological idea! The God who saves by sending His messenger (Jesus) to deliver His servants (us) is worthy of praise! What God's enemies use to try to destroy His people, God uses to glorify His name!

The text also emphasizes the part that these faithful servants of God played. (1) They placed their faith in God. This again points forward to God's requirement for deliverance (Eph. 2:8-9) and to the attitude of those who experience God's ongoing sustaining power in their lives (Heb. 11:6; Gal. 3:5). (2) They changed the king's command. This has a double-meaning: they defied the king's command for them to bow and thereby God changed the king's command for them to burn (God is the changer of times and seasons, 2:21). They yielded their bodies as an act of exclusive worship to the one true God. May we do the same (Rom. 12:1).

The king makes a final decree that protects the name of God from slander and contempt (v. 29). It is a universal decree to all people that warns of dire judgment against those who hate Him. Its theological significance is that it functions as a prophetic warning to those who would later attempt to express their hatred against God by hurting God's people (Antiochus/Antichrist). No other God can deliver like He can!

Side Note: If one looks carefully, there is a sort of a numerical count down in the text. 8 different groupings of Babylonian leaders (2-3); 7 descriptions of music (4, 10, 15); 6 descriptions of music (7); 4 men in the flame (25), 4 descriptions of their clothes (21, 27), 4 groups of Babylonian leaders (27), 3 Hebrew children with 3 descriptions of their actions (28, 29), 3 descriptions of universality (29), 2 descriptions of worship (28), 2 descriptions of punishment (29), ONE God who can deliver (28-29).

## Lecture 6

### Daniel 4

#### Structure

The literary character of Daniel 4 is different from the rest of the book in that it is a letter from the king of Babylon to the world. There are several different structural methods at work in this chapter. The most natural is the literary structure of story retold.

- ✘ The King's Opening – Prologue (1-3)
  - ✚ Main Story (4-36)
- ✘ The King's Closing – Benediction to the King of Heaven (37)

The Main Plot of the Story can be broken down into easily defined sections.

- ✘ **The Dream Told: Nebuchadnezzar's Words (4-18)**
  - ✚ The Dream and the Decree (4-8)
  - ✚ The Dream Recounted to Daniel (9-18)
    - ✘ The King expresses confidence in Daniel (9)
      - ★ Vision of the Tree (10-12)
      - ★ Vision of the Angel (13-17)
    - ✘ The King expresses confidence in Daniel (18)
- ✘ **The Dream Interpreted: Daniel's Words (19-27)**
  - ✚ Daniel's Reaction to the Dream (19)
  - ✚ Daniel's Interpretation of the Dream (20-26)
    - ✘ The Tree Described and Interpreted (20-22)
    - ✘ The Angel Described and Interpreted (23-26)
  - ✚ Daniel's Advice based on the Dream (27)
- ✘ **The Dream's Fulfillment: Nebuchadnezzar's Judgment and Restoration (28-36)**
  - ✚ The Occasion for Fulfillment (28-32)
    - ✘ The King's Voice (29-30)
    - ✘ The Divine Voice (31-32)
  - ✚ The Description of Fulfillment (33-36)
    - ✘ Fulfillment of Judgment (33)
    - ✘ Fulfillment of Restoration (34-36)

There is also a subtle shift in perspective in telling of this story. First, Nebuchadnezzar testifies to his own personal experience in 1<sup>st</sup> person, but the narrative switches to recounting the king's actions in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person. At the climactic point in the plot, the perspective returns to that of Nebuchadnezzar telling his own testimony.

✘ 1<sup>st</sup> Person (1-18)

✚ 3<sup>rd</sup> Person (19-33)

✘ 1<sup>st</sup> Person (34-37)

This literary device illustrates the effects of God's working to restore Nebuchadnezzar to his right mind, which is not a return to his proud thoughts but to the mind of wisdom that humbles himself before God.

This narrative gives the main theological point at the very beginning: God's kingdom is an everlasting dominion, and He rules from generation to generation (v. 3). A reoccurring summary statement of God's rulership over man occurs at the end of each of the three main sections: the dream (v. 17), the interpretation (vv. 25-26), and the divine voice from heaven (v. 32) as well as Nebuchadnezzar's praise (v. 34). In the final conclusion, Nebuchadnezzar references God as the King of Heaven in complete sovereignty over the doings of men (v. 37). This repetition makes the theological emphasis apparent and dramatic: God rules. The dominant vocabulary reflects this emphasis: King (14x), kingdom (13x), dominion (4x), rule (4x). This is the testimony of the most powerful man of his day and how he came to learn a truth that transformed his life.

### **Prologue: An Open Letter to the World (1-3)**

**1.** Nebuchadnezzar ties together the first three narratives of the Aramaic section. He receives dreams in both chapter 2 and 4 that depict the future destruction of man's power. The second dream reveals the loss of power in more personal terms, but it is in contrast with the first dream in that it also depicts his restoration. Nebuchadnezzar has witnessed firsthand God's ability to reveal the unknown and God's ability to deliver, but he has not yet submitted his heart to the God who rules over all the world. This open letter, which is addressed to every man ("all people, nations, and languages"), has timeless relevance in that it explains the nature of pride that is in all men and the present working of God to bring men to humility before Him.

**2.** This testimony is the story of the redemption of a pagan king which stands in stark contrast to another pagan king who refuses to humble himself in the following chapter. Nebuchadnezzar was a man who needed knowledge (2:3; 4:6), but now having his eyes opened, he makes known the wonders of the God who is supreme above all things (Most High, 4:2). God uses His absolute sovereign power over the events of life to grab the attention of men (wonders) and to point to Him (signs).

Daniel	What is Learned
Chapter 2	Only God’s Kingdom is Eternal
Chapter 3	Man’s Kingdom Seeks to Oppose
Chapter 4	God’s Kingdom Triumphs

3. Nebuchadnezzar recognizes that God’s Kingdom is superior to the kingdoms of men and that He is actively ruling and controlling their reigns throughout all generations to accomplish His purposes! The fact that the king joyfully acknowledges God’s sovereignty points to a submission of His will to God, and his desire to tell others signals the regeneration of his heart.

### **The Dream Told (4-18)**

Nebuchadnezzar recounts the night of his dream as a night of peace and relaxation until God’s revelation came (v. 4). He was “flourishing” like well-water vegetation (foreshadowing the dream in which he is depicted as a tree). After the dream, he experienced fear and anxiety (v. 5). The human reaction to God’s revelations of the future are consistent throughout Daniel as emotionally overwhelming (2:1; 4:5, 19; 5:6; 7:15, 28; 8:27; 10:8) as they disclose future evil, suffering, and judgment.

The king again makes a decree (like Daniel 2 and 3), and again the ignorance of the Babylonian wise men shows the bankruptcy of human religion (vv. 6, 18). Why Daniel comes in last when the king has such confidence in him is unknown, but it creates a dramatic effect (vv. 8, 18). It is significant that the king acknowledges him as “Daniel” and then gives his Babylonian name after his pagan god. This reminds the reader of Daniel’s stand for God (Dan. 1), and brings to mind the contrasting significance in those names (Daniel’s God is King/Judge vs. Bell shall protect his life), which will come to greater prominence in the following narrative of Daniel 5. It is also another small piece to the puzzle that points to Nebuchadnezzar’s acknowledgement of the Most High God, for in the narrative flashback (the time before He submitted to God), the king only refers to Daniel by his pagan name.

The acknowledgment of Daniel’s possession of “the spirit of the holy gods” occurs three times (vv. 8, 9, 18), and signifies that something was unique about Daniel (see also 5:11, 14). Daniel’s connection to the “gods” was revealed through a divine spirit within him. Although the king, like Pharaoh (Gen. 41:38), would not have theologically understood what he was identifying, the text’s inclusion of this description invites the reader to understand Daniel’s ability to understand revelation in light of the Spirit of God who spoke through the holy men of the Old Testament (2 Sam. 23:2). The king saw Daniel’s ability to interpret the unknown (v. 18), his confidence in God (v. 9), and the fruit of the Spirit in Daniel’s life (Gal. 5:22), which was manifested in Daniel’s kind and gracious interaction with the king.

There is an inclusio that emphasizes these themes in verses 9 and 18 which the following chart below illustrates on the following page.

Inclusio (v. 7-9, 18)
Inability of the Babylonian wise men
Daniel's pagan name
The spirit of the holy gods in Daniel
Command to tell the interpretation
An Assurance of Daniel's ability

### **The Vision of the Tree: Prosperity (10-12)**

The king reports what he saw in a well-balanced, 12 lined poem (3 sets of 2 lines and 2 sets of 3 lines).

Thus *were* the visions of mine head in my bed; I saw, and behold

a tree in the midst of the earth,  
and the height thereof *was* great.

<sup>11</sup> The tree grew,  
and *was* strong,  
and the height thereof reached unto heaven,  
and the sight thereof to the end of **all** the earth:

<sup>12</sup> The leaves thereof *were* fair,  
and the fruit thereof much,  
and in it *was* meat for **all**:

the beasts of the field had shadow under it,  
and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof,  
and **all** flesh *was* fed of it.

The focal point of the vision is a tree and its exaltation. Its position is one of prominence with height in the middle of the earth, and it prospers in growth and strength so that it grows to its global capacity. The second half of the poem focuses on the universal impact of the tree. Its productiveness provides food for all so that beasts and birds find shelter and food in it.

### **The Vision of the Angel: Disaster (13-17)**

A heavenly messenger comes to this tree, and the text describes him as a “watcher” and a “holy one” (vv. 13, 17, 23). The messenger’s holiness means that he comes from the presence of God, and the title “watcher” indicates that he comes from God’s heavenly court.<sup>10</sup> This title communicates God’s awareness of man’s activity (2 Chron. 16:9; Zech. 4:10) and His sovereignty in that His watchmen (think lowly scout) are dealing with kings of men (highest rank of men).

---

<sup>10</sup> John E. Goldingay, *Daniel*, vol. 30, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, 1998), 88.

The angel speaks a command with great authority and calls for the complete negation of the tree's prosperity (v. 14, notice words corresponding to the first part of the dream: tree, branches, leaves, fruit, beasts, birds).

The command to leave the stump provides an element of hope (v. 15). A brass band placed around the stump protect it by helping to maintain its structural integrity. During this portion of the description, it becomes apparent that the stump represents a man. He remains under the elements at night and possesses the grass with the beasts of the field. His heart is changed from one of a man to that of a beast for a set period of time (7 times). The text uses two key theological words from Daniel's doxology: change and give. Both emphasize God's sovereignty in orchestrating His plan and being the Mover who changes things.

God reveals the purpose of His plan: so that the living would learn the supremacy of God (Most High) and acknowledge His sovereignty in dispensing the power of man's kingdoms. With the freedom of a King, He does according to His will and often chooses to exalt the lowest of men (v. 17).

### **The Dream Interpreted (19-27)**

Daniel's reaction reveals that the dream signified judgment, yet his obvious concern for this ungodly king demonstrates how believers should respond to the coming destruction of the wicked around them. He did not delight in this tyrant's demise, but wished this destruction only on the king's enemies. Daniel demonstrates loyalty and love to this pagan king.

At verse 19, the story transitions into a **3<sup>rd</sup> person narrative** at the words "the king spake."

The interpretation identifies the tree as Nebuchadnezzar whose power had grown strong and his dominion was universal (v. 22). Daniel identifies the command of the watcher with the decree of the Most High (v. 24). The king would be driven from the palace and would live in the field with the wild animals. He would eat grass like an ox and would sleep on the open ground (v. 25). He would be in this state for seven years (times) until God's purpose was completed: He would recognize God as the Highest God who is ruling as the Sovereign King.

Daniel also interprets the stump being left in the ground as meaning that no one would usurp his position while he was absent from the throne (a true miracle of God!).

Daniel then evidences both his love for God and for this ungodly king by suggesting that the king submit himself to God by turning from his sin and demonstrating righteousness and mercy so that God may give him a reprieve from this coming judgment (v. 27). Because the narrative turns to the fulfillment of God's judgment on Nebuchadnezzar, it is safe to assume that he neglected this good advice from Daniel.

### **The Dream Fulfilled (28-36)**

Two voices dominate the first half (vv. 30-32) of this section (vv. 28-36): the voice of the king (v. 30) and God's responding voice (vv. 31-32).

The king was walking in his palace and enjoying the beauty and strength of his kingdom when his heart was lifted up in pride (v. 29-30). He did not see his accomplishments as gifts from God nor did he express gratitude toward Him. The resource for his actions was his own strength, and the purpose of his achievements was for his own honor and glory. This reveals the nature of pride – self-sufficiency and self-exaltation. This is the exact opposite of the humble attitude of Jesus who did nothing of His own self and did all for God’s glory (John 17:4).

God responds to the pride of man by giving him a piece of humble pie. What the king had made his idol was now to be taken away. This story confirms the purpose of all trials in that they are meant to bring men to a place of exaltation through humility (James 1:8-11). Humility, therefore, is the recognition and submission to the authority of the Most High God who rules (v. 32).

The description of the king’s insanity repeats God’s declaration of isolation, eating grass, and sleeping without protection to the elements (v. 33). This kind of aberrant behavior (men behaving as beasts) is observed in mental institutions from time to time and is classified as boanthropy. The narrative description points out the direness of his condition by giving the additional notes that his hair became such a long, matted mess that it resembled eagles’ feathers and that his nails grew out like claws.

This pathetic picture has great symbolic value. Man is made in the image of God exalted in dignity to a place just under the angels (Ps. 8). Part of the glory of being made in God’s image is the ability to relate to God. When men refuse that enlightening relationship, they act like animals and follow only their base instincts. Pride leads men to rebellion, and rebellion leads men to resemble beasts. Daniel 7 will symbolize man’s kingdoms as beasts, while God’s kingdom will be ruled by one like the Son of man!

At the end of the appointed time, God gave His mercy to Nebuchadnezzar and caused his light to shine into his heart and mind. This glorious day of restoration begins with the king coming to himself (Luke 15:17). His first action is to look up to heaven (4:34). This action indicates his lowliness under heaven and correlates with his spirit of humility that recognizes that God is his superior. It is this act of humility that is the key to the return of his mental faculties. When one has true understanding, he understands the greatness and praiseworthiness of God. The king does not lash out at God in anger for losing 7 years of his life, but responds with thankfulness and praise to God. Pride resents punishment, but humility embraces correction. Pride has a sense of entitlement and indignation at what God does not grant, but humility possess a sense of lowly gratitude for all that God has graciously granted.

The king uses the title for God Most High that occurs 6 times in this story (vv. 2, 17, 24, 25, 32, 34). He acknowledges His supremacy and His eternity. The king finally acknowledges what God had revealed to him at the beginning of his reign: only God’s Kingdom is eternal, and He rules now. He understands the puniness of man before this great Sovereign who acts with the

freedom of all-mighty power and all-encompassing authority. His ways are inscrutable, and His acts are irresistible.

Once the king praised God in his state of humiliation, God restores to him all that he lost: his reason, and then his glory returned (like God restores Job after he prays for his friends). This king now represents the glory that God gave man as His representatives in the garden of Eden. His former counselors had remained loyal to him throughout his bout of insanity and did not seek to replace him. They were ready to restore him to his previous position because of God's preserving providence. The king had true authority now that he recognized God's authority.

The structure of the book beautifully reinforces the theology of the text. Nebuchadnezzar returns to narrating his own story (v. 34). The overall structure that goes from 1<sup>st</sup> person to 3<sup>rd</sup> person back to 1<sup>st</sup> person tells the story of Nebuchadnezzar's life. He was sane, then went insane and returned to sanity by God's grace. This pattern also reflects the overall story of the Bible. God created mankind in perfect fellowship with Him; man sins and enters a depraved state; God's plan is to restore men back to what He intended through the Lord Jesus Christ! This pattern is seen in the lives of Job and Abraham with his son. It is seen in the life of Jesus who lived, died, and then rose again. It is the pattern for believers who must give up their life before they find it. God's pattern of restoration and humility before exaltation finds a quintessential example in Daniel with God's restoration of a proud pagan ruler.

## **Conclusion (37)**

The king in his final word testifies to his new allegiance of worship to the Supreme God whom He identifies as the King of Heaven. This last word from the king reveals the central theological emphasis of the Aramaic section and the entire book of Daniel: God sits upon His throne, and the sons of men must submit to His authority. His actions are firm so that what He does is unmovable and undeterrable, and His ways are just so that He always does right by every man. One of the immutable purposes of this great and mighty Sovereign is to humble those who walk in pride. This ability sets the stage for chapter 5 and every vision of the second half of the book, because the main attribute of Belshazzar, Antiochus, and the Antichrist is their pride against the King of Heaven.

