



THE KING OF ALL KINGDOMS
THE BOOK OF DANIEL



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Daniel Studies – Introduction

Approach

These studies seek to encourage the view that there is a continuity of message between the Old and New Testaments. They are influenced by Biblical Theology thinking which “is to describe the process by which revelation unfolds and moves towards the goal which is God’s revelation of his purposes in Jesus Christ”¹. Whilst that may seem complex it means the studies try to follow a pattern of:

1. Understand the passage in its original setting (e.g. What it meant to Daniel, what was the historical situation)
2. Consider the passage in its biblical setting (e.g. Identify what themes arise, what we learn about God and ourselves)
3. Application of the passage in relation to unity of the message of the Bible. (e.g. Any application from the original situation and or to Christians today)

That is a lot of ground to cover in each study, but the approach means that we cannot just jump to us via analogy or moralise the messages for us today, instead we must work hard to think about God’s word and its meaning.

The studies are aimed to last about an hour, and so are usually limited to 10 questions to allow more time for reading and discussion.

A consequence of the above is that little time is spent trying to map prophecies to people, dates, and events. There is no shortage of this sort of information available and while it is interesting, ultimately it requires a lot of outside knowledge and so would distract from the purpose of bible study groups. However, whether you resolve this type of thing or not, the message and the conclusions reached are unchanged if you keep relating what you read back to the big picture of the bible.

A difficulty faced in studying the Old Testament is the lack of familiarity we have with names, places, and the historical context. The Handouts associated with these studies look to provide enough background information to help you read Daniel. Each study also has a brief introduction to help set the scene.

A question followed by a number in superscript (e.g. ¹) indicates that the supporting notes at the back have more information.

Quick Facts

History: There are diverse views on when the book was written, however the studies take the position that Daniel is a historical person who lived in the 6th Century BC.

Purpose: Daniel is an incredible book that directly challenges us to consider the nature of God and his rule over the world. How will we respond to God’s eternal kingdom and king?

Themes: Kings and Kingdoms. God’s Eternal King is greater than temporary human kings.

Timing: 605 BC to 536 BC

¹ G. Goldsworthy, *The Goldsworthy Trilogy, [Gospel and Kingdom]*, p. 45

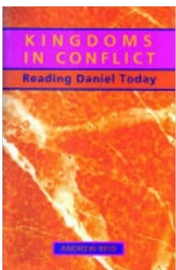
What happened to Chapter 8?

You may notice that chapter 8 is not in the studies, but it is still certainly worth reading. It was left out to balance the size of the studies overall. Also, as a narrative it is quite clear, a brief summary being: Daniel has a dramatic vision of the future which leaves him exhausted and struggling to understand (Dan 8:27). The Angel interprets the vision saying the Ram represents the kings of Media and Persia and the Goat represents the king of Greece (Dan 8:20-21). Persecution and trouble will result, but ultimately these kings, proud and strong as they are, will be dealt with. The events can be clearly mapped to history in the 2nd Century but doing so requires a lot of information outside the Bible which is not the focus of these studies.

Resources

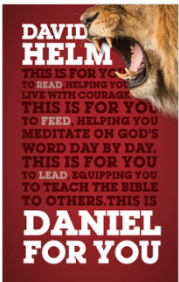
The following resources may help with reading/learning about Daniel

Used to help write the studies



1. Reid, A. *Kingdoms in Conflict*. Hope for the Helpless (Reading the bible today series): Australia Aquilla press

Very accessible and straightforward commentary. Has helpful sections on the theme of the kingdom of God and how it links to Gods big plan.



2. Helm, D. *Daniel for you*. Good Book company.

Helpful, works hard to link the Old Testament to Jesus as part of God's big plan.

Other resources used

3. Wallace, R. *The Message Daniel: The Bible Speaks Today*
More detailed, technical study than first two but still has helpful insights.
4. Pawson, D. *Unlocking the Bible*: Collins. P 635-664.
Has interesting observations on history and nature of prophesy
5. Dever, M. *The Message of the Old Testament*: Illinois Crossway Books
Series of sermons each on a book of the Bible. P653-668. "Survival" Focuses on how kings change, but God is unchanging and sovereign but also how Daniel behaves – he is a survivor.
6. *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*: England Inter-Varsity Press

Bonus Material

The Articles of Religion state under Article 6 “of the sufficiency of the holy Scriptures for salvation” which books are considered part of Holy Scripture and necessary for salvation. It also goes on to say “And the other Books (*as Hierome saith*) the Church doth read for example of life and instruction of manners; but yet doth it not apply them to establish any doctrine; such are these following...” There are 14 books in this list and of these, three directly relate to Daniel and a fourth covers historical events prophesied about in Daniel.

