

DANIEL

Lesson 1: Introduction

A TIMELY WORD

- Proverbs 15:23 - *A man has joy in an apt answer, And how delightful is a timely word!*
- A timely word is truth that is perfectly suited to the moment. Puts life into you. Prepares you for what's coming.
- The Book of Daniel is just such a timely word. You'll understand why as we work through the book.

INTRODUCTION OVERVIEW OF DANIEL

- I. Historical Context
- II. Author
- III. Structure
- IV. Themes
- V. Criticism
- VI. Application

I. HISTORICAL CONTEXT: **BIG PICTURE**

- 1436 BC = Enter the Promised Land (Judges)
- 1050 - 930BC = 120 years - United Monarchy
- 930 - 722BC = 208 years - Northern Kingdom
- 930 - 586BC = 344 years - Southern Kingdom



I. HISTORICAL CONTEXT: BIG PICTURE

- Daniel grew up in “the south.”
- His life and ministry punctuate the end of Israel’s first round in the Promised Land. About over.
- Haggai spoke to the do-over, Daniel how it ends.



I. HISTORICAL CONTEXT: **CLOSE UP**

- Let’s consider the last five kings of Judah in the South.
- Josiah = the rescued child who became king at age 8.
- Led a great return to God. Rediscovered the Law.
- Although Josiah had an amazing heart for God, the future for Israel remained grim.

I. HISTORICAL CONTEXT: CLOSE UP

- 2 Kings 23:25–27: *Before him there was no king like him who turned to the Lord with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; nor did any like him arise after him. However, the Lord did not turn from the fierceness of His great wrath with which His anger burned against Judah, because of all the provocations with which Manasseh had provoked Him. ➤*

I. HISTORICAL CONTEXT: CLOSE UP

- *The Lord said, “I will remove Judah also from My sight, as I have removed Israel. And I will cast off Jerusalem, this city which I have chosen, and the temple of which I said, ‘My name shall be there.’”*
- Despite Josiah’s unparalleled passion for God, Israel’s destiny was unchanged.
- Countdown! We know 23 years to doomsday!

I. HISTORICAL CONTEXT: CLOSE UP

- Josiah had three sons who became king, Jehoahaz (oldest), Jehoiakim (middle), and Zedekiah (youngest)
- Jehoiakim's son also reigned after his father.
- All four of them were disasters.
- Jerusalem was utterly destroyed in 586BC.

I. HISTORICAL CONTEXT: CLOSE UP

- Jehoiakim assumed the throne in 609BC after a short (3 mo) reign by his older brother, Jehoahaz.
- *He did evil in the sight of the Lord His God.*
- His reign lasted 11 years, from 609 – 598BC.
- His son (for 3 months), then brother, Zedekiah (for 11 years), were the last.

I. HISTORICAL CONTEXT: **JEHOIAKIM**

- 2 Chronicles 36:5-6: *Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king (609BC), and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem; and he did evil in the sight of the Lord his God. Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against him and bound him with bronze chains to take him to Babylon (597BC).*
- In year 3, (605BC) something significant happened.

II. AUTHOR: **INTRO TO DANIEL**

- Daniel 1:1-2: *In the third year (605BC) of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the vessels of the house of God; and he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and he brought the vessels into the treasury of his god.*

II. AUTHOR: **INTRO TO DANIEL**

- Daniel 1:3-4: *Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, the chief of his officials, to bring in some of the sons of Israel, including some of the royal family and of the nobles, youths in whom was no defect, who were good-looking, showing intelligence in every branch of wisdom, endowed with understanding and discerning knowledge, and who had ability for serving in the king's court; and he ordered him to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans.*

II. AUTHOR: INTRO TO DANIEL

- Daniel was taken to Babylon in 605BC.
- He is a young royal. (Maybe between 12-20?).
- His physical and mental attributes make him highly suitable as a candidate for service in the court.
- In a way that echoes Joseph, he is gifted with the ability to understand dreams and visions (1:17)

II. AUTHOR: INTRO TO DANIEL

- Daniel is the author of the book that bears his name.
- Daniel 8:1: *In the third year of the reign of Belshazzar the king a vision appeared to me, Daniel, subsequent to the one which appeared to me previously.*
- Note: Third person accounts match literary conventions.