There are several elements to this story that indicate that the meaning of this story has implication for the people of God during the tribulation period. The Aramaic phrase "end of the days" (v. 34) bears parallel to the final vision's references to "the end of years" (11:6) and "time of the end" (11:35, 40). This indicates that this story should be seen in light of the end of time. The five-fold reference to 7 times passing over the king points to God's purifying timetable of 7s in Daniel 9. This indicates that part of God's purpose for Israel's final 7 (week, 9:27) is to humble them and bring them to recognize their God whom they have pierced (Zech. 12:10; Rom. 11:26).

# Lecture 7

## Daniel 5

This chapter moves the reader forward in time about 30 to 50 years to the night that Babylon fell to the Persians. In the intervening years, several Babylonian kings were assassinated in a short period of time after Nebuchadnezzar's death (see timeline in appendix). A new regime is in charge with bloodlines tied to the old. Daniel is now in his eighties and his prominence has been forgotten or perhaps deliberately displaced. Yet God is going to exalt Him again at one of the most crucial junctures in ancient world history.

### Structure

The literary structure of Daniel 5 flows back and forth between the enemies of God and the servant of God.

- ✘ The Setting: An Idolatrous Feast (1-4)
  - + The Turning Point: God's hand writing on the Wall (5)
- ✘ The King's Terror: Decree of honor for interpreting the handwriting on the wall (6-9)
  - + Queen Speaks: Praise of Daniel and Mention of Nebuchadnezzar (10-12)
- ✘ The King's Speaks: Decree of honor for interpreting the handwriting on the wall (13-16)
  - + Daniel's Speaks: indictment of pride and feast and interpretation of Judgment (17-28)
    - ✘ Rejection of gifts (17)
    - ✘ Reference to Nebuchadnezzar's humility (18-21)
    - ✘ Indictment of Belshazzar's pride and idolatrous feast (22-24)
    - ✘ Interpretation of the handwriting on the Wall (25-28)
  - + Daniel is honored (29)
- ✘ Belshazzar and Babylon's power dies (30-31)

Repetition again becomes a vital aid in discerning the emphasis of the biblical text.

Description	Repetition
Drank wine	1, 2, 3, 4, 23
Vessels of God's house	2, 3, 23
Fourfold Description of Entourage at party	2, 3, 23
Sixfold Description of idols praised	4, 23
King Troubled	6, 9, 10
King's Countenance changed	6, 9, 10
"knots" loosed	6, 12, 16

Read writing and Give Interpretation	7, 14, 16, 17, 24-28
Threefold Reward	7, 16, (17), 29
Threefold Description of Wise men	7, 11
Failure of King's Wise men	8, 14
Description of Daniel's Ability	11, 12, 14
Reference to Nebuchadnezzar	11, 12, 13, 18-21
Lifted up in pride	20, 22, 23
God Gave	18, 19
God's Hand	5, 23, 24
Know	8, 15, 16, 17, 21, 22, 23

Through repetition of the King's command to honor the man who interprets the handwriting on the wall, a prominent theme of this chapter is God's ability to reveal (Chapters 2 and 4). Since Nebuchadnezzar's story is recounted and applied to Belshazzar, God's purpose of humbling pagan kings is central to this story as well (Chapter 4). Because the chapter ends with Daniel being honored and the king of Babylon being killed, the theme of the triumph of God's people over wicked men receives a climactic emphasis (Chapter 3). In this chapter, all three of Daniel's main themes find emphasis: God reveals, God rescues, and God rules!

### **A Pagan Idolatrous Feast (1-4)**

In Daniel 5, the text introduces a new king in Belshazzar. Because Babylonian history did not list a king named Belshazzar, unbelievers for years touted this as a biblical error. Nabonidus was the last king of Babylon, but the deciphering of cuneiform and the discovery of the Nabonidus Cylinder has shed much more light on his reign: for ten years he abdicated Babylon as the active ruler, and appointed his son to rule in his stead, Belshazzar. Where unbelievers thought there was error, the Bible proves again to be the richest source of truth.

Babylonian history informs us that the Persians had already won decisive victories over Babylon before this feast. Yet the fortifications and resources of the city of Babylon were so great that conquering it through siege or direct warfare was simply an impossibility. Although the Persians had them surrounded, Belshazzar determined to demonstrate his confidence in their defenses before his court by throwing a lavish party for a thousand of the highest government leaders.

It was supposed to be a party of drinking, promiscuity, and "good" times, but it would turn into a night of terror! The party was a night for personal pleasure, and it was a night to honor all the gods of Babylon. Idolatry and lasciviousness go hand in hand (see Exod. 32). While Belshazzar was under the influence of the wine, his wicked heart prompted him to express his rebellion and pride through an act of blasphemous sacrilege (v. 2). He ordered that the sacred utensils of the temple of the Most High God be used for their drunken orgy! He knew Yahweh from his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar. He knew the testimony of Nebuchadnezzar's praise to the true God. Belshazzar's actions were deliberate and diabolical in that they defied God, profaned His

name, and attempted to demonstrate that the gods of Babylon had triumphed over Him. This is a brash young man who expresses His arrogance and defiance toward the God of Israel. The irony is that what they thought were the trophies of their triumph were actually the instruments of their doom. In rejecting God and blaspheming His name, they had ensured their own destruction. God will silence the tongue that wags at Him.

### **The Hand Writing on the Wall (5-6)**

The King sees a divine portent of doom. A supernatural hand, that possibly only the king could see, was writing a message in the wall. This same word that describes the finger “coming forth” (v. 5) was used twice to describe the vessels of the temple being “taken forth” from the Temple (vv. 2-3). The text then portrays God’s action as a direct action against man’s attempt at supremacy over Him. The young, arrogant king could sense immediately that he was witnessing an act of God and that it did not bode well for him.

The text describes his countenance changing (v. 6). He went from levity to absolute gravity; from frolicking to fearing; from merriment to misery; from drunkenness to sobriety in one heart-stopping moment. He was terrified to the point that he lost control of his body. His legs were shacking so violently that the knees knocked together. The “joints” (lit. knots) of his loins being loosed seems to mean that his bowel muscles involuntarily relaxed. Here was a king who flaunted his supremacy over God and now he is reduced to a humiliated, shriveling mess! God again is the “changer” of this story, and He can change the mood and outcome of those who exalt themselves in pride.

### **The King’s Call and Decree (vv. 7-9)**

Now in the panic of a crisis, the king calls a conference of pagan religious leaders to help him make sense of this writing. Belshazzar needs help to read the writing and to understand what it meant. The words are written in Aramaic (vv. 25-28), but as in Hebrew, the letters would be only consonances without vowels. A consonance cluster can have different meanings based on the vowels (e.g. “LV” could mean “Love,” “Alive,” or “Leave”). The written language, therefore, required context to determine the meaning of words. The words were a short riddle without any context so that, unless you knew the meaning, you would not be able to read them.

The extravagance of the reward reveals the king’s desperation. He promises exaltation, honor, and power. Whoever could read and interpret the message would wear the royal colors and gold chain and would be exalted to the third highest rank in the kingdom. Since Belshazzar was the coregent under his father Nabonidus, this was the greatest position that he could offer. God would use this open-ended decree to exalt His servant.

The pagan wise men with their resources of the black arts, astrology, and omen interpretation could not read the writing. To invent an interpretation would have been very difficult as well because they would have to interpret the letters in to real words with a cogent message. The riddle exposes the emptiness of the power and ability of pagan religion and pagan gods. The

repetition of the wise men's failure for the third time in Daniel emphasizes the message that Israel's God is the only true God who should be worshipped.

The king ends where he began: in terror!

## **Introduction of Daniel (10-12)**

The identity of the speaker in verse 10 is far from certain, but this queen was not Belshazzar's queen because his wives were already present at the banquet (v. 2). This queen has knowledge of Daniel and his wisdom in the Nebuchadnezzar's court. The most likely designation is that she was the daughter (but could be the wife) of Nebuchadnezzar and the wife of Nabonidus.<sup>11</sup>

The Queen comes to give hope to her son by reminding him of a man in the kingdom who could help. She presents the qualifications of Daniel and his grandfather's promotion of Daniel before she ever identifies him. This indicates that although Belshazzar knew of Daniel, he was prejudiced against him on the basis of religious grounds.

Daniel is marked by the qualities of understanding and wisdom and light (v. 11; see Daniel's prayer, 2:20-22). This is attributed to the "spirit of the holy gods," which can be identified biblically as the Spirit of God in Daniel.

The Aramaic portion of Daniel references God **the Father** throughout as the King in control of all things, **the Son** in chapters 2 (Rock), 3 (Angel), 6 (Angel), and 7 (Son of Man); and **the Spirit** in chapters 4 and 5 as indwelling Daniel to give revelation to those who do not know God.

This Spirit in Daniel was the Spirit of excellence, knowledge, and understanding (Isa. 11:1-3), who gave Daniel the ability to interpret dreams, interpret riddles, and solve dilemmas.

The last of these descriptions is a play on words in Aramaic. Solving dilemmas or "dissolving of doubts" is literally "loosing of knots." On the reader's level, this references Belshazzar's embarrassing problem of sitting in his own waste and reminds the reader of the absurdity of pride and rebellion against God.

The Queen's reference to Belshazzar's father (grandfather) would have smarted this young man because he was living in direct defiance of his grandfather's testimony. The Queen finally introduces Daniel's name at the end of her speech (v. 12). This is another testimony to Daniel's triumph over the intentions of Babylon to redefine him in terms of their pagan culture and religion. Daniel still stands as a testimony to His God, the true God. This may be why the Queen's final lines can be read as plea for the king to overcome his hatred of his father's "foreign" God and for His people and allow Daniel to help him.

---

<sup>11</sup> Stephen R. Miller, [Daniel](#), vol. 18 of *NAC* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 160.

## The King's Speech of Pride and Reward (13-16)

One can detect an air of disdain in the king's voice toward Daniel. The king reminds Daniel of his present condition as a captive and the superiority of Babylon to the people of Israel in that his father had conquered them and taken him from his homeland (v. 13). Belshazzar defied Daniel's God and despised Daniel's position. This sets the stage for interpreting the rest of the king's words as though he speaks them with an air of skepticism. The text repeats through the king's words Daniel's possession of the Spirit of God in understanding and knowledge, the wise men's failure, the pun of loosing of knots, and the stipulation of reward for reading and interpreting the writing.

## Daniel's Speech of Moral and Historical Context (17-24)

Daniel's words to Nebuchadnezzar were gracious and polite, but the tone of his words to Belshazzar are quite blunt and accusatory. This makes sense when the rebellion of Belshazzar is understood.

In reminiscences of the three Hebrew children's conversation with Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel responds to both parts Belshazzar's two fold decree of requirement and reward. Daniel rejects the reward, knowing that being 3<sup>rd</sup> in command of a kingdom that has but mere hours left to its existence is meaningless, but boldly declares that he will read the writing and give its interpretation (v. 17). Human exaltation could not motivate Daniel for His faith was in God to lift him up.

Like Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, he first sets the moral context that frames its interpretation. The context of understanding Belshazzar's problem (and all of life) is the gracious sovereignty of God. God "gave" (vv. 18, 19) to Nebuchadnezzar his kingdom and his glory so that he had universal and absolute authority (v. 19). But his father's mistake was that his heart was lifted in stubborn pride (v. 20).

he was deposed from his kingly throne,  
and they took his glory from him:  
<sup>21</sup> And he was driven from the sons of men;  
and **his heart was made** like the beasts,  
and his dwelling was with the wild asses:  
they fed him with grass like oxen,  
and his body was wet with the dew of heaven . . .

The verb forms create a poetic chiasm that focuses on his heart being made like a beast's heart. It ends with the word "heaven" which was his only source of help.

That proud heart was made like unto the heart of a beast till he understood that the Most High God was the ruler over the earth and that He is the absolute Sovereign over all (v. 21)!

Daniel then points the finger of accusation at Belshazzar (v. 22). You knew all this! You had been warned but disregarded the testimony of your father! You have lifted up your heart in pride and rejected God's witness to His Sovereignty. You sought to attack the "Lord of Heaven" by desecrating the vessels of His temple in using them as means for idolatrous praise and illicit pleasure. The hand of God holds your very breath and controls all your steps, but you have refused to glorify Him (v. 23).

Daniel takes a parting shot at idolatry by adding three descriptions to the idols of gold and silver, brass and iron, wood and stone. He describes them as not having the ability to see or hear or to know. Daniel references knowledge three times – Nebuchadnezzar knew (v. 21, after God's education program), Belshazzar knew (v. 22), but these worthless idols know nothing. They cannot help you solve this riddle or the riddle of life.

### **Daniel Gives the Interpretation (vv. 25-28)**

The complexity of the interpretation gives glory to the God who communicates with such wisdom and clarity. He can conceal His truth from the wise and reveal it unto those whom He wills!

Here is what was written on the wall: MN'MN'TQLUPhRSN

Daniel reads it as: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN

These are all Aramaic nouns that reference to weights of money.

Mina = 60 shekels

Shekel = 1 shekel

Pharse = Half a shekel – the plural form is used Pharsin so it is 2 half shekels

The difference between nouns and verbs is simply vowel pointing in Aramaic. The consonances could then be repointed as passive verbs and it would mean:

Was numbered	- has the sense of destiny or lot of appointment
Was weighted	- has the sense of evaluation
Was divided	- has the sense of being broken in half

Through a play on words, the vowel pointing could be changed again to refer to nouns and it would mean

Total number reached	finished (or time's up)
Too light	(not a genuine product)
Persia	the country of Persia

In Daniel's interpretation, he first references the verb and then uses the same letters to reference the noun.

God **has numbered** your kingdom and it is **finished**  
You **have been weighted** in the balances and been found **too light**  
Your kingdom **is divided** and is given to the Medes and the **Persians**

The interpretation reinforces the themes of God's sovereignty and God's ability to humble the proud. The double emphasis falls on God's appointment of a certain number of days for Belshazzar's kingdom and that the time had run out. God had evaluated Belshazzar's heart and he did not meet the standard (Ps. 62:9). God would break his power and sovereignty and would give it to the Persians who were outside his front gate.

The fact that Darius's age is mentioned seems an odd detail to conclude this narrative (v. 31) with unless it is connected with the message that was interpreted. Mina = 60 and Shekel = 1 and two halves = 1. The total number of the weights mentioned comes to 62, which is the age of Darius when he receives control over Babylon. Only a Sovereign God could orchestrate such a fulfillment of His Word!

Another interesting observation is the unique similarities between the stories of the Tower of Babel and the fall of Babylon. Daniel has already presented Babylon as the spiritual successor of that ancient rebellion against God (land of Shinar, 1:2). God directly intervened because of the rebellion of man at the Tower of Babel and divided the people by making their languages unintelligible to each other. Here on the last night of Babylonian power, God communicates through an unintelligible message that this latest kingdom in opposition to God would be divided. In both stories, God divides and conquers by turning the tables through the use of language.

### **A Contrast of Destinies (29-31)**

The interpretation unlocks the riddle so convincingly that Belshazzar keeps his promise to reward Daniel (v. 29). Here God's servant is exalted in the same night that Belshazzar is killed and Babylonian power is broken. Like Haman who must exalt Mordecai, God will exalt the righteous in the presence of the wicked (Dan. 12:3). God's man stands as a testimony to God's power and ability to deliver and exalt! He sets up whom He will and puts down those who exalt themselves in pride against Him. Both Daniel 4 and 5 focus on the same theological truth: The Sovereign God humbles the pride of man. One is a story of redemption and the other is a story of destruction. These stories place before every man everywhere a choice: which one are you?

Because the name "Bel-shazzar" means "may Bel protect him," the theological message of the closing verses is found in the names. The one whom Bel "protects" died because God is the Judge (Daniel), and He will deliver His servants from this ungodly world.

Persian and Greek historians present slightly different accounts. One tells of the Persians diverting the river that flowed through the city and the soldiers coming in through the water ways. Another account is of bribery in which those at the gates let the Persians in. Both

historical versions of that fateful night record that it was not a night of blood-shed. The entrance of the Persian army was so sudden and unexpected that the city did not put up a fight. Only one person was killed that night, the king Belshazzar.