- 1 Maccabees A lot of historical information that relates to 2nd Century events helps with reading Dan 8 and 11.
<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Maccabees+1&version=NRSV>
- The Story of Susanna
<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Susanna+1&version=NRSV>
- Of Bel and the Dragon
<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Bel+and+the+Dragon&version=NRSV>
- The song of the Three Children/Prayer of Azariah – Added after Dan 3:23
<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Prayer+of+Azariah+1&version=NRSV>

Book Structure

There are many ways to break up a book into sections. Doing so helps to get a sense of the whole and is worth creating your own. The more you study Daniel the more patterns and connections you find – it is a very well-constructed book that has a convincing unity.

Topic	Lang uage	Focus Theme	Ch	Vs	Section Title	Summary of Events	Key Vs	
Exile context	Hebrew	Kingdoms War, Unrighteous Exiled	1	1-2	Exiled	God gives Judah into Nebuchadnezzar's hands	v2 And the LORD Gave	
				3-16	Exception	God gives Daniel favour in officials eyes		
Dealing with Kings & Kingdoms	Aramaic	Human Kingdoms vs God's Kingdom	2	17-21	Exceptional	God gives Daniel knowledge superior to wise men	v44 Eternal Kingdom will come	
				1-13	Manic Request	Dream unknown, edict of death		
				14-30	Mystery Revealed	Daniel requests time to interpret		
				31-45	Meaning of Rock	Dream revealed and explained		
				46-49	Marvellous Response	Nebuchadnezzar responds in praise		
				1-7	Stupid Statue	All nations to worship golden statue		
		Worship Idol or God	3	Supernatural Salvation	8-18	Strong Stand	Nebuchadnezzar - no god can save you	v15 Who can save? (God Can!)
					19-30	Supernatural Salvation	Saved from fire, God praised by Nebuchadnezzar	
					1-3	Praise Declared	Nebuchadnezzar acknowledges God's kingdom	
		Proud King Humbled	4	Proud King Humbled	4-18	Profound Dream	Dream of Tree	v27 Repent or be humbled
					19-27	Prophetic Decree	Dream interpreted	
					28-36	Proud Debased	Dream fulfilled and acknowledges God	
1-9	Problem				Writing on the wall uninterpretable			
Proud King Judged	5	Proud King Judged	10-16	Proposition	Reward and fame if solve	v23 Aware but not humble, then judged		
			17-30	Proclamation	You knew but didn't humble self - Judged			
			1-9	Villains	Plot to overthrow Daniel even though righteous			
Dealing with Sin	Hebrew	Worship King or God	6	10-18	Victims	King and Daniel - Lions	vs26 His kingdom endures forever	
				19-28	Vindication	God Saves		
				1-8	Temporary Kings	4 Beasts represent kings		
		Human Kings vs God's King	7	Human Kings vs God's King	9-18	True King	1 Human eternal King	v14 True king established forever
					19-28	Trouble to Triumph	History's outcome is known	
					1-14	Defiance	Ram and Goat at war	
Dealing with Sin	Hebrew	Kingdoms War, Righteous Persecuted	8	15-27	Destroyed	Represent Persian and Greece	v25 persecute & prosper but destroyed in the end	
				1-19	Daniel Implores	Prays in light of Jeremiah - a return after 70 yrs		
		End to Sin, Everlasting Righteousness	9	End to Sin, Everlasting Righteousness	20-27	Daniel Instructed	Angel points to a greater, future fulfilment	v24 Problem of sin dealt with
					10:1-21	Revelation Received	Vision revealed and Angel visits Daniel	
					11:1-45	Rulers Rampage	Detailed explanation of future events	
Dealing with Sin	Hebrew	Kingdoms War, Righteous Resurrected	10-12	12:1-13	Righteous Resurrection	Result assured, be wise	12:1 Promise of resurrection	

Read Dan 1:17-21

5. In Vs2, 9 and 17 we see God's hand at work
 - a. What does God do?

 - b. What does this tell us about God?

Reflection

Vs 21 tells us that Daniel is in Babylon for a long time as Cyrus comes some 70 years later. Daniel lives faithfully and distinctively for the whole time. We today are called to live distinctively in the world whilst we wait for Christ to return. (1 Thes 1:9-10)

6. Living in our culture today, are there times you are tempted to say yes to the world when you should say no?
 - a. At work
 - b. Around your friends

7. Have you ever had to make a conscious decision to stand against the culture of the world, what happened?

8. How does knowing the LORD is behind history's events affect:
 - a. How you live each day?

 - b. Your hopes for the future?

