

to them? (3:19-27) _____

It may not always be that the Lord will keep us out of the furnace, as we see in this story, but He will be with us through it all.

Chapter 4. Records the story of Nebuchadnezzar’s madness.

Chapter 5. Daniel interprets the “handwriting on the wall” for Belshazzar, the last Babylonian king as the city of Babylon falls to the Medes and Persians.

Chapter 6. Another dramatic story from this book is Daniel in the lions’ den. This incident occurs after the Medes and Persians have reorganized the empire and placed Daniel in a ruling position in Babylon. Daniel would now be in his eighties (or nineties) by this time.

Why was Daniel thrown into the den of lions? (6:7-12) _____

What happened in the lions’ den? (6:17-23) _____

Lessons: From Daniel 1 - 6

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

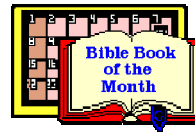
SUPPLEMENT QUESTIONS:

1. How old may Daniel have been when taken captive?
2. Daniel was a _____ and a _____.
3. What kind of character traits does Daniel exemplify and encourage?

4. While Daniel was an official with the government at the capital (Babylon) during the captivity, _____ was with the Jewish captives in the colonies in Babylon teaching and revealing visions to them of their return to Israel, and _____ was a prophet back in Jerusalem.
5. What encouraging truths would the exiles find in Daniel’s book?
6. What did God promise to do during the days of the Roman kings?

In our next lesson we will look at Daniel part 2, the prophetic section of Daniel (chapters 7-12).

DANIEL – Part 1 (Historical)



Text: Daniel 1 - 6

Introduction

Daniel was just a young man probably in his early teens when taken captive from Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar in 605 BC. He was of royal blood, was handsome and intelligent (Daniel 1:4). He was a descendant of Hezekiah (Isaiah 39:7) and was an eunuch in government service to Nebuchadnezzar.

For three years he was given intensive training in the Chaldean language and literature before being tested by the king. He served the duration of the Babylonian empire and then held one of the three top posts in the Medo-Persian government. He served as an advisor, counselor, and government administrator for more than seventy years in these two empires.

Daniel lived during the time when Babylon was supreme under Nebuchadnezzar but witnessed its fall to the Medes and Persians.

But more than being a great statesman, Daniel was a prophet of the Lord God of heaven. God gave him the ability to understand and interpret dreams and visions. He was able to tell Nebuchadnezzar the meaning of his prophetic dreams as well as recording visions of his own.

Throughout his life Daniel was uncompromising and faithful to God. Through his personal life and prophecies he bore testimony to the power of God. He must have been a great encouragement to the Jews in exile for Ezekiel mentions him three times (cf. Ezekiel 14:14, 20; 28:3).

The Book of Daniel

The book of Daniel was written in two languages. Daniel 2:4b-7:28 is written in Aramaic while the rest is in Hebrew. (Aramaic became the tongue of the Jews during the exile and remained so even after their return to Palestine; it was still their primary language at the time of Jesus.)

From Daniel’s writing God’s people in exile learned several encouraging truths:

1. The captivity was only a temporary thing. The message of Daniel served to comfort and encourage them to look beyond their present dark hour in confident faith that God was working out his plan.
2. That Babylon would be overthrown. The book shows us through its repeating theme that the nations of the world are under the power of the

Almighty God and the destinies of individuals are under his control.

3. That the Lord expects his people to be faithful to him even under trying circumstances. The book of Daniel provides us with outstanding examples of faith under trial.

4. The Lord is triumphant over the vain idols of the heathen and the ungodly persons who serve them.

5. The Messiah and his eternal kingdom will be established in the days of the fourth empire (the Romans.)

Outline Plan

The book of Daniel falls naturally into two divisions:

Part I – Daniel’s Life and Work – Ch. 1-6

Part II – Daniel’s Visions and Prophecy – Ch. 7 – 12

The first half of Daniel features five events selected from the prophet’s long life in Babylon. Each event has much of value for application to our lives today. There is also a report of an experience of his three Hebrew friends which apparently took place when Daniel was away from the capital (ch. 3).

Chapter 1. Some critics in the past were quick to allege a conflict between dates given in Daniel 1:1 and Jeremiah 25:1, and 46:2. Archaeological discoveries have shown however that the Hebrews and Babylonians used a different system to number years of rule. Daniel followed the Babylonian system; Jeremiah, in Judah, followed the Hebrew system.

Daniel was taken to Babylon along with three of his friends, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. What Babylonian names were these four given? 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____

The Babylonians did not observe Jewish laws concerning clean and unclean food (Leviticus 11, 17). Probably the food offered the captives had been part of sacrificial offerings to their pagan gods (Exodus 34:15). Though young, Daniel and his friends would not compromise their religion. What excuse would probably many Christians today make?

Instead, what test did Daniel and his friends propose? (1:11-14) _____

What were the results? (1:15-21) _____

Chapter 2. King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream that troubled him so he called his “wise men” (his counselors, magicians, astrologers, and sorcerers) to show him his dream (2:1-2).

What did he say he would do to them if they couldn’t recall his dream and interpret it for him? (2:4-5) _____

If they could interpret the dream he promised them great rewards (2:6). What did these wise men tell the king as he continued to demand to know the dream and its interpretation (2:10-11)? _____

The king’s order that all the wise men be slain included Daniel and his friends (2:12-13). Daniel asked that he might be given time to interpret the dream. Then Daniel and his friends entreated God, and in a night vision God revealed the dream and its meaning to Daniel (2:14-19).

When Daniel revealed the dream and its meaning to the king, how did Nebuchadnezzar reward Daniel? (2:46-49) _____

The king had seen a statue made from four different substances. God told Daniel this statue represented succeeding kingdoms.

	Substance	Kingdom Represented
Head	_____	_____
Chest & arms	_____	_____
Belly & thighs	_____	_____
Legs & feet	_____	_____

A rock shatters the statue and then grows into a mountain which fills the whole earth. Daniel said the rock represents a kingdom which God will set up and which will never be destroyed (2:39-45; cf. Hebrews 12:28). What kingdom was this? _____

This picture of the future is repeated in another vision (Daniel 7 & 8) with the interpretation given in even more detail. The prophecies were clearly fulfilled in the events of world history in the centuries that followed.

The book of Daniel is proof that the God of heaven who reveals Himself in the Holy Scriptures is One who knows the future and holds it in His hands!

Chapter 3. The incident of the fiery furnace is one of the most dramatic stories in the Bible. Nebuchadnezzar had set up an image made of gold and commanded all the people to fall down and worship it. If any refused, he would have them cast into a fiery furnace.

The command was given that at the sound of the instruments all should fall down and worship the golden image (vs. 5). When the music sounded, what three men refused to worship the image? (v. 12) _____

Consequently, they were thrown into the fiery furnace. What happened