There is a time, we know not when,  
A place we know not where,  
That marks the destiny of man  
In glory or despair.

There is a line, by us unseen,  
That crosses every path,  
The hidden boundary between  
God's patience and His wrath.

Oh, what is that mysterious bourn  
By which man's path is crossed,  
Beyond which God Himself hath sworn,  
The soul that goes is lost?

How long might I go on in sin,  
How long will God forbear;  
Where does hope end and where begin  
The confines of despair?

The answer from the skies is sent—  
'Ye who from God depart,  
While it is called today, repent  
And harden not your heart.'<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> Stuart Olyott, [\*Dare to Stand Alone: Daniel Simply Explained\*](#), Welwyn Commentary Series (Darlington, England: Evangelical Press, 1982), 72.

## Lecture 8

### Daniel 6

The final narrative of the book of Daniel occurs near the very end of Daniel's life and records the incident for which he is the most famous: Daniel and the Lion's Den.

#### Structure

- Daniel's success (1-3)
  - Darius signs an edicts but Daniel stands firm for God (4-10)
    - Daniel's opponents plot his death (11-15)
      - Darius hopes for Daniel's Deliverance (16-18)
      - Darius witnesses Daniel's Deliverance (19-23)
    - Daniel's opponents meet with their death (24)
  - Darius signs an edict and takes his stand for God (25-27)
- Daniel's Success (28)

Daniel six begins and ends with 3 prominent themes: Daniel's prosperity, the presence of enemies, an edict from King Darius. This structure focuses the reader's attention again on the message at center of the story: God delivers of His people as they stand for Him in the presence those who seek to destroy them. Because the middle section of this story focuses on Darius perspective, actions, and reactions, this story communicates how the deliverance of God's people impacts the Gentile nations around them.

This deliverance story parallels God's deliverance of Daniel's three friends so that the two stories compared side by side provide interesting insights into the overall message of God's ability to save.

#### Daniel's Prosperity (vv. 1-3)

Another world power is another day at the office for Daniel. Darius sets up a well-organized administration of 120 officials who report to 3 presidents, and Darius made Daniel the chief of the three. Daniel's integrity prevented the king from losing revenue to graft, theft, and bribery. The source of his integrity and the reason for his promotion was that an excellent Spirit empowered his moral life just as surely as He prompted his faithful, religious life.

#### Daniel's Danger (vv. 4-9)

Righteousness and light will always be hated by evil and darkness because light invariably expose darkness (John 3:19-20). Like Daniel 3, the peers of God's people despise them and seek

their destruction. The first plan of these contemporary political rulers was to find some area of corruption in his life, but none could be found! He did not shirk his duties nor did he abuse his position of authority. It is extremely important for Christians to realize that for God to use us to glorify Himself, we must be walking in the light as He is in the light. The world is full of “fault-finders.” Don’t give them something by which they can reproach your God (1 Pet. 2:12-15).

These wicked men watched Daniel, and they discerned a key aspect of his character: Daniel would choose death before he would disobey God’s law. If Daniel was willing to cave, their plan would not have worked at all. Yet they proceeded with confidence because they were completely sure of Daniel’s allegiance to God (v. 5). Could this be said of you?

These wicked men assemble together around the throne of Darius to destroy God’s man just like mankind assembles in rebellion against God’s Anointed one (Ps. 2:1). They used flattery to trick the king. They lied to him when they said that all the men in authority had consulted together (v. 7). The excuse “everyone is doing it” is always a lie! The one exception to the crowd indicts the entire mob. Their plan was to require everyone to pray only to the king for 30 days, and they played to the king’s vanity in making him think that his officials spontaneously wanted to honor him as one would honor a “god.” Darius pictures man, who when he grasps for divine power, he becomes a helpless fool (Rom. 1:22). When man seeks the honor of God for himself, he loses the honor God has given him. God’s law in action again is that pride humbles.

The other officials knew that once Darius knew that Daniel would have to die that he would change his mind so they request that he sign the decree according to the laws of the Medes and Persians, which were unalterable (v. 8). This pits the “unchangeable” law of man against the God who is the “changer of times and seasons.”

### **Daniel’s Defiance (vv. 10-11)**

The Bible says that “when Daniel knew,” then he went to pray as he always did. There is a purposefulness to his actions that reflects the spirit of Daniel 1 in which he purposed in his heart.

This narrative illustrates the importance of prayer! Prayer is at the heart of “the law of his God” (v. 5). His public prayers (windows opened) were a non-negotiable in his life. He did not get too busy to pray. He was not too tired to pray. He was not too discouraged to pray. Daniel treats prayer as a **divine imperative!**

To pray is to render the homage of worship to whom one prays. This was what the evil officials used to lure Darius into signing the decree. Darius would be treated as if *he* was the only God for one month. The issue at stake here, therefore, is one of supremacy. For Daniel, to fail to pray or to pray exclusively in private would have been a silent confirmation of the idolatrous presumption of the decree. Prayer, therefore, is an act of humility that acknowledges God’s supremacy. The absence of prayer means the presence of idolatry, and to cease to pray is to

trust and worship something else. Daniel was compelled to pray because of who God was, not because he needed to get something from God.

Not only does Daniel reveal the necessity of prayer, but he also provides an example for the practice of prayer.

- (1) Daniel reveals the basis for prayer by the direction in which he prayed. He prayed toward Jerusalem in accordance with Solomon's prayer in 1 Kings 8:48. The basis of all answered prayer was the presence of God as mediated by the sacrificial system at the Temple. This points toward the blood of Jesus, which fulfilled these Old Testament types, as the basis for all prayer for believers today. This is why Christians pray in the name of Christ because it is only through Him that we have access unto God (John 14:13).
- (2) Daniel also mimicked Solomon's posture of prayer by getting on his knees (1 Kings 8:54). This is a symbolic gesture of humility and worship before God (Ps. 95:6). It reminds believers that we come in the spirit of submission to Him as the Lord did (Luke 22:41) and as His apostles did (Acts 7:60; 9:40; 20:36; 21:5; Eph. 3:14)!
- (3) Daniel models the consistency of prayer by praying three times a day as he had always done (Ps. 55:17). Daniel had established a routine that aided him to do the right thing at the moment of crisis. "Consistency assists courage, and discipline feeds faithfulness. In the crisis Daniel's habit set him free to be faithful."<sup>13</sup>

### **Daniel's Denunciation (vv. 11-16)**

The officials slyly come to the king and ask him to acknowledge that he had signed the decree. He unwittingly volunteers the information that this law cannot be changed (or can it?)! Then they spring the trap and tell the king of Daniel's transgression. They paint him in as unfavorable light as possible. They associated him with the weakness of captivity and emphasize his racial difference. They try to get Darius to take Daniel's offense personally and point out that his actions are a habitual, ongoing defiance of the law that the king had signed.

The king, however, does not get angry at Daniel but becomes very displeased with himself for being fooled into signing such a vain decree. He purposed in his heart that he would find a way to deliver Daniel.

There is such a contrast between Darius and Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar did take the three Hebrew children's defiance personally, grew very angry with them, and sought to have them killed. Darius seeks to have Daniel saved, and yet because of the law, he is helpless to save him. Nebuchadnezzar was powerless to kill, and Darius was powerless to save!

---

<sup>13</sup> Dale Ralph Davis, *The Message of Daniel: His Kingdom Cannot Fail*, ed. Alec Motyer and Derek Tidball, *The Bible Speaks Today* (Nottingham: InterVarsity, 2013), 88.

All day Darius sought some loophole that would allow for Daniel to be spared (v. 14), yet the officials kept on reminding the king that the law of the Medes and Persians cannot be changed (v. 15)! He must die.

### **Daniel's Death Sentence (vv. 16-18)**

When all possible options were exhausted and the last rays of the setting sun were extinguished, the king reluctantly commands that Daniel be cast into the den of lions (v. 16).

Startlingly, the theological words that set the stage for the understanding the importance of this narrative come from the pagan king. The king testifies to Daniel's constant fidelity in worship to God and declares **that God will deliver him**. These words of faith did not produce a steady confidence in the king's heart who would not be able to sleep through the night, but they reflected the hope that caused him to run to the lion's den in the morning.

The perspective of this story is not from Daniel's perspective. The reader does not spend the night with Daniel in the lion's den but in the palace with the king. The focus of this story then is not primarily on the deliverance but on the impact that God's deliverance would have upon a watching, pagan king.

The stone was brought and the king sealed his fate with his signet ring so that the "purpose would not be changed" (v. 17). Yet, God was about to change the purpose of these ungodly men, and He would show that His law is the only law that should not be broken!

The reader waits the night with the king. He does not eat for he is praying that the lions do not eat as well (v. 18). He does not sleep and rises early to go to the den (v. 19).

### **Daniel's Deliverance (vv. 19-23)**

The king comes to what he fears is Daniel's tomb and calls out in a sorrowful voice (v. 20)!

The king references God as the living God, which contrasts Him with all other fake, dead, false gods. Daniel's testimony of constant, unceasing worship to His God in the face of death had influenced this king! At the peak of the tension in the story, the king asks the crucial question "Is God was able to deliver?" (v. 20).

The voice of Daniel spits the stagnant air, "O King, live forever" (v. 21). God had sent His agent of Deliverance – the angel of the Lord (v. 22; see Ps. 34:7; Dan. 3:28) to shut the lions' mouths. Daniel specifically associates God's deliverance with his innocence before God and before the king. He was like Paul who was without offense before God and man (Acts 24:16). The narrator also adds that God delivered Daniel because of his faith (v. 23; Heb. 11:33). This communicates a powerful message to those who will undergo the persecution of the tribulation: walk before God in righteousness and integrity, be loyal to Him, and trust Him in the lions' den.

The Psalms picture the dilemma of the future Messiah as also being confronted with lions. The author of these psalms was David, who also experienced God's deliverance from a lion's mouth (1 Sam. 17:37). These words portray David's enemies (the Messiah's enemies) as lions.

**Psalm 22:13** They gaped upon me with their mouths, **as a ravening and a roaring lion.**

**Psalm 22:21a** Save me from the **lion's mouth**:

**Psalm 57:4, 6** My soul is **among lions**: and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword. . . . They have prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down: they have digged a **pit** before me, **into the midst whereof they are fallen themselves.** Selah.

**Psalm 91:10** **There shall no evil befall thee**, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. **For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.** They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. Thou shalt tread upon **the lion** and adder: **the young lion** and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.

Elements of the story of Daniel echo Jesus' death and resurrection.

- Wicked men assemble to plot his death
- They scheme a plan to manipulate the ruling authority into their plot
- They slanderously accuse God's representative
- God's man is impeccably righteous
- God's man prays before his capture
- The ruling authority unwillingly sentences him to die
- God's man is lowered into a place of death
- That place of death is sealed with a stone
- God's man comes out alive from the place of death (Daniel is raised from the den)
- An Angel is at each place of death
- Men run to each place of death early in the morning sorrowful over the executed one's fate
- The faith and innocence of God's man is vindicated by his deliverance from death
- His deliverance results in God receiving glory from all people

### **Daniel's Defense (v. 24)**

The King wastes no time in bring the wicked counselors to justice. The fact that the lions consumed them in such vicious fashion demonstrates the miracle of Daniel's deliverance. This is the justice of God meted out, for as they thought to do to Daniel so it was done to them (Deut. 19:19, 21). The death of their entire families reminds the reader that the consequences of sin do not just affect one person but entire households (see Num. 16:27; Exod. 20:5). Just as Daniel represents the righteous whom God will deliver from destruction in the last day, so these men and their families represent the wicked whom God will bring into final judgment in the end.

## **Daniel's Deity (vv. 25-27)**

Like Daniel 3 and 4, this story also focuses on deliverance and ends with a pagan king praising God. The spontaneous nature of this decree parallels the decree that Darius gave earlier in the story that focused worship toward himself; now he instructs others to worship Daniel's God. Darius' introduction to the decree parallels Nebuchadnezzar's story of praise to God at the end of chapter 4.

Whereas Nebuchadnezzar decreed that no one could speak against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (3:29), Darius goes beyond forbidding disrespect to Yahweh but decrees that all men (all people, nations, languages) should fear the God of Daniel.

This God is the living, eternal God whose authority and dominion shall never be stopped, but continue unto the end of time (v. 26)! God demonstrated Himself to be a saving God when He has rescued Daniel from the lion's den. He proves His saving nature by doing signs and wonders (v.27)! God would accomplish the greatest rescue operation ever at the cross, and He would perform wonders in heaven (darkness) and in earth (earthquake).

God amazingly attaches His glory and His kingdom to His people. There was no "hurt" found on Daniel (vv. 22, 23) so Darius concludes that God's kingdom cannot be "destroyed" (v. 26). Daniel represented God's authority and power because he was a part of that kingdom as a loyal subject to God.

This declaration of praise prefigures the day when there will be universal submission to God and His Anointed Deliverer (Pss. 18:43-44; 67:2-4; 68:31-32; 72:11; 86:9; 102:15, 22; 138:4-5).

## **Daniel's Prosperity (v. 28)**

The Story ends where it began – with Daniel prospering. So it is with the story of man. He will end where he began: in fellowship with God and ruling over God's restored creation!

Never fear to obey the Lord! Let the call ring in our souls . . .

"He is able to deliver thee!"

# Lecture 9

## Daniel 7

Daniel 7 is the heart of the book of Daniel. It is the conclusion of the universal message of Daniel (Last Aramaic chapter) and the foundation for all the remaining visions that are to come. It parallels Daniel 2 in that it reveals God's sovereign plan over the succession of man's governments until the coming of Christ. Daniel 7 is a supernatural revelation of God about the sovereign rule of God to accomplish the deliverance of God's people!

### Structure

The Overall Structure is rather simple but the poetic balance seems rather complex

#### The Overall Structure

Daniel Reports the Vision (vv. 1-14)  
Daniel is grieved and agitated (v. 15)

Daniel Reports the Interpretation (vv. 16-27)  
Daniel is troubled in his thoughts (v. 28)

#### Structure of Vision

There are repeated words of sight that divide the text and function as structural markers. The poetic prose breaks into stanzas made up of four lines each.

Introduction	1 stanza	(v. 1)	" <u>saw</u> "
<b>Vision of Three Beasts</b>	<b>4 stanzas</b>	<b>(vv. 2-6)</b>	<b>"<u>saw</u> in night vision"</b>
The Sea	½ stanza	(vv. 2b-3)	"behold"
Lion	1 ½ stanzas	(v. 4)	" <u>beheld</u> "
Bear	1 stanza	(v. 5)	"behold"
Leopard	1 stanza	(v. 6)	" <u>beheld</u> "
<b>Vision of the End</b>	<b>7 stanzas</b>	<b>(vv. 7-13)</b>	<b>"<u>saw</u> in night vision"</b>
Fourth Beast	3 stanzas	(vv. 7-8)	"behold"
Little Horn	3 <sup>rd</sup> stanza	(v. 8)	"considered" / "behold" 2x
Ancient of Days	3 stanzas	(vv. 9-10)	" <u>beheld</u> "
Judgment	1 stanza	(vv. 11-12)	" <u>beheld</u> " 2x
<b>Vision of Son of Man</b>	<b>2 stanzas</b>	<b>(vv. 13-14)</b>	<b>"<u>saw</u> in night vision" / "behold"</b>

## Structure of Interpretation

- Daniel Troubled (v. 15)
  - General Interpretation Requested (v. 16a)
  - General Interpretation Given (v. 16b-18)
    - Four Beasts are Four Kingdoms (v. 17)
    - Kingdom of God Given to the Saints (v. 18)
  - Specific Interpretation of 4<sup>th</sup> Beast Requested (vv. 19-20)
    - **Ongoing Vision (vv. 21-22) – “beheld”**
      - Little Horn makes War with Saints (v. 21)
        - Ancient of Days Comes (v. 22a)
      - Justice and Kingdom to the Saints (v. 22)
    - Specific Interpretation of 4<sup>th</sup> Beast Given (vv. 23-27)
      - Fourth Beast and Little Horn Explained (vv. 23-25)
      - Justice and Kingdom to the Saints (vv. 26-27)
- Daniel Troubled (v. 28)

This chapter again has the convergence of Daniel’s three main theological themes. God **reveals** to Daniel the future which shows that God **rules** over the kingdoms of men by bringing them to judgment in order to **deliver** His people so that they may inherit His eternal kingdom.