II. AUTHOR: INTRO TO DANIEL

- Although Daniel nowhere refers to himself as a prophet, Jesus does and ascribes content to Daniel.
- Matthew 24:15: *“Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place...”*

II. AUTHOR: INTRO TO DANIEL

- Ranked by God as someone with standing before Himself similar to that of Noah and Job, both models of persevering righteousness.
- Ezekiel 14:14: *“Even though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job were in its midst, by their own righteousness they could only deliver themselves,” declares the Lord God. (Stay the Course Heroes)*

II. AUTHOR: INTRO TO DANIEL

- Viewed by God as a paragon of wisdom (Ezekiel 28:3).
- Named to the Hall of Faith in Hebrews.
- Hebrews 11:33–34: *Who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, **shut the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, ...***

II. AUTHOR: INTRO TO DANIEL

- Bottom Line: Jesus, God (in Ezekiel), and others affirm Daniel is a remarkable man.
- We can learn much from him: Daniel illustrates and instructs us how to serve God as a stranger in a world that is opposed to God.
- In the book he wrote, we get to follow him around at key moments as he shows us how he did it.

III. STRUCTURE

- Chapter 1 and chapters 8-12 are written in Hebrew.
- Chapters 2-7 are written in Aramaic
- Chapters 1-6 are narrative – chronological.
- Chapters 7-12 are prophetic – cyclical.
- But delivery dates of 7-12 can be connected to the chronology of 1-6.

III. STRUCTURE

- Chapters 2 and 7 present the progression of kingdoms.
- Chapters 3 and 6 recount divine deliverances.
- Chapters 4 and 5 describe God's judgment on world rulers.
- Chiasm: Progression, deliverance, judgment

III. STRUCTURE

- Chapter 7 – four beasts to the Kingdom = 75% history
- Chapter 8 – the ram and the goat = 100% history
- Chapter 9 – 69 weeks to Messiah = 98% history
- Chapter 10-12 – countdown to Antiochus, jump to Antichrist and the Kingdom = 75% history

IV. THEMES

- The fortunes of kings and of men are subject to God.
- Prayer is the resort of prevailing saints.
- God's redemptive time-table is unassailable.
- Grace works in concert with consequences to deepen devotion to God.

IV. THEMES

- Psalm 137:1-4: *By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down and wept, when we remembered Zion. Upon the willows in the midst of it we hung our harps. For there our captors demanded of us songs, and our tormentors mirth, saying, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion." How can we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?"*
- This is our question!

IV. THEMES

- John 17:16: *“They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.”*
- We don’t belong here!
- Philippians 3:20: *For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.*

IV. THEMES

- Daniel describes the man who lives for God in a world that is hostile to that belief and his account provides insight into how he does it.
- Further, the book of Daniel provides both verifiable (past) and future prophesy of how historical developments will challenge those who seek to live for God. It is indeed a timely word.

V. CRITICISM (BRIEFLY – Q&A?)

- The precision and detail of Daniel’s prophecies and their correspondence to historical events suggests (to some) that Daniel had to have been written around 165BC.
- Manuscript fragments from Qumran are a problem.
- Jesus ascribes this book to Daniel (Matthew 24:15).

VI. APPLICATION

- Eschatology refers to the doctrine of last things.
- There are differing views on eschatological matters.
- I want you to know what some of these views are and which one I will be using.
- Differing views on eschatology do not determine one’s salvation.

VI. APPLICATION

- These views are attempts to understand what the Bible says about the future and this does matter.
- Clearly, God wants us to know what to expect!
- View One: Amillennialists believe that Christ's resurrection inaugurated His kingdom and marked His victory over Satan and the curse.

VI. APPLICATION

- Postmillennialists believe that the millennium is an era marked by the gradual increase of the Gospel such that the majority of the world has been converted to Christ.
- Premillennialists believe Christ will return to establish a literal 1,000 year earthly kingdom which will be preceded by a period of intense tribulation.

VI. APPLICATION

- The eschatological view one takes will affect how one approaches prophetic passages in Daniel.
- My approach to Daniel will be informed by a premillennial eschatology. A future, earthly, 1,000 year kingdom with Jesus as king is coming. It will begin when Jesus returns to our world to conclude a time of unprecedented trial.

VI. APPLICATION

- Jesus teaches that it is critical to make a vital Daniel connection. Readers need to understand something!
- Matthew 24:15–16: *“Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains.”*

VI. APPLICATION

- To what does Jesus refer? His statement about Antiochus indicates that this is a future preview.
- Daniel 11:31: *“Forces from him will arise, desecrate the sanctuary fortress, and do away with the regular sacrifice. And they will set up the abomination of desolation.”*

VI. APPLICATION

- The very next verse echoes what Daniel demonstrates and explains.
- Daniel 11:32: *“By smooth words he will turn to godlessness those who act wickedly toward the covenant, but the people who know their God will display strength and take action.”*

VI. APPLICATION

- Our goal is to become a people who know God so well that we effectively live for Him in a hostile world.
- We can become, we must become, like Daniel!
- Hostility towards us as Jesus followers will grow.
- Ask God to show you how to become a Daniel.

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