## Introduction (v. 1)

The visions of Daniel 7 takes place in the 1<sup>st</sup> year of Belshazzar so that chronologically both Daniel 7 and 8 occur before Daniel 5 and 6. *When* and *where* Daniel receives the vision seems to correspond with what kind of *content* he receives in the vision. Belshazzar is a type of the Antichrist in his arrogance, his attack on Yahweh by desecrating the temple vessels, and his end in judgment. The first two visions of Daniel 7 and 8 happen during Belshazzar’s reign, therefore, because the content of each has a special focus on the Antichrist. The vision takes place in Babylon, which is a place that symbolizes world rebellion against God because the content of the revelation is about God’s judging all such rebellion.

The prominence of the words for “seeing” and “vision” indicate that this was a highly visual experience. Daniel is putting into words what he saw and the interpretation that he was given, but it should be remembered that when general descriptions are given, he may have been seeing the events of the future taking place before his eyes as the symbols were presented to

him. This would explain Daniel's reaction of being greatly troubled even though the content of the visions end on positive notes for God's people.

### **The First Three Beasts (vv. 2-6)**

The first thing that Daniel sees is a great storm upon the sea with the waves being beaten around by winds coming from all four different points on the compass. This great turbulence represents mankind in its rebellion against God.

Woe to the multitude of many people, which make a noise like the noise of the **seas**; and to the rushing of nations, that make a rushing like the **rushing of mighty waters!** The nations shall rush like the **rushing of many waters**: but God shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before **the wind**, and like a rolling thing before the **whirlwind**. **Isaiah 17:12-13**

But the wicked are like **the troubled sea**, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. **Isaiah 57:20**

And he saith unto me, **The waters** which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. **Revelation 17:15**

Scripture repeatedly pictures the enemies of Jerusalem (Ps. 46:3, 6) and of the anointed Davidic King (2 Sam. 22:5; Ps. 69:2, 14) as raging waters that want to overflow and drown God's people. Yet God is sovereign over the sea (Ps. 49:9; Mark 4:39), and in the end there will be no sea (Rev. 21:1).

In Daniel's vision, the beasts originate from this sea of rebellion. John sees a similar vision in Revelation with a beast that represents the Antichrist coming out of the water (13:1).

These beasts are mega-sized ("great") so that their size adds to their terror (v. 3).

**Babylon (v. 4):** The first beast is a **Lion** with eagle's feathers, which seems to draw on the symbolism of king of beasts and king of birds that would correspond to the head of gold in Daniel 2. Something unusual happens with this beast. It initially appears to be being destroyed when its feathers are plucked, but in the end the beast is being transformed into a man that stands upright! Receiving a man's heart references the restoration of Nebuchadnezzar who was the main King of Babylon.

**Persia (v. 5):** The second beast is a **Bear** that is taller on one side of his body. This probably points to the superior military strength of the Persians in their partnership with the Medes. The three ribs in the mouth of the bear could correspond with the three nations that they conquered in coming to power: Lydia, Egypt, and Babylon. The nature of this beast was to conquer with brutality.

**Greece (v. 6):** The third beast is a **Leopard** which were known for their swiftness (Hab. 1:8). The four wings on the leopard’s back only adds to the correlation of the Greek’s swift military campaigns under Alexander the Great. After his death, the empire was divided into four parts which corresponds with the four heads on the leopard. The Greeks too would have a vast dominion over the known world.

Right in the middle of the description of these evil empires, the key word in Daniel occurs that signals the sovereignty of God: “dominion was **given**” (v. 6, see also v. 2). God is still in control of these godless nations. He gives them power, limits their power, and uses their power to accomplish His perfect plan.

**Rome (v. 7):** The fourth beast is even more grotesque than the preceding beasts in that it caused terror and dread, was exceedingly strong, and had iron teeth. The mention of iron is another correspondence with the image of Daniel 2 and links this beast with the legs of iron. Its dominion is characterized by its destructive power and its brutality in total subjugation.

The ten horns (v. 8) correspond to ten toes on the statue and are identified as ten kings (Dan. 2:44; Rev. 17:12). While some have sought an interpretation of ten consecutive kings in the Roman Empire, the prophecy indicates that their reigns are concurrent. One king, which is described as little, rises up and displaces three others kings and thereby gains dominance over the rest. The horn’s characteristics of having eyes and a mouth point toward this horn symbolizing a human individual. This horn’s mouth will receive a great deal of prominence because it is the mouth of pride like Nebuchadnezzar’s before God humbled him (Dan. 4).

**The Ancient of Days (vv. 9-10)**

This vision of God sitting upon His Throne is the theological heart of Daniel’s book. Man and his kingdoms may have their day of evil but God is the **King**, and He will judge mankind for its wickedness. The vision of God on His throne is also foundational to John’s prophecies as well (Rev. 4:2).

The next two verses begin a very terse form of poetry that is fitting of the regality and majesty of Whom is being described.

9 I beheld till the thrones were cast down,	A	S1
and the Ancient of days did sit,	B	
whose garment was white as snow,	C	
and the hair of his head like the pure wool:	D	
his throne was like the fiery flame,	E(A)	S2
and his wheels as burning fire.	F (B)	
10 A fiery stream issued	G (C)	
and came forth from before him:	H (D)	

thousand thousands ministered unto him,	I (A)	S3
and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him:	J (B)	
the judgment was set,	K (C)	
and the books were opened.	L (D)	

Daniel sees the establishment of thrones signaling the time of judgment of man had arrived. The plurality of thrones indicates that others will join God in His reign, most likely the saints who receive later mention (7:18; Rev. 20:4). God the Father takes His seat as the presiding judge over all the earth (Pss. 2:4; 47:8; 99:1; remember Daniel means “my God is Judge”). The title “the Ancient of Days” emphasizes the grandeur, wisdom, and eternality of God. He who has always been will deal with that which is but for a moment!

The whiteness of His garments and hair speaks of His purity and righteousness that befits the presence of God (Isa. 1:18; Rev. 3:5; 4:4; 19:8, 11). He will judge the world in justice and equity, and faithfulness and truth are the pillars of His pronouncements. The white hair would speak of someone worthy of great respect and honor.

The picture of this throne is of a chariot with wheels (kings often executed judgment from their chariots), and it is on fire! The river that flows from that throne is like molten lava. Fire is commonly associated with the presence of God and in this context indicates the consuming nature of God’s wrath against all that is evil (Lev. 10:1-2; Numb. 11:1; 16:35; Heb. 12:29).

God’s throne room is filled with an innumerable host of attendants (Rev. 5:11; Deut. 33:2; Job 25:2; Ps. 68:17; Heb. 12:22). Thousands in rows of thousands, myriads upon myriads, a vast array of servants ready to do His bidding signifies His grand majesty and the power of His authority! The judgment then was ready and the books by which to judge the deeds of men were opened.

God possesses a book that contains the names of all who are His (Exod. 32:32; Isa. 4:3; Dan 12:1; Luke 10:20; Phil. 4:3; Heb. 12:23; Rev. 3:5; 13:8; 20:12, 15, 27). This book is used in the final judgment in addition to “the books” that contain the actions of men’s deeds (Rev. 20:12).

### **Judgment of the Beasts (vv. 11-12)**

Daniel’s attention is diverted to the little horn who was boasting with a loud voice great swelling words about great things. While he talks, the thrones were set and the judgment was established behind him, and that braggart appears to be oblivious to the doom that his blaspheme was about to bring upon him. This little horn epitomizes the fourth beast so that the death of the fourth beast communicates the total destruction of the antichrist and his kingdom.

While the fourth beast in its final manifestation is destroyed, the other three beasts are subjugated and allowed existence for a season and a time. This correlates with God’s destruction of all the forces of evil that join with the Antichrist (Zech. 14:1-4; Rev. 19:17-21) and side against the people of God (Matt. 25:41-46); yet those who are converted during the tribulation period throughout the whole world will aid God’s people and will enter into Christ’s

Kingdom (Matt. 25:32-40, 46). The remnant of the nations of the world will be prolonged for a 1000 years during reign of Christ.

### **The Coming of the Son of Man (vv. 13-14)**

The origin of the One like unto a son of man is the Clouds. The clouds are invariably associated with the exalted domain of God. God's presence appeared in a cloud that concealed God's glory (Job 22:14; Exod. 19:9; 34:5; Num. 11:25; Ps. 18:11; 97:2). This association indicates that this person is divine.

The description of this person as like unto a "son of man" identifies this person with the human race. The contrast between the "beasts" of man's rule and the "man" of God's rule is intentional. Nebuchadnezzar illustrated in Daniel 4 what happens when men rule apart from submission to God, they rule as selfish, ruthless beasts that devour and kill. But God's agent will restore dominion back to man by ruling as man was originally intended to rule (Heb. 2:5-9). "Son of Man" would be the title that Jesus would predominantly use for self-reference while He walked the earth.

This "Son of Man" is received unto the King upon the throne with great pomp and circumstance as all conduct Him to His place at the throne.

God sovereignly gives to the Son of Man His dominion, glory, and authority! He receives the universal worship (3:17, 28; 6:16, 20) that sinful man had craved for himself (3:4, 7; 5:19) but only rightfully belongs to God (3:29; 4:1; 6:25).

The description of the Son of Man's dominion fuses together two verses from the testimony of the two pagan kings in Daniel who praised God. These two verses describe God's eternal kingdom. This passage, therefore, reveals that the Son of Man will own and rule the kingdom of God. This is another indication that this representative of man is a divine figure equal with God (Yet He is distinct from the Ancient of Days who sits upon the Throne. See Rev. 5:13).

**Daniel 4:34** whose **dominion is an everlasting dominion**, and his kingdom is from generation to generation:

**Daniel 6:26** and **his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed**, and his dominion shall be even unto the end.

**Daniel 7:14** his **dominion is an everlasting dominion**, which shall not **pass away**, and **his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed**.

The word "**pass away**" is another significant word that runs throughout the narratives of Daniel.

God causes kings to pass away (2:21)

The smell of smoke was taken away (3:27)

The kingdom was taken away from Nebuchadnezzar (4:31; 5:20)

The law of the Persians does not pass away (6:8, 12)

The dominion of the three beasts is taken away (7:12)

The dominion of the Antichrist will be taken away (7:26)

The normal rust that covers the shine of the power of men will not touch this kingdom. It will never fade or be eclipsed. The authority of the Son of Man will not be diminished or hurt at any time but will continue on into eternity. All men from the highest to the least will acknowledge His rule and authority (Phil. 2:9-11).

### **Daniel's Reaction (v. 15, 28)**

Though this vision ends on a superlative, Daniel has seen some things that he cannot un-see, and they have greatly troubled him and turned the countenance of His face. The subsequent interpretation will explain why it bothered him so.

### **General Interpretation of the Vision (vv. 16-18)**

Daniel requests for more information about this vision, and one of the heavenly attendants gives an overview of what Daniel has seen. The four beasts are four kings or kingdoms. There is an overlap in the idea of kings and kingdoms because you cannot have one without the other (v. 17, 23).

The surprising thing about the interpretation is where one would expect an explanation of the Son of Man, one finds repeated reference to the "**Saints** of the Most High." This implies that this Son of Man figure is a representative of God's people. Since the Son of Man is Jesus Christ (Mark 14:62), Jesus is the representative of mankind and specifically of redeemed humanity (the nation of Israel). The Son of Man must suffer (Mark 9:12) to identify with the downtrodden people of God that He will vindicate and cause to inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:2; Rev. 20:4). Because God's man is upon the throne, the people of God have hope!

An interesting nugget is in the Aramaic expression "forever, even forever and ever." It literally means "until an age and an age of ages." The saints of God will reign with Christ for an age (1,000 year reign) and then an age of ages (eternity).

### **Ongoing Vision (vv. 19-21)**

Daniel seeks more information specifically about the beast that troubles him the most: The Fourth beast and its little horn. The only two details that Daniel adds in his repetition of the description is that the beast has claws of brass and that the little horn had a greater appearance than the rest of his contemporaries.

At that moment, he receives a further vision of the little horn attacking the saints of God and prevailing against them. Daniel sees images of the greatest holocaust that the world has ever seen. This little horn is identified as the Antichrist in Revelation (11:7; 13:7) who beheads so many saints that they cannot be numbered (Rev. 6:9-11; 7:9, 14-17; 8:4-5; 12:9-11; 13:15; 14:13; 16:6; 17:6; 18:24; 19:2; 20:4). The uniform testimony of the Bible for the last days for the saints of the most High will be full of bloodshed and horror.

As the Kingdom was given to the Son of Man, so also judgement (vindication/rulership) was given to the saints of the Most High when the Ancient of Days comes (v. 22).

## Specific Interpretation of the Vision (vv. 23-27)

The fourth beast is a universal kingdom that shall cruelly rule over the globe (v. 23). The king that arises from among the ten will speak blasphemy against the Supreme God (v. 25), and will wear out and beat down the people of God through a prolonged war of extermination. He will act like He has the power of God to change times and seasons. The amazing word in this interpretation is that God will sovereignly give the saints into his wicked hand. God has a purpose in this gruesome persecution. But the mercy of God's sovereignty is that it is limited to a "time, times, and half a time."

The Book of Revelation identifies this beast with ten horns as the dragon who tried to kill Jesus at His birth (12:3-4). This pinpoints this fourth beast as Rome because Herod was merely the extension of Roman power. The little horn is the Antichrist who is pictured as the beast who rises out of the sea and who is characterized by his blasphemous words against God.

**Revelation 13:1** And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and **saw a beast rise up out of the sea**, having seven heads **and ten horns**, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of **blasphemy**.

The fulfillment of this picture was still future for John in A.D. 90, and therefore the 10 kings are still future as well.

The characteristics of this beast capitulate the 3 other beasts of Daniel.

**Revelation 13:2** And the beast which I saw was like unto **a leopard**, and his feet were as the feet of **a bear**, and his mouth as the mouth of **a lion**: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

There is a universal aspect to His authority.

**Revelation 13:3** And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and **all the world** wondered after the beast

He is worshipped because of his satanic-inspired military power and his success in warfare.

**Revelation 13:4** And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped **the beast**, saying, **Who is like unto the beast?** who is able to **make war** with him?

He speaks blasphemy in claiming to be god and has a limited time of power.

**Revelation 13:5** And there was given unto him **a mouth speaking great things** and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue **forty and two months**

Forty two months = 3 ½ years (36 months + 6 months) so that we can conclude that a time = 1 Year, times = 2 Years, and half a time = ½ year.

The emphasis in both Daniel and Revelation is on the Antichrist's blaspheme against God. He takes out his hatred for God by attacking and overcoming God's people. The language of universality in Daniel (people, languages, nations) now applies to this wicked king's sovereignty.

**Revelation 13:6-7** And he opened **his mouth** in **blasphemy against God**, to **blaspheme** his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to **make war with the saints**, and to **overcome them**: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

This is the Man of lawlessness from 2 Thess. 2:6-8 whom Christ will consume with the brightness of His coming. Because this spirit of iniquity and rebellion against God already works in the world today, there are many antichrists in the world that foreshadow the Antichrist of the end (1 John 2:18).

The end of the story is one of triumph for God's people, when the sovereign God "gives" to the people of the saints of the Most High the earthly kingdom of Christ and His universal domain. Here God reveals that He will use His sovereignty to rescue His people.

## **Who is the One like unto a Son of Man?**

The Gospels make clear that the Son of Man of Daniel 7 is Jesus Christ. This passage provides the primary background for the usage of Jesus' favorite title of self-reference. Jesus refers to Himself as the Son of Man in three contexts, authority, suffering, and final exaltation. Although son of man is usually a Hebrew expression for being human and can be a term of circumlocution for self-reference, it takes on the nuance of a specific figure in Jesus' use of Daniel 7.

**Mark 8:38** . . . of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, **when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels**.

**Mark 13:26** And then shall they **see** the Son of man **coming in the clouds with great power and glory**.

**Mark 14:62** And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall **see** the Son of man **sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven**.

Why Jesus chose this title is much debated, but it seems to revolve around its not being a typical title for the Messiah and the fact that it captured both nuances of suffering and vindication/exaltation. Jesus uses this title much to refer to His suffering (Mark 8:31; 9:9, 31; 10:33, 45; 14:41) and states that this suffering was written about the Son of Man (Mark 9:12; 14:21). Jesus' connection of suffering to this title may have come directly from the passage of

Daniel 7 that speaks much of the suffering of God's people whom He represents. For Him to represent the suffering people of God, then He too must suffer and be vindicated for them.

The throne scene of Revelation 4 and 5 have Daniel 7 as its background. The presence of the angels and the saints around the throne numbering ten thousand times ten thousand singing the praises of the Lamb of God (5:11-12) parallels the reception of the Son of Man in Daniel 7. The Lamb causes the saints to reign on the earth (5:10) just as the Son of man procures the kingdom for the saints (Daniel 7:14, 18). It is informative that the worthiness of the Lamb of God is found in His being "slain" and redeeming the saints "by His blood" (Rev. 5:9). Suffering seems inherent in the context of the Son of Man as a representative and victor for the people of God!

### **Who are the people of the saints of the Most High?**

The debate is whether this refers to the church or to the nation of Israel. The non-dispensational, post-tribulation rapture position believes that these people are the persecuted church, while a dispensational, pre-tribulation rapture position holds that this people is the nation of Israel.

The texts studied so far do not provide a conclusive case either way. It is true that the church will suffer persecution, and that the spirit of antichrist is already at work in this world so that the issue should not be framed in the context of desiring to flee the unpleasant reality of persecution. The text should determine if there is some reason to limit the phrase "saints" to saved people of God of the nation of Israel. The only two clues presented so far in identifying these saints in Daniel is the national identity of those in need of rescue in Daniel and the fact that God gave these saints into the hand of the Antichrist. The purpose of God should shed light on their identity. The following visions will provide more data by which to determine this issue.

## Lecture 10

### Daniel 8

At Daniel 8 the language changes back to Hebrew. Whereas Chapter 7's vision was broad and universal in terms, chapters 8-12 become much more specific in its application to Israel.

#### Structure

- Introduction (vv. 1-2)
  - Vision (vv. 3-12)
    - The Ram (vv. 3-4)
    - The Goat (vv. 5-8)
    - The Little Horn (vv. 9-12)
      - Heavenly interlude (vv. 13-19)
        - The Message of the saint (vv. 14-15)
        - The Message of Gabriel (vv. 16-19)
  - Interpretation (20-25)
    - The Ram (v. 20)
    - The Goat (vv. 21-22)
    - The King (vv. 23-25)
- Conclusion (26–27)

#### Introduction (vv. 1-2)

Daniel's second vision also takes place in the reign of Belshazzar. The correlation between the story of Belshazzar and the little horn king make it appear that God's timing was intentional to see one in light of the other. Both attack God by desecrating the (vessels of the) temple and using it for the purpose of idolatry, both lift their heart up in pride, both stories have reference to a hand and understanding hard riddles, and both kings die suddenly.

While Nabonidus was forming political alliances against the rising power of Persia, Daniel receives a vision in which he is not in Babylon but in an insignificant city in Daniel's day, Shushan, "which became one of the main residence of the kings of Persia" (v. 1, see Neh. 1:1; Ezra 1:2).<sup>14</sup> The place of his vision then is prophetic. Daniel receives a vision about Persia in the place that

---

<sup>14</sup> John F. Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key To Prophetic Revelation* (Galaxie Software, 2008), 180.

would later become the capital of Persia. The vision itself assumes the demise of Babylon and picks up directly with the nation of Persia. This vision is dependent on the first vision of Daniel 7 (since it is referenced in the introduction) and informs the reader with much greater detail concerning the second and third kingdoms as well as spotlighting against the blasphemous little horn of Daniel 7.

### **The Vision of the Ram and the Goat (vv. 3-8; 20-22)**

**Persia:** Daniel first sees the Ram, who has two horns (vv. 3-4) which the interpretation clearly identifies as the kingdoms of Media and Persia (v. 20). The relationship of the two horns is that one is higher than the other and the higher one comes up after the other. The history of the Medo-Persian Empire was of a two nation alliance between the Medes and the Persians in which the Medes were stronger at first but through Cyrus the Persians came to completely dominate. This corresponds to the second beast of Daniel's 1<sup>st</sup> Vision, the bear whose one side was higher than the other side. Like the little horn of Daniel 7, the stronger horn rises up last.

The Vision sees the expanse of the Persian Empire toward the Mediterranean in the West, toward Egypt in the South, and toward Greece in the North.

The text emphasizes irresistible military might in terms of characteristics like unto God. No one could stand before him or deliver from his hand (see Daniel 3). The nation did according to their will in sovereign freedom and became great.

**Greece:** The interpretation makes clear that the male goat was the Greeks. The first king of Greek foreign conquest was Alexander the Great whose military genius is renowned and is represented by the one central horn on the goat. Alexander the Great would conquer the entire empire of Persia and expand it "on the face of the whole earth." Within three years, the Greeks had conquered the entire Middle East. This speed in their military conquests is pictured by the goat "not touching the ground" and corresponds with the third beast of Daniel 7, the swift leopard with four wings.

The anger and animosity of the Greeks toward the Persians that was prophesied in Daniel's vision (vv. 6-7) is well documented historically. The repeated attacks of the Persians on the Greeks and their barbaric treatment of the captured caused the Greeks to hate them and to refuse to accept any surrender.

In the height of his greatness and youth, the great horn was broken, and Alexander's kingdom was divided among his four generals. The four horns matches the 4 heads and 4 wings of the leopard from Daniel 7.

The Goat stomps on the Ram (8:7) in a similar fashion to the Fourth beast (7:9, 17) and to the little horn (8:10). A theme develops in Daniel: Wicked human characters are exalted to greatness (8:4, 8, 9, 10, 21), sovereignty (8:4), and control over the demise of others so that

none can deliver them from their hand (8:4, 7). Then after prideful exaltation, sudden destruction follows (see little horn, 7:8, 11, 20, 25).

Generals	Region of Governance
Cassander	Macedonia and Greece
Lysimachus	Thrace and Asia Minor
Seleucus	Syria, Babylon, Persia
Ptolemy	Egypt, Libya, Palestine,



### The Little Horn (vv. 9-12, 23-25)

The emphasis of the text crescendos to a climax with the lengthier description of the little horn.

The use of the same image of a “little horn” brings the king of chapter 8 into a close proximity with the king of chapter 7.

**Similarities:** Both are identified as a little horn, both rise up in the later part of their kingdom, both become great after small beginnings, both are arrogant and blasphemous, both persecute and prevail over God’s people for a similar length of time, both oppose God directly and are destroyed by God.

**Differences:** They arise in different empires. Daniel 8’s little horn is clearly of the he goat empire which is the Greeks and parallels with the 3<sup>rd</sup> empire of Daniel 7. The little horn of Daniel 7 comes from the Roman Empire in its future state.

### The Vision (vv. 9-12)

The prophetic description matches a king of the Seleucian Empire by the name of Antiochus Epiphanes. He would become strong militarily and would attack Egypt (South), Persia (East), and the nation of Israel (Pleasant Land, see Jer. 3:19; Ezek. 20:6, 15; Mal. 3:12).

He brought his military greatness to attack the host of heaven. He, like the little horn of chapter 7, seeks to attack God by attacking the people of God. He is successful in casting down some of God's stars and stomping on them like a beast would tend to do (Dan. 7:7, 19; 8:7).

The use of cosmic language (host and stars) magnifies the significance of God's people and demonstrates with whom the true battle is. The same language is used of Satan's rebellious attempt at absolute sovereignty (Isaiah 14:13; Rev. 12:4)

The identity of the prince of the host is difficult to identify if one looks for literal fulfillment in Antiochus' day. Some have seen a historical fulfillment in the death of the high priest, but the spiritual nature of the language indicates that this person is either the chief angel in charge of protecting the nation of Israel (Michael, 10:21) or mostly likely the Prince of princes, Messiah, the Lord Jesus (Dan. 8:25; 9:25). The very name that Antiochus IV adopted for himself "Epiphanes" means the outshining of God and is in direct rivalry with the person of Jesus Christ the Son of God who is God incarnate and the outshining of God's glory (Heb. 1:3; 2 Cor. 4:5).

He would attack Jesus by attempting to eradicate Judaism! He would forcefully stop the sacrifices at Jerusalem and desecrate the holy place with an idolatrous sacrifice of swine's flesh upon the altar. Although he did not "cast down" the altar itself (v. 11), he rendered it unusable so that Israel would tear it down and built another (1 Macc. 4:48). Everything sacred and holy was to be profaned and every law of the truth was to be disobeyed on pain of death (1 Macc. 1:44-49).

The startling reality is that the nation of Israel ("host") and holy sacrifices were given into the hand of Antiochus by the sovereignty of God (given, v. 12). God has done this because of the transgression of His people.

A pattern develops of repeated nouns and verbs. The little horn follows the pattern of the Ram and the Goat. They cast to the ground (v. 7); he casts to the ground (vv. 9, 11, 12). They stomp (v. 7); he stomps (v. 10). They become great (vv. 4, 8); he becomes great (vv. 9, 10, 11). This pattern is broken with the description "and none can deliver out of their hand" (v. 4, 8). This phrase does not describe the host of heaven in Antiochus's hand because there is a God who is their Savior.

The vision ends with the triumph and prospering of the enemies of God while God's truth, His temple, and His people are left in humiliation!

### **The Interpretation (vv. 23-25)**

The focus of the interpretation of Daniel's vision is clearly on the little horn with a lengthy description of his character and actions. Antiochus arises in the waning years of Greek power when Rome is beginning to flex its might (v. 23). This points to the Antichrist who will arise in the waning portion of Rome's dominance in the last days. God's patience with sinners reveals His mercy (2 Pet. 3:10), but also when the fullness of sin arrives (Gen. 15:16; 1 Thess. 2:16) the justice of God upon wickedness appears ever more just.

This prophecy is crafted skillfully to describe Antiochus in a way that prophetically describes the Antichrist as well. Antiochus fulfills this prophecy in a limited sense but the Antichrist fulfills it in its full sense.

- (1) Fierce countenance (Fierce = Goat)
  - a. He is a hard man who has no feeling or compassion on others when he hurts them (Deut. 28:50)
- (2) Understanding dark sentences
  - a. His will be wise like Solomon and Daniel (Dan. 5:12; 1 Kings 10:1) – wisdom with evil purposes makes a man crafty and cunning. He will know how to use intrigue to accomplish his evil purposes.
- (3) Power shall be mighty
  - a. He is strong militarily (8:6, 7, 22; 11:6, 15, 11:25)
- (4) Not by his own power
  - a. He will be empowered by Satan. The dragon gives power to the beast so that he recovers from a fatal blow and becomes invincible in battle (Rev. 13:4). By Satanic power, the Antichrist will be able to do miracles and deceiving wonders (2 Thess. 2:9).
- (5) He shall destroy wonderfully
  - a. His wake of his destruction will be staggering and devastating to behold.
- (6) He shall practice and prosper
  - a. He can do whatever wicked thing he wants (8:4, 12; 9:12, 15; 11:3, 7, 16, 17, 23, 24, 28, 30, 36, 39), and he seems to prosper and get away with it (vv. 12; 11:36).
- (7) He shall destroy the mighty and holy people
  - a. He attacks those who are strong and those who are holy. The holy people is the nation of Israel, who are mighty because of their God.
- (8) Through his policy, he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand
  - a. He has insight like Daniel (1:4, 17) so that he will be able to prosper by deceit and treachery (11:23).
- (9) He shall magnify himself in his heart
  - a. He will be lifted up with pride (11:12, 25, 27-28, 36-37)
- (10) He will destroy many by peace
  - a. He will make covenants (11:21, 24) with which he intends to use to destroy his partners (9:26; 11:17).

(11) He shall stand up against the Prince of Princes

a. This man is in direct defiance to the character, glory, and position of Jesus Christ.

(12) He shall be broken without hand

a. He will die as a direct result of God's hand. It will be evident that God struck him down. He will not die in battle at the hand of a man (8:7, 8, 22; 11:4, 20, 22, 26).



# Lecture 11

## Daniel 9

This is not a vision report but a prayer. It is meant to exemplify what Israel should do in response to their sin and what they should do during the time of the great persecution!

### Structure

- Daniel's Prayer (vv. 1-19)
  - Setting for the Prayer (vv. 1-4a)
  - Prayer of worship and confession (4b-15)
  - Prayer of petition (16-19)
- God's Answer (vv. 20-27)
  - Gabriel comes to give understanding (vv. 20-23)
  - The 70 Week Prophecy (vv. 24-27)

### Introduction (vv. 1-4a)

Daniel's third vision takes place in the reign of Darius. The change of emphasis in the content from destruction to great hope coincides with the change of rulership. Since this occurs in the first year of Darius, it is safe to assume that the prayer of chapter 9 occurs before the lion's den (Daniel 6). This means that Daniel 9 gives insight into the content of Daniel's prayer.

### Motivation for Prayer

Daniel received insight and understanding by reading Jeremiah's prophecy (v. 1; Ps, 119:99-100, 130).

And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon **seventy years.** **Jeremiah 25:11**

For thus saith the LORD, That **after seventy years** be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

**Then shall ye call upon me,** and ye shall go and pray unto me, **and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.**

And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive.

**Jeremiah 29:10-14**

God gave him understanding of a promise that He had made, and Daniel's response was to claim this promise in prayer. God's sovereignty is never an excuse not to pray. God's sovereignty rather motivates prayer. The knowledge that God can and will accomplish all His will and purpose gives believers the confidence to come to Him! This prayer then is an example of what it means to seek God with all one's heart and to find Him (Jer. 29:13).

The promise of God was that the captivity of Israel would only last 70 years. Daniel was taken captive in the first wave of captivity (605 BC), and he read Jeremiah's words in the first year of Darius (538 BC) nearly 67 years later. In 536 BC, Ezra and nearly 50,000 Hebrews would journey from Babylon to Jerusalem. They would arrive exactly in the 70<sup>th</sup> Year just as God said. Coincidentally, they would not be able to complete the temple until 515 BC just over 70 years from the destruction of the temple in 586 BC.

This 70 years of Judgment corresponds to the 70 weeks of Daniel's prophecy in Daniel 9. Because God's promise of judgement was fulfilled in a literal 70 year timeframe, this gives strong indication that one should interpret Daniel's 70 "7s" as literal years that have an exact fulfillment as well. God provides believers with His timeline for events to assure them in times of persecution that God has a stopwatch and that He is going to limit their suffering. A general rough estimate of time would not be as encouraging as an exact number of days! God mercifully identifies 3 ½ years as the length of the worst time in history, and this timeline will provide hope and enduring power. Literal fulfillment of specific numbers, no matter what their symbolic value may be, was the clear expectation of this prophet of God.

### **The Intensity of Prayer**

The amount of energy and focus that Daniel put into his time of prayer indicates how important God was to Him. He did not pray this prayer as a passing whim that floated through his consciousness during his daily activities. He set aside time to point his face in the direction of God. Closet time with God fuels a deeper intimacy with God that carries over into an ongoing abiding in His presence throughout the day.

He went without food, and He also wore sackcloth and ashes as symbols of humility and brokenness. Because these garments would have been very uncomfortable, they expressed Daniel's complete dedication to the prayer that he prays. He is seeking God with all his heart through prayer! The words for prayer that describe Daniel's prayer (v. 3) find a high frequency in Solomon's prayer (1 Kings 8-9) and demonstrate that Daniel is praying on the basis of God's Word (His praying toward Jerusalem also indicates that Solomon's prayer is on Daniel's mind).

The opening word in Hebrew (“O”) expresses intense desire, and is used for pleading for one’s life (Gen. 50:17; Ps. 116:4, 16; 118:25; Isa. 38:3; Jonah 1:4) or deep sorrow over sin (Exo. 32:31; Neh. 1:5, 11).

### **Daniel’s Prayer (vv. 4-19)**

Daniel’s prayer provides gold mine of theological truth because it is all about God. There is a repetitiveness to this prayer that is best organized into themes rather than a linear outline (which itself expresses the passion of this prayer).

The word translated “confession” is the Hebrew word for praise. This indicates the purpose and nature of true confession, it brings praise to God. When we “confess” our sin but make excuses for ourselves and do not thoroughly condemn ourselves, we have not brought glory to God (Joshua 7:19).

Daniel makes **his** confession and constantly refers to sin with the plural pronoun “WE” (vv. 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14). Yet, Daniel confesses sin which he did not commit himself, and the book of Daniel presents him as an impeccably righteous man.

#### Representative Role

Daniel prays as a representative for Israel in his confession. Because all sin is an offense against God, and Daniel cares about God and His name, he seeks to address the wrongs done against God by his people. In this role, Daniel is a type of Christ who was of us and who while being the completely righteous, He bore the sin of others as His own and made reconciliation to God for them (2 Cor. 5:19-21). Daniel also prayed at the time of the evening sacrifice (v. 21), which only strengthens his representative role in light of this picture of the substitutionary atonement for sin. Although sacrifices had not been offered in nearly 70 years, Daniel prays on the basis of God’s merciful atonement. Interestingly enough, he will receive the vision of the coming of the Messiah at the time of day at which Jesus would ultimately die (Mark 15:34).

#### Prophetic Example

The reason why God sent Israel into captivity in Babylon was because of their sin, and the reason that God must bring Israel through the tribulation will be because of their sin. Daniel’s prayer, therefore, is exemplary for those who will experience the tribulation and is prophetic of the repentance and supplication that Israel will offer to God (Zech. 12:10).

#### Application

Believers should not only confess their own sin, but they should provide intercession and confession for the sins of their family (Job 1:5), their church, and their country.

### **Praise**

Daniel starts his praise with God’s greatness, God’ goodness, and God’s superiority.

**“O Lord, the great and dreadful God”** – God strikes terror and dread into all creation (Deut. 10:17, 21; 28:58; 34:12), and He will do great and fear-imposing things in the end (Joel 2:31; 3:21; Mal. 4:5). The transcendent holiness of God inspires fear and dread in all who enter His presence (Gen. 28:17).

**“Keeping the covenant and mercy”** – God reveals His goodness through His faithfulness to keep His covenant. He always remains loyal in His love to those whom He binds Himself in promise (Deut. 7:8-12; 1 Kings 8:23; Neh. 9:32). The ultimate fulfillment of God’s covenant promises is the Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 1:72; 2 Cor. 1:20; Eph. 3:6; Titus 1:2).

**“to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments”** – To submit to God’s requirements is to acknowledge His superiority. God is faithful to His covenant promises, but the enjoyment of His blessing comes only as believers uphold their responsibility in the relationship! He demonstrates His loyal love to those who love Him and demonstrate that love by obeying what He commands (Exod. 20:5-6; Deut. 5:10; 7:9; Neh. 1:5). The New Testament confirms that obedience is the proof of love that allows enjoyment of the constant, abundant love of God (John 14:15; 15:10; 1 John 2:5).

The word “commandments” touches on a significant theme in this prayer: God’s Word (commandments, v. 4; precepts and judgments, v. 5; spoke in thy name, v. 6; voice of the Lord, v. 10; His laws set before us, v. 10; law, voice, written in the law of Moses, v. 11; words which He spoke, v. 12; written in the law of Moses, thy truth, v. 13; voice, v. 14). How a person responds to God’s Word determines what kind of relationship one will have with God.

Daniel also praised God’s righteousness and justness in bringing judgment down upon his nation (vv. 12, 14). He is basically saying “God was right and we were wrong.” Daniel acknowledged that Israel deserved every bit of the judgment that they received (vv. 7-8) and that God only did what He said He would do (v. 11). God’s righteousness, therefore, mandated their judgment.

## **Confession**

### Sin Brings Shame

To confess is to say the same thing that God says about sin. Daniel illustrates this truth by using a variety of words and descriptions for sin to acknowledge sin as God views it. Sin is missing the mark and failing the standard that God set for us (vv. 5, 8, 11, 15, 16). It is the revelation of our nature which is bent in iniquity away from goodness (v. 5). Before the bar of justice, therefore, Israel stood guilty of wickedness and wrong doing against God (v. 5, 15, 27). They had absolutely rebelled against their rightful authority. This was the evil of insurrection and mutiny (v. 5, 9). They had turned aside and departed from the presence of God and His way (v. 5, 11), and stubbornly refused to listen to God when He tried to call them back by the prophets (v. 6). They had deliberately stepped over the boundaries of God in defiance against Him (v. 7) They were disobedient (v. 10) and had sinned against the Lord (v. 9, 11).

To compound sin upon sin, even after all the judgment came upon Jerusalem, they still did not repent and come back to God in obedience and love (v. 13). Daniel refused to mention the judgment of God without mentioning their sin and the justice of God. Daniel would never have countenanced any complaint or bitterness toward God for their suffering, only praise!

### Sin brings Consequences

Daniel recounts the judgment of God throughout his prayer. Jerusalem continued to be in a state of desolations and had been for the past 67 years (v. 2), and God's people were in a state of shame and embarrassment in captivity (vv. 7-8). God had poured out His promised curse upon them (v. 11), and had brought a great evil that was unique in the history of the world (v. 12). God carefully made sure that this disaster struck them in such a way (vv. 13-14) that their origin from Judea was a reproach and a byword among the nations (v. 16). The holy place and the people of God were desolate (vv. 17-18), which is exactly the two things that the Antichrist will target with His abomination of desolation.

The only way to be bitter against God is to first minimizing one's sin against God. It is the presence of wickedness that makes the judgment of God perfectly just and only those who don't see sin as exceedingly wicked presume God to be harsh. When we don't see ourselves as sinful, we do not stand amazed at grace (because we deserve it!) and we don't respond to chastening with repentance (because we don't deserve it!). When we lose sight of our neediness, we are not eager for God's revelation. We think of God the way we ought to think of ourselves and ourselves the way we ought to think of God.

God intends for man to turn to Him in prayer, to turn from their sin, and seek to understand His truth in how they should live (v. 13). They will walk in the light (understand) and stand on solid ground (truth).

### **Petition**

The basis for Daniel's petition is the character of God. God had delivered this people for "His renown" (v. 15) because He wanted a righteous people for His name sake (v. 6). Daniel asks God to turn away His wrath and cause the blessing of His face to shine on Jerusalem for His own sake, for His own glory (vv. 17, 19)! It is because this city and this people bear the name of God that He should act on their behalf (vv. 18-19).

It is God's righteousness – a straightness that cannot bend – that brought Israel into judgment, and it is God's righteousness – a commitment that cannot break – that brought Israel restoration from judgment. The righteousness that called for their judgment in their sin, now calls upon God to be faithful to His covenant! Daniel calls on that very righteousness as the reason to forgive and restore them. It is God's desire to exonerate His name that forced Him to bring judgment, and it is God's desire to exalt His name that compels Him to bring them back to restoration! That which called for their damnation now calls for their justification – for the

Lord's sake. Believers today are justified *for the Lord's sake* because He died for them and rose again (Rom. 3:26)!

Daniel then begins to call upon God in earnest to hear and look! If God hears his prayer, He will respond to the need. If God looks upon the city of His name, it will be blessed. The basis of Daniel's prayer is not the righteousness of men but the mercy of God. We must come to God as the song writer said,

Nothing in my hand I bring  
Simply to thy cross I cling.

We have nothing! You possess all!

Standing on the character of God and the promises of God, Daniel reaches a fevered pitch of boldness, and in reverent devotion he calls upon God to act in the imperative mood! Listen! Forgive! Act! Do not Delay (v. 19)! God is not insulted by the demands of His servants when they ask for His glory in His Will based on His Word! Nay, rather God delights in such holy boldness which evidences a strong faith in God as He has revealed Himself to be!

### **God's Answer (vv. 20-27)**

God answers Daniel's prayer *while* he is praying. This fact teaches us at least three things.

(1) God thereby places a massive exclamation mark of approval behind this prayer. He honors those who will be broken before Him and who will confess their sin! He exalts those who will serve Him by interceding on behalf of the sins of others! Daniel's focus was not personal but on his God and sanctity of God's holy mountain! He put God first in his life, and it evidenced itself in his prayers.

(2) The immediacy of God's answer also demonstrates God's heart to answer prayer (Isa. 65:4; Ps. 145:18; Isa. 58:9)! God's gracious eagerness to answer prayer is also seen in the fact that God does much *more* than Daniel asks. He asks for the restoration of Jerusalem and His people, and God answers this not only in the building of the temple and the city under Ezra and Nehemiah but also by sending Jesus Christ the Messiah to bring everlasting reconciliation! God's answer was much bigger than what Daniel had asked.

(3) The angel states the reason for God's sending him at the beginning of Daniel's prayer: Daniel was beloved of God! This reveals God's love for His people . . . the nation of Israel and His church today. The love of God is constant toward His people no matter what they do, but their ability to enjoy that love is contingent on personal obedience (John 15:10). Daniel was obedient, and God's love was intimate and sweet! Israel disobeyed, and God's love was corrective and bitter. Yet that love will lead Israel back to Him, will motivate His forgiveness of them, and will bring them again to the place of blessing and intimacy with God.

That God answers Daniel's prayer while he is speaking also ties together the prophecy of the 70 weeks to Daniel's prayer. This has powerful implications to the significance of prayer but also should be an interpretive guide for the meaning and fulfillment of the 70 weeks.

The presence of Gabriel links the prophecy of the 70 weeks to chapter 8 and his reference to the beginning may also link him as the interpreter of the first vision in chapter 7. This reinforces the understanding that although the specific content may be different, the ultimate significance is still the same through all the visions.

The understanding that Daniel had lacked after the first two visions is now to be given to him by God through this messenger.

### **God's purpose (v. 24)**

God first declares His purpose for setting forth 70 weeks with six infinitive constructions that should ultimately guide one's understanding of the prophecy and God's purpose for these terrible times.

#### The Significance of the number 70

The captivity of Israel demonstrates that God has purposes behind the timeline on which He acts. The number of years was clearly literal, and Daniel understood it to be so in asking God to keep His promise. If a nonliteral interpretation was possible, it would have undercut Daniel's ability to pray with confidence. Yet while literal, the number of years in captivity was also symbolic in that it communicated a message.

God's people were supposed to allow the land to rest every 7 years as a picture of God's creative and redemptive rest. After 7 weeks (49 years), they were supposed to have a year of Jubilee in which not only did they allow the land to rest but also released everyone from any debts and restored the land back to its original recipients of the inheritance. All of this pointed forward to the day of redemption that God had promised when He would free men from sin and restore the earth back to its original form before the fall.

Because Israel did not keep the covenant with God nor observe those Sabbath rests for 490 years (70 weeks), God would cause them to be exiled from the land for 70 years (2 Chron. 36:20-21).

That God would appoint another period of 70 weeks or 490 years indicates that God wants this vision to be seen in light of the importance of the Sabbath rests and the year of Jubilee: God's restoration of people from sin and from the consequences (curse) of sin. At the end of this designated period of time, God will have made reconciliation from sin through the Messiah and will have brought an end to the curse of sin on the land by the second coming of Christ.

“upon thy people and thy holy city”

The focus of the vision is stated from the very beginning: It concerns the people of God and the holy city of God. These two concerns were the very things on which Daniel focused his prayer: the city called by thy name and the people called by thy name (vv. 18-19). The original referents of Daniel's prayer, therefore, should be the interpretive guide to understanding God's purpose for the 70 weeks. This prophecy is for Daniel's (“thy”) people, the nation of Israel and *Daniel's*

holy city, Jerusalem. This is the most natural interpretation of these words, and yet it leads exclusively to and sets the foundation for a premillennial, pretribulational interpretation.

### What God will accomplish

These parallel lines can be organized into 2 sets of 3 lines or 3 groupings of parallel lines.

The first three lines all contain references to what is wrong (three words for sin relate to the focus of Daniel's prayer) and the second three lines reference restoring what is right.

to finish the transgression,  
and to make an end of sins,  
and to make reconciliation for iniquity,  
and to bring in everlasting righteousness,  
and to seal up the vision and prophecy,  
and to anoint the most Holy.

The opening two verbs seems to form a tight parallelism and also invite the reader to contemplate the relationship between the parallel lines.

to finish the transgression,  
and to make an end of sins,  
and to make reconciliation for iniquity,  
and to bring in everlasting righteousness,  
and to seal up the vision and prophecy,  
and to anoint the most Holy.

- (1) To Finish the Transgression
- (2) To Make an End of Sins

This communicates that by the end of the 70 Weeks prophesied that God will stop the vicious cycle of Israel's rebelliousness against God and Israel will never again sin against God!

- (3) To Make Reconciliation for Iniquity

God will make an atonement that will cover their sins. The background of the Day of Atonement points to a time of weeping and repentance (Lev. 16:29; 23:27). Daniel's prayer modeled the spirit of this repentance that preceded the application of the blood to Israel and their subsequent cleansing. Because this prophecy mentions specifically the Messiah being cut off after the first 69 weeks (v. 26), the cross of Jesus fulfills this purpose statement. Jesus made an atonement for sins on the cross, yet the application of the blood to Israel on a national level as picture at the Day of Atonement is still yet future.

- (4) To Bring in Everlasting Righteousness

Jesus was the righteous one (Luke 23:47), and He becomes the righteousness of God's people (Jer. 23:5-6; 2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 3:9). Yet, everlasting righteousness in the context of God's desire to bring Israel's rebellion to a close speaks to an imparted righteousness to the nation of Israel in which they will be obedient to God's covenant forever.

(5) To Seal up the Vision and Prophecy

The prophecy and vision refers to all that Daniel has been receiving from God. By the end of the 70<sup>th</sup> week, God will complete all that He has said and thus will add His seal of approval and confirmation to all that has been said. This means that if the nature of any of these visions in Daniel prove to be eschatological (dealing with the end of time) in nature, then the 70 weeks cannot be completed until Jesus' second coming.

(6) To anoint the Most Holy

Some interpret this phrase as referring to the anointing of Jesus at His baptism, but this is the standard expression for the Holy of holies in the tabernacle and temple. To anoint this place means to restore it to functionality after it has been desecrated. The focus of this vision on the Antichrist's abomination of desolation (v. 27) indicates that when the 70 weeks are complete, the holy temple of God will be sanctified again. This signals the accomplishment of the purpose for which the temple stood for and the absolute restoration of Israel and mankind's relationship with God. This signifies the return of God's presence and the resumption of worship and fellowship with Him (Rev. 21:3).

**God's Determination (vv. 25-27)**

The prophecy of the 70 weeks is divided into 3 separate sections: 7 weeks; 62 weeks; and 1 week.

The challenge is to determine what the purpose for their division is and when each division begins and ends. The first 7 weeks addresses the current state of the city, and the following 62 weeks leads up to the provision of atonement through the Messiah. The final week brings the nation to accept the Messiah and enter into the Kingdom of Christ.

Since the 7 weeks and the 62 weeks are grouped together, they should be taken together as consecutive with a time gap between them and the final week. This mirrors the pattern observed in Daniel 2 and 7.

**7 + 62**

The 70 weeks begins with a word going forth to restore and build Jerusalem. At the end of the first 49 years, the street (town square) and the wall (fortified moat?) will be built. After the additional 62 weeks are completed, the Messiah will be cut off (the death of Jesus).

In search of an exact fulfillment of these words is difficult because of the difficulty of dating Jesus' death (which is based on the dating of Herod's death) and the possibility that lunar (360

days in a year) or solar years (365 days in a year) could have been used, but we have enough information to show us that God's sovereign decree was and will be fulfilled just as He said!

Identifying the starting date is tricky because there are two dates to choose from (although many others have been offered as well).

In 458 BC, Artaxerxes gave Ezra the priest a commission to return to Jerusalem to restore the Temple and offer sacrifices on the altar (Ezra 7:11-26). Although there was no command to build the wall, its focus on restoring temple sacrifices fits the theme of Daniel and the purpose of the 70 Weeks. In 445 BC, Nehemiah would come to Jerusalem to build the wall so that Jerusalem would have been a fully functioning city by 409 BC (49 years [7 weeks] after the command in 458 BC).

483 (solar) Years from 458 BC comes out to AD 27. If the death of Christ occurred in AD 30, then this puts end of the 69<sup>th</sup> week at the beginning of Jesus' ministry.

In 445 BC, Artaxerxes commissions Nehemiah to build the wall (Neh. 2:1-8), which fits well with the specific words used in Daniel 9:25. This would put the completion of the city renovations at 397 BC (49 years [7 weeks] after the command in 445 BC).

483 (lunar) Years from 445 BC comes out to AD 32. This would require a later date for the death of Christ but would put the end of the 62<sup>nd</sup> week at the passion of Jesus.

The books of Ezra and Nehemiah do testify that the rebuilding of the city occurred in "troublesome times" (v. 25). Yet the prophecy gives a time for when the city will be rebuilt and restored and announces the coming of the Messiah. This is Great News!

### **After 69 weeks**

What takes place after the first 69 weeks is not so good (v. 26). The Messiah will be cut off. This word references the cutting of a covenant (Luke 22:20) and communicates that Jesus will die to establish a new covenant! His death will be unjust because there will be no reason for Him to die. This points to the righteousness of Christ and his substitutionary atonement on the cross ("not for himself").

After this, "the people of the prince" shall come and destroy the temple and the city. The identity of the prince is important. Some point to the Messiah being called a prince (9:25) but in a subsequent vision Antiochus will be titled the Prince (11:22). Since the action of the people is to destroy the temple, this seems to indicate that this is an evil prince, the Antichrist, who will be foreshadowed by Antiochus. This prince is the little horn of Daniel 7 who was prefigured by the little horn of chapter 8. The Roman destruction of the Temple and city of Jerusalem in AD 70 fulfills this prophecy and confirms that Rome is the power from which the Antichrist will arise. History records that the Roman General Titus had instructions not to destroy the temple, but during the looting of the temple, it caught fire and was burnt to the ground. This prophecy of Daniel was fulfilled in that at the end of that siege, the enemy overran Jerusalem like a flood

and completely destroyed it until there was not one stone on top of another in the temple and the city wall was completely destroyed (v. 26).

This word “desolation” is the same word that was used of to refer to the sacrilege that defiles the holy of holies. What Antiochus did 167 BC in defiling the temple and the Romans did in AD 70 in destroying the temple gives a fuller picture of the desolations and abominations that the Antichrist will bring to Jerusalem when he comes to destroy. This is why Jesus tells those who see the abomination of desolation to flee (Mark 13:14).

### **The Final Week**

There is an evident time break between the death of Jesus (AD 30s) and the destruction of Jerusalem (AD 70) which also confirms that there is a time gap between the end of the 69 weeks and the final 70<sup>th</sup> week. The pattern of Daniel 2 and 7 was to speak of historical events before Christ’s 1<sup>st</sup> coming and then jump to the events of the end at Christ’s second coming.

The Bible tells us the purpose for this gap in which the church age occurs – God is seeking a full harvest during this time of the Gentiles (Rom. 11:25).

This final seven years precedes immediately before the return of Christ. The Antichrist (the prince) will confirm a 7 year covenant treaty with many nations. But in the middle of that week, he will double-cross the nation of Israel and cause their sacrifices to stop being offering in the temple. The time frame of Daniel meshes perfectly with the 3 and ½ times in Daniel (12:7) and the 42 months/1260 days in Revelation (11:2; 12:6; 13:5). The Antichrist will then set up an abomination of idolatry and declare Himself to be God (2 Thess. 2:3-4; Rev. 13:5-7). The temple will remain desolated until the consummation of all things at Jesus Christ’s 2<sup>nd</sup> coming.

Although the Antichrist will have his day, God controls the actions of evil men and has set boundaries to their power according to His determination (vv. 25, 27). God will “pour out” His wrath on the one who has caused all this desolation. The Antichrist will be taken and be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20).

At the time of the end, Israel will repent of their sins, and will be forgiven and restored (Zech. 12:10). God will put an end to Israel’s sin and transgression against Him and they will be restored in His kingdom so that Jesus Christ will rule the world through them for a 1000 years (Rev. 20:6).

God wants us to repent and return to Him! He has good purposes to accomplish through us! What must God do to put us through to get us to these good things?

# Lecture 12

## Daniel 10

Daniel 10 is the introduction to the final and climactic vision of Daniel. Its placement and its length signal its importance. The climactic nature of the vision is revealed by its connections to the theological center of Daniel in chapter 7, the length of the introduction, the impact of the Theophany on Daniel, the length and detail of the vision, and its eschatological climax.

### Structure

- Introduction and Record of Prayer (vv. 1-4)
  - Theophany (vv. 5-6)
    - Response of fear and lack of strength (vv. 7-9)
    - Strengthening touch (v. 10)
      - Speech: understand and stand (v. 11a)
        - Obedient Response of fear and standing (v. 11b)
          - Speech: I have come to make you understand vision in answer to prayer (vv. 12-14)
            - Spiritual battle while praying
  - Response of silence (v. 15)
    - Touching lips (16a)
  - Speech: how can I speak to you when I have no strength? (16b-17)
- Strengthening Touch (v. 18)
  - Speech: Command to be strong (v. 19a)
    - Obedient Response because of strength (v. 19b)
      - Speech: purpose to reveal vision (20-11:1)
        - Spiritual battle

## Structure in Prophetic Visions

- 7 – four beasts, little horn, Theophany, deliverance of saints
  - 8 – Vision of Persia, Greece, and the little horn
    - 9 – Prayer for Deliverance – God’s Answer by 70 week decree
    - 10 – Prayer for understanding – God’s Answer by Theophany
  - 11 – Vision of Persia, Greeks, Antiochus, Antichrist
- 12 – Resurrection and God’s promises to deliver His people

## Connection with the Rest of Daniel

### Connection with the Beginning of Daniel

There are multiple aspects of Daniel 10 that echo words or ideas from Daniel 1 and 2. The reference to Cyrus (1:21; 10:1), the name Belshazzar (1:7; 2:26; 10:1), a revelation to Daniel (2:26; 10:1), lack of eating meat and wine (1:8; 10:3), Daniels’ understanding (1:17; 10:1), and Daniel’s purposing in his heart (1:8; 10:12).

### Connection with Beginning of Prophetic Visions

This vision ties into the first vision of Daniel in chapter 7. Both chapters start with referencing Daniel in the third person (7:1; 10:1) and then continue with Daniel as the narrator (7:2-9:27; 10:2-12:13). Both chapters report a vision in which a detailed description of a theophany takes place. Both visions report on the Antichrist and eschatological events with assurances for God’s saints.

### Connections with Daniel 9

Both chapters have Daniel seeking God in prayer and fasting. Daniel is in a spirit of mourning and contrition in both, and God answers both prayers with a vision that gives understanding. In both, God sends a messenger immediately but there is a delay in their coming.

## Introduction (vv. 1-4a)

In the third year of Cyrus’s reign, 72 years after his captivity, Daniel received a vision which he understood the certainty of a long sorrowful conflict for the people of God.

Daniel had purposed in his heart that he needed to understand the terrible visions that he had seen. He humbled and afflicted himself for 3 weeks, fasting from food and wine and not anointing his body (vv. 2-3, 12). He again, like in chapter 9, sought God with all his heart and again was heard by God.

Daniel received the vision by the Tigris River (v. 4). This Hebrew word is used only twice in the Old Testament: here and in Gen. 2:14 at the description of the rivers that flowed through the

Garden of Eden. Daniel, therefore, stood in the place where man’s story began and receive the vision of how man’s story was going to end.

### Theophany (vv. 5-6)

Daniel sees a man who is dressed in linen. Linen was a fine piece of clothing that was associated with the priests (Exod. 28:39-43) and angels (Ezek. 9:2-3). He wore a golden belt and sash. His body appeared like a glowing metal or sparkling gem, and his face radiated a bright light like lightning. His eyes were like lamps of fire, and His voice was so loud that its roar sounded like the crashing of many waters in the ocean.

The detailed description indicates that this person is highly significant in Daniel, and Daniel’s reaction points more toward a physical manifestation of deity. The incredible similarities with John’s description of the exalted Christ as the Son of Man in Revelation 1 make the identification of the man in linen in Daniel 10 certain. The additional description of Jesus’ white hair mirrors the description of the Ancient of Days in Daniel 7 and ties chapter 10 theophany with Daniel 7’s.

Daniel 10:5-6	Rev. 1:13-15
Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain <b>man clothed in linen</b> , whose loins were <b>girded</b> with fine <b>gold</b> of Uphaz: His body also was like the beryl, and <b>his face</b> as <b>the appearance of lightning</b> , and <b>his eyes</b> as <b>lamps of fire</b> , and his arms and <b>his feet</b> like in colour to polished <b>brass</b> , and <b>the voice</b> of his words like <b>the voice of a multitude</b> .	And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of <b>man, clothed</b> with a <b>garment down to the foot</b> , and girt about the paps with a <b>golden girdle</b> . His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and <b>his eyes</b> were as a <b>flame of fire</b> ; And <b>his feet</b> like unto fine <b>brass</b> , as if they burned in a furnace; and <b>his voice</b> as <b>the sound of many waters</b> . . . and <b>his countenance</b> was as <b>the sun shineth</b> in his strength.

### The Human Response (vv. 7-9)

Daniel’s experience with the Lord Jesus Christ mirrors the experience of Paul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9, 22, 26). Both men were with others when they saw the Lord Jesus. Their companions did not see the vision, but were very aware of the supernatural phenomenon accompanying it. These other men express great fear while the recipient of the vision is deeply affected by it.

Both Paul and John fell to their faces when they saw the exalted Lord Jesus just as Daniel ended upon the ground face down unconscious (v. 8). This vision of deity took all his strength away and left him incapacitated.

## **Sequence: Touch, Command, Obedience (vv. 10-11)**

### The Purpose of Touch

In this passage, the Man in linen touches Daniel 3 times. He sets him on all fours (v. 10), touches his lips to enable communication (v. 16), and strengthens him with a final touch so that he can receive the final vision (v. 18). Daniel was touched in the two previous visions as well (8:18; 9:21). The angel of the Lord touched Elijah twice (1 Kings 19:5, 7). The Lord touched Jeremiah's mouth (Jer. 1:9), and Isaiah's mouth was touched (Isa. 6:7). John on the Island of Patmos was touched by Jesus' right hand (Rev. 1:17), and Jesus touched many people when He walked upon the earth when He was healing them. The purpose of these acts of touch are to meeting the needs of human weakness and to impart strength and blessing to them. Since touch is token of good will, these gestures of grace indicate God's love for His people and His desire to strengthen them when they are overwhelmed and are at the end of their resources.

The hand that touched Daniel sets him on all fours, and the Man commands him to stand up. This command is connected to the parallel command to understand (v. 11). Daniel's posture reminds the reader of Nebuchadnezzar who acted as a beast and was restored to a man (who was himself symbolized as a lion who was picked up and made to stand upright, 7:4). Daniel is equipped by the divine touch to stand in the presence of God as a man and understand God's revelation. These two commands (to stand and to understand) are enveloped by two words of encouragement to Daniel. God's enablement came from God's deep love for Daniel (and His people), and has included Daniel in the revelation of God's purpose in which He wants Daniel to have a part. God's plan gives purpose and God's love gives motivation and assurance! It is the love of God that causes Him to reveal Himself to us and to make us understand Him and His ways! God illuminates our hearts, convicts our consciences, and directs our path because of His great love for us!

## **Statement of Purpose and Revelation of Spiritual Warfare (vv. 12-14)**

Just like John, the Man in linen calms Daniel with His command not to fear. He had come for the express purpose of answering Daniel's prayer by giving him greater insight into the revelations that he had already seen.

The beauty of this revelation is what it communicates about answered prayer and spiritual warfare. The first truth confirmed in these words is that God answers prayer! God's sovereignty does not exclude the use of human means, human choices, and human interaction with the Divine! Believers who have a strong sense of God's sovereignty should not forget that there is a responsiveness in the divine will that incorporates and answers prayer! The Bible pictures God interacting with men, and being persuaded to certain courses of action in accordance with His will. Prayer makes a difference in the lives of others. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man accomplishes much (Jam. 5:16)! There are things that we do not have because we have failed to pray for them (Jam. 4:2; Mark 9:29).

## Spiritual Warfare!

The coming of the Man in linen was hindered by a prince over the kingdom of Persia. This indicates that every territory or people group has an organized demonic hierarchy whose express purpose is to fight against the purposes of God in that region or nation. The kingdom of the Greeks had a prince (10:20) as well as the nation of Israel (Michael, your prince, 10:21). This is not truth that sits well with anti-supernaturalistic minds. But Satan is a real being who is going around this globe seeking whom He may devour (1 Pet. 5:8). He is the mover and shaker of this world's system (Eph. 2:1) deceiving it to his own destructive purposes (Rev. 12:9). He is presently working in all who disobey (Eph. 2:2), is the source behind sin (1 John 3:8-10), and blinds the minds of those who might hear the gospel (2 Cor. 4:3; Mark 4:15). He plots ways to destroy Christians (Eph. 6:11) through bitterness (Eph. 4:26-27; 2 Cor. 2:10) or doubt (Eph. 6:16) and lays traps to ensnare them (1 Tim. 3:7; 2 Tim. 3:26) and sift them (Luke 22:31). Satan has an organized host of demonic angels who carry out his plans like a trained unified army (Eph. 6:12), and he is at work in your city, your neighborhood, and your home.

The hindering of the Man in linen takes place during the entire time that Daniel is praying. This indicates that prayer is the means by which we enter into this battlefield and fight. Satanic forces resisted the coming of the Divine messenger because this vision would provide encouragement and understanding to God's people. The faithfulness of Daniel to persevere in prayer played a part in the coming of this vision so that Daniel engaged in this battle through His faithful prayer to God. Paul tells us that believers to use the weapons of spiritual warfare in prayer (Eph. 6:17).

Some question whether the Man in white linen could be a manifestation of the Son of God because God could never be hindered by Satan. It is true that God has omnipotent power and yet God allows some of His plans to be temporarily hindered by the choices of men (Luke 13:34). The story of Job provides the best model for understanding how God can allow Satan his way while still accomplishing His own way through it all.

## Purpose Statement

Because Daniel's prayer had been answered, the interpretation again corresponds to Daniel's concerns. Daniel was concerned about his people, the nation of Israel, and what would happen to them in the last days. The vision is concerned with eschatological realities and, therefore, cannot be interpreted as having already been fulfilled in its totality (v. 14).

## **Human Response to the Divine (vv. 15-17)**

Daniel was completely overwhelmed by this encounter with the Divine Man and this Divine revelation. He bows his head in speechless silence until he is enabled to speak. He then expresses this experience as if he had been in child-labor or has had the wind completely knocked out of him. Those who claim to see visions of Jesus and talk to a manifestation of His presence as a casual experience are not to be believed!

## Sequence: Touch, Command, Obedience (vv. 18-19)

Again the heavenly touch communicates strength and is followed by the double command to be strong. These commands are preceded by another assurance of God's deep love for Daniel and because of that love, he is assured that he has no need to fear His presence. God's desire for Him is peace (Jer. 29:11). Daniel is strengthened by the very command to be strong so that the power for obedience lies within the command itself. Jesus gave commands to the impotent ("stretch forth thy hand") during His earthly ministry, and they were enabled to obey. His command carried the power, if they would only believe Him and obey. So God's Word strengthens us!

## Statement of Purpose and Revelation of Spiritual Warfare (vv. 20-11:2)

There is a sequence in the final purpose statement that intertwines statements about the purpose of the heavenly visit with further descriptions of the spiritual battle taking place.

<sup>20</sup> Then said he,

Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee?

and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia:

and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come.

But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth:

and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince.

Also I in the first year of Darius the Mede, even I, stood to confirm and to strengthen him.

And now will I shew thee the truth.

This indicates that the spiritual battle was related to the revelation of these truths and the accomplishment of God's purposes for His people. The reader should understand the nature of spiritual warfare in correlation with the spiritual contest over Job. The battle ground for this cosmic conflict is the people of God on the earth. God could easily dispatch with Satan and someday He will (Rev. 12:7-9). But God allows Himself to be hindered, and allows the presence of evil in the world to demonstrate His superior power through men. It was Job's faithfulness to God that displayed God's glory to a watching world!

The events of the spiritual realm have a more direct impact on human events that most imagine. Darius was directly impacted by this spiritual warfare and God's power! The spiritual wicked ones in high places were battling with the Man in Linen and with Michael (the angel assigned to the nation of Israel) because these wicked beings wanted to influence men to hate and to hurt the nation of Israel. The battle was ongoing throughout the time that Daniel was dedicated to prayer so that His dependence on God impacted this battle for God's glory (Exod. 17:10-13).

Daniel 10 is the background for the New Testament passage Eph. 6:10-18. The commands to be strong, the necessity of standing in an evil day, wrestling against spiritual wickedness in high places, divine strengthening grace, and prayer as the means of fighting all point a connection

between these two passages. Believers today, therefore, need to be strong in God's grace and give all that they have to withstand the evils of their day by putting on the armor of God and entering the warfare in persevering prayer! They take their stand on their knees before a Saving Sovereign for the purpose of the Gospel.

# Lecture 13

## Daniel 11

The vision of Daniel 11 is so detailed and specific in its prophecy that the only explanation for those who do not believe in predictive prophecy is to claim that this whole book is a forgery fraudulently trying to appear prophetic. For those who believe God's Word, this spectacular display of perfect prediction should give us an excitement for the words of God that are still yet to be fulfilled.

### Structure

#### Setting the Stage (vv. 2-20)

Kings of Persia (2)

Alexander the Great (3-4)

Two Kingdoms (5-20)

Strength compared (5)

Peace pursued through Marriage Alliance (6)

South Victorious over the North (7-8)

North Victorious over the South (9-10)

South Victorious over the North (11-12)

North Victorious over the South (13-20)

Peace pursued through Marriage Alliance (17)

#### Antiochus Epiphanes – Forerunner to the End (vv. 21-35)

- Rise and Success (21-24)
  - Conflict and Oppression (25-31)
    - Suffering and Steadfastness (32-35)

#### Antichrist and the End of Time (vv. 36-12:3)

- Rise and Success (36-39)
  - Conflict and Oppression (40-45)
    - Suffering and Steadfastness (12:1-3)

## Setting the Stage (v. 2-21)

2 Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia;

and the fourth shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia.

3 And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will.

4 And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken,

and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion which he ruled:

for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside those.

5 And the king of the south shall be strong,

and one of his princes; and he shall be strong above him, and have dominion; his dominion shall be a great dominion.

6 And in the end of years they shall join themselves together; for the king's daughter of the south shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement:

but she shall not retain the power of the arm; neither shall he stand, nor his arm: but she shall be given up, and they that brought her, and he that begat her [father], and he that strengthened her [husband] in these times.

7 But out of a branch of her roots shall one stand up in his estate, which shall come with an army, and shall enter into the fortress of the king of the north, and shall deal against them, and shall prevail:

8 And shall also carry captives into Egypt their gods, with their princes, and with their precious vessels of silver and of gold; and he shall continue more years than the king of the north.

Cambyses, Pseudo-Smerdis, Darius I

Xerxes (Ahasuerus – Esther's husband)  
Height of Persian Power  
Instigate fight with Greeks

Alexander the Great

Dies at an early age during the height of his power

Greek empire was divided between 4 generals into geographical regions  
Son and brother assassinated

Generals would take his kingdom; but it would never be as strong

Ptolemy I – Ruler of region that includes Egypt

Seleucus – one of Ptolemy's generals  
Appointed to northern region of Babylon  
Flees to Ptolemy for protection when attacked but later returns – would rule from Asia Minor to India

Alliance through Marriage  
Bernice (Daughter of Ptolemy II - South),  
Antiochus II (King of the North) divorces current wife (Laodice)

Once Ptolemy II (father) dies, Antiochus leaves Bernice and returns to Laodice  
Laodice in anger poisons Antiochus II, Bernice, and her son

Bernice's Brother (Ptolemy III) retaliates and begins conquering expeditions into the North

To demonstrate his total subjection of the North, he takes their idols and images back to the South and returns idols taken by the Persians to the great delight of the Egyptians

9 So he shall come into his [king of the South] kingdom, and shall return into his own land.

10 But his sons shall be stirred up, and shall assemble a multitude of great forces:

and one shall certainly come, and overflow, and pass through: then shall he return, and be stirred up, even to his fortress

11 And the king of the south shall be moved with choler, and shall come forth and fight with him, even with the king of the north: and he shall set forth a great multitude; but the multitude shall be given into his hand.

12 And when he hath taken away the multitude, his heart shall be lifted up; and he shall cast down many ten thousands: but he shall not be strengthened by it.

13 For the king of the north shall return, and shall set forth a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come after certain years with a great army and with much riches.

14 And in those times there shall many stand up against the king of the south:

also the robbers of thy people shall exalt themselves to establish the vision; but they shall fall.

15 So the king of the north shall come, and cast up a mount, and take the most fenced cities: and the arms of the south shall not withstand, neither his chosen people, neither shall there be any strength to withstand.

16 But he that cometh against him shall do according to his own will, and none shall stand before him: and he shall stand in the glorious land, which by his hand shall be consumed.

17 He shall also set his face to enter with the strength of his whole kingdom, and upright ones with him; thus shall he do: and he shall give him the daughter of women, corrupting her: but she shall not stand on his side, neither be for him.

Seleucus II, King of the North makes unsuccessful retaliation run into South

Seleucus III, King of the North, dies after 4 years  
Antiochus III (Seleucus III's brother)

North (Antiochus III) comes into South and makes several successful campaigns against the South and gets close to Egypt itself.

South (Ptolemy IV) counter-attacks and they meet in a very large battle  
King of the North (Antiochus III) brings a massive army South, however, wins battle over this massive army; Antiochus III barely escapes with his life.

King of the South (Ptolemy V) does not remain strong but wastes away through moral dissipation and the wonton abandonment that the pride of his victory had produced

Antiochus III the Great (King of North) returns strengthened and enriched after successful battles in the Northern (Caspian) and Eastern (India) regions

Many Rebelled at this time including the Jews

Secular Jews who want to throw off Egyptian rule shall help Antiochus III – their purposes will fail and they will die (hint: through Antiochus III's son)

The Vision – the atrocities on the Jews in Daniel 7, 8

Antiochus III defeats Egyptian General and his elite soldiers at the citadel of Sidon  
While besieged, Egyptian counterattacks would fail to rescue the General

Antiochus III will rule over the Palestine region. He is peaceable to the Jews at first but it is his power that will eventually lead to their destruction

Antiochus III gives Ptolemy V (7 yrs) his daughter Cleopatra (under political pressure from Rome)  
Rather than work against the South for the North, however, she loves her husband and supports the South against her father

18 After this shall he turn his face unto the isles, and shall take many:

but a prince for his own behalf shall cause the reproach offered by him to cease; without his own reproach he shall cause it to turn upon him.

19 Then he shall turn his face toward the fort of his own land: but he shall stumble and fall, and not be found.

20 Then shall stand up in his estate a raiser of taxes in the glory of the kingdom:

but within few days he shall be destroyed, neither in anger, nor in battle.

21 And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom:

Antiochus III begins to attack Northward and Westward against Romans interests.

Roman consul (Scipio) will defeat Antiochus III and revenge him of his shameful treatment of Roman ambassadors.  
Antiochus becomes vassal to Rome.

Antiochus III returns defeated and sends his son, Antiochus IV, to Rome as insurance and pays tribute to Romans by robbing temples and is attacked and killed by an angry mob.

Seleucus IV (Antiochus III's son) sends tax collectors throughout the kingdom. Seleucus sends his own son to Rome in exchange for Antiochus IV (his brother)

Tax collector comes to Jerusalem to claim its treasures but sees a vision in the temple and returns emptyhanded. Shortly thereafter he poisons Seleucus IV. (with the approval of Antiochus IV)

Antiochus IV rules in Seleucus' stead

### **Anticipation**

This history presents the common human nature of kings that do not submit to God. They do whatever they want, seek power and revenge at any cost, and their hearts are lifted up in pride. These kings were bad enough in their wickedness but they anticipate a king who will embody all their wickedness and carry out the worst atrocities that the nation of Israel had experience to that point.

### **Frustration**

Throughout this opening narrative, kings make plans and go to battle, but time and time again God is frustrating their plans so that they fail. God breathes futility into the designs of self-exalting rulers. In pride, they attempt the unattainable. In selfishness, they attempt to grasp the wind and find it elusive. There is only one Sovereign over this world, and He rules with perfect righteousness and goodness!

### **Preparation**

Through this whole vision, God is like a doctor preparing his patient for the discomforts that are to come so that when they come, they will be prepared and assured that He has an ultimate purpose.

### **Antiochus (vv. 21-35)**

Antiochus was the kind of person that people despise. He did not come to his power by right but by cunningly having his brother killed (and then executing the assassin to appear morally just!). He offered to be the vice-regent until his brother's son grew up, only to have his nephew killed once he had obtained power (v. 21).

Antiochus would consolidate his power through a preemptive attack that won him a decisive victory over a superior force (arms of a flood) in Egypt under Ptolemy IV. He then has the high priest in Jerusalem (Prince of the covenant) Onias III put to death for his alliance with Egypt (v. 22).

Antiochus would develop a strategy of operation. He would make peace overtures and then form an alliance through the use flattery and deception. He would then come with a small band of warriors and enter into strategic places. Once he had the upper hand, he then would treacherously turn on his ally, destroy them, plunder their wealth, and use their wealth to build more allies (vv. 23-24). It worked . . . for a time.

The king of Egypt, Ptolemy VI, would raise a large army to attack Antiochus, but this attack would fail because Ptolemy's trusted counselors would turn against him (possibly through Antiochus' cunning). Antiochus would captures Ptolemy VI, but in the meantime Ptolemy VII was made king (v. 26). Both Antiochus and Ptolemy VI sit down and make lying promises to each other with each trying to use the other to gain the throne of Egypt, but it does not work because God has a plan that He is working out (v. 27).

After a successful attack on Egypt and returning with wealth, Antiochus came to Jerusalem and used an internal dispute as an excuse to turn Jerusalem into a blood bath (v. 28). This wetted his appetite for the violence that was to follow.

At God's appointed time after Ptolemy VI double-crossed Antiochus, Antiochus determines to conquer Egypt once and for all. He would not be able to accomplish his plan, however, because the Roman commander Gaius would arrive and warn him not to attack Egypt unless he wanted a war with the growing Roman Empire (v. 29). Antiochus requested time, but Gaius drew a circle around him and said that he had to decide before he exited that circle (v. 30). Antiochus turned his army around in humiliation and turned toward Jerusalem to pour out his anger and frustration on the holy people of God. He would make alliances with Hellenized Jews who were forsaking the covenant, but once he had the superior military advantage over them, he would begin to do according to his will. He would set up an abominable idol in the holy place and cause the daily sacrifices to stop (v. 31).

He would flatter those who would compromise, but many Jews would resist his compulsory, apostasy program, and God would give them success (Maccabees, v. 32). Those who understood what God was doing would vocally teach others even while they would be dying by a variety of sadistically cruel and painful deaths (v. 33). God would give the Maccabean revolt some success, but so that many Jews would join them for expedience sake as the time turned against the Greeks (v. 34). God would allow some of the wise to fall in martyrdom for the purpose that He might test and purge and purify the nation (v. 35). Never again would the nation of Israel give in to the temptation of idolatry. Thankfully, God appointed a specific time by which these persecutions would end. The significance of all these events is that while they have been fulfilled, they are still yet prophetic for what will take place at the end of time.

This instructs believers today on how seriously God takes our holiness and purification. He is willing to orchestrate hundreds of years of history just to purify His people. God sent His Son to the cross to purify us. God is intent on it, but He must bring us to the place where we are as well. God would not use anything more than was necessary to get them to repent, but the reality that it takes this much to get man to submit to God reveals the extent of man's rebellion and stubbornness against Him. How stubborn are we in resisting His working to change us? What does God have to do to get our attention so that we will submit to Him?

### **Antichrist (vv. 36-45)**

The historical details in the next nine verses have no correspondence to events in Antiochus' life so one must conclude that that these verses refer to another. Yet this "another" is another of the same kind. Antiochus pictures the Antichrist. This vision jumps to the end of time just as the other dreams and visions of Daniel 2, 7, and 9 do.

The Antichrist will live by self-will and do whatever he pleases. He will seek to exalt himself to the place of worship. He will prosper in his blasphemous ways right up until God is done

pouring out His wrath on His people. The Antichrist is just a pawn in the determining counsel of God (v. 36).

The Antichrist will disregard the God of his fathers which indicates that he may be of Jewish descent. His lack of regard for “the desire of woman” could refer to homosexuality, but could also refer to Christ whom women desired to bear (Gen. 3:15). He would not regard any god but would seek to everyone treat him like a god (v. 37).

He will honor the “God of forces” which refers to making military might his god or to worshipping Satan who gives him his power. He will be successful in war and will give wealth and authority to those who align themselves with him (v. 38). This god empowers him to conquer strongholds and he will spread in fame, power, and influence (v. 39).

The King of Egypt will rise up against the Antichrist and be defeated. The Antichrist will come in with a horde and overrun the land of Israel (v. 40) so that all will be oppressed except Moab, Edom, and Ammon who are all enemies of Israel and located to the East of Israel (v. 41). The Antichrist will plunder the southern coalition from Egypt, Ethiopia, and Libya (vv. 42-43).

Disconcerting news of rebellion will be rumored from the East (China) and from the North (Russia) so that the Antichrist will rally his army to meet this advancing threat (v. 44). Revelation attests that the kings of the East (Rev. 16:12) will bring a 200 million man army toward the Antichrist in Israel (Rev. 9:16). He will make Jerusalem his capital headquarters from which to attack these armies (v. 45). The armies will not attack each other for Christ will come, and they will join forces to attack Jesus (Rev. 16:14). Christ will ride into battle at Armageddon and destroy this army until the blood flows as deep as a horse’s bridle (Rev. 14:20; 19:11-21). But God’s appointed end will come to this ruler and none will be able to help him.

This tribulation period will be the worst time in history (Matt. 24:15-22, 27-31; Zech. 12:1-10; 14:1-16; 2 Thess. 2:8), but God has appointed the time of its end.

## Lecture 14

### Daniel 12

Daniel 12 is the conclusion to the vision of Daniel 10-12 and provides a fitting capstone to the entire book.

#### **Vision Continued (vv. 1-4)**

**Persecution:** Michael, the angel who protects the nation of Israel, will stand up and fight against the purposes of Satan (v. 1a; Rev. 12:7-9). Satan will be cast out of heaven and will enter the earth as a desperate being who has only 3 and ½ years left (Rev. 12:10-14). The worst time ever on the earth (v. 1b) is actually a sign that Satan is defeated! Although it may appear that Satan is winning, the last gasp of his influence will be shortly put to an end. We should walk by faith and not by sight.

**Salvation:** The Scripture confirms that this time will be the worst the world has ever known (Matt. 24:21) in which 2/3rds of the nation of Israel will die. Yet this will be a time of great deliverance with a host of martyrs that cannot be numbered (v. 1c; Rev. 7:9-17), and the entire nation of Israel repenting at the sight of the One whom they had pierced (Zech. 12:10). At that point, all Israel shall be saved (Rom. 11:26), and those who are written in the citizen's book of heaven will be saved as well (Luke 10:20; Phil. 4:3; Rev. 13:8).

**Resurrection:** Israel's salvation will bring about the resurrection from the dead and the restoration of all things (v. 2; Rom. 11:15). The bodies of Old Testament and Tribulations saints will be resurrected to immortality and eternal life and the rest (the ungodly) will await a resurrection after the 1000 year reign of Christ (Rev. 20:4-5). The experience of those who are resurrected at the end of the Millennial Kingdom is one of everlasting shame and abhorrence (there is no party in hell, Isa. 66:24).

**Exaltation:** The wise and righteous will be exalted to the stars in the heaven and will shine in the brightness of God's glory (v. 3; Matt. 13:43).

Daniel is instructed to seal and preserve the book for its fulfillment in the last days when men will seek understanding and gain knowledge and insight into God's purpose and plan for the end (v. 4).

#### **Man in Linen (vv. 5-13)**

Daniel then sees two men who ask again the compelling question of the duration of God's people's suffering – How Long? The Man in linen hovering over the river holds up both hands in a doubly solemn oath and swears that it will not last any longer than its appointed time, but it will only accomplish the humbling of the power of the holy people (vv. 5-7). Men do not repent unless there is nowhere else to go, but when this repentance is accomplished the chastisement will not last a moment longer.

Daniel requests to know what the time of the end will be like (i.e., what will happen next?) but he is not given this information because that is not God's purpose for Daniel's book (vv. 8-9).

God reiterates that the purpose of the tribulation period is to make white the nation of Israel. The wicked will continue to do wickedly and will not understand, but many will understand what God is doing in the world during that time (v. 10). They will be counting down the days from the abomination of desolation – 1290 days (v. 11). Forty-five more days beyond the end of the tribulation period will be the time of greatest of blessings – the time of the Millennial Kingdom of God (v. 12).

The Man in linen reassures Daniel that God has a plan for him – rest. He can have peace because there is a place for him, and he can rest until that time comes knowing that God will have a spot marked out with his name on it. So we say with John,

“Even so Come Lord Jesus!”