Study 2 DANIEL 2: HUMAN KINGDOMS VS GOD'S KINGDOM

Introduction

Nebuchadnezzar is early in his reign, having conquered the world (literally). Would it last? Would his reign continue? Nebuchadnezzar was religious, having prayed to the god Marduk for success when he first became king, then later, he has a dream. Babylonians believed dreams were communication from the gods, and so he would be anxious to know its meaning.

Discuss

What control do we have over the future?

Investigate

Read Dan 2:1-13

1. Nebuchadnezzar's mind was troubled (vs 1). He engages his astrologers/wise men to assist, is his behaviour towards them reasonable? How would you summarise Nebuchadnezzar's character?
2. What do we learn about the astrologers? Particularly from vs 10-11.

Read Dan 2:14-30

3. How is Daniel's response in vs14-18 different to that of the astrologers?
4. Daniel praises God in vs20-23. What does he say about God's character?
5. What do we learn in vs 27-30?
 - a. About Daniel?
 - b. About God?

Read Dan 2:31-49

6. According to vs 37 it is God who has given Nebuchadnezzar his authority.
 - a. Does this surprise you? Why/why not?

 - b. What might God therefore expect of Nebuchadnezzar? (Hint: Note how similar the language is to Gen 1:27-28)¹

7. Daniel was under the rule of an impressive king who had attacked God's people, yet he submits to that rule with wisdom and tact. Today as we live in society what should our attitude be towards those in authority?
 - a. Romans 13:1-2
 - b. 1 Peter 2:13-17

8. Much is written about the historical kings and kingdoms mentioned in this dream². However, as the mystery is revealed, the climax is actually in vs44. How is this kingdom different to the others in the dream?

Reflection

Daniel 2 shows us that we should be looking forward to an eternal kingdom to be set up. From our vantage point in history we can see that God's progressive revelation culminated in Jesus:

- has come to earth and dwelt amongst us (compare to astrologer's view Vs10-11)
- arrives in Mark saying the kingdom of God is near (Mark 1:15)
- applies to himself, idea of a stone from heaven, not cut by human hands which brings down all human kingdoms and ushers in God's eternal kingdom. (Luke 20:18)
- now sits at God's right hand with all authority and power under him (Eph 1:19-23)

In Jesus, this eternal kingdom has been established.

9. What does the vision given to Nebuchadnezzar tell us about God, his sovereignty, and his plans?

10. In what ways does this encourage/challenge you in your faith today?

Study 3 DANIEL 3: WORSHIP IDOL OR GOD?

Introduction

Wisdom in the bible is not based on intellectual clarity, it is based on rightly acknowledging the LORD (Pr 1:7). Foolishness is saying in the heart there is no God (Ps 14:1). This wise/foolish response to God and his kingdom is contrasted throughout the book of Daniel. In Daniel 3 being wise means worshipping God alone, not a man-made statue (foolish), but that is easier said than done.

Discuss

What ideas, habits and beliefs do modern Christians have that brings them into open conflict with those around them? Which of these would you fight for?

Investigate

In Jer 29:4-7 they are told to settle into life in Babylon and make the city prosper! In Dan 1 we see they accept some things but not all. They are now in a position of authority under the king (Dan 2:49), this makes them visible and vulnerable.

1. Do you think it would have been easy for a Jew to live in Babylon?

Read Dan 3:1-7

2. Nebuchadnezzar “sets up”¹ a stunning and expensive statue.
 - a. Why is this an arrogant thing to do? (compare with Gen 11, Psalm 2)
 - b. Note that in vs 6 a furnace is pre-prepared for those who dissent. What does that imply about Nebuchadnezzar’s character and his plans for having everyone worship his statue?

Read Dan 3:8-18

3. Why might the astrologers “dob” in Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego?
4. How do you view Nebuchadnezzar’s character throughout this episode? (compare vs 1, 13, 15)

5. Did Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego have a choice in their response to the king? Why/why not?

Read Dan 3:19-30

6. Who do you find yourself identifying with during this story? Are you faithful like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego or proud like Nebuchadnezzar?
7. Clearly God did not have to save Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, but he did. What was the result?

Reflection

Reading Matt 4:8-11 there is an interesting parallel to Daniel 3. In Matthew we see Jesus taken to the top of the world and shown the kingdoms – if only you will worship me. Tempting Jesus to bypass the cross to gain the world. Whilst Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were faithful and resisted worshipping the statue, Jesus is the ultimate example to us in being faithful and worshipping God alone.

8. Looking at Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, how are we called to be faithful today?
 - a. Luke 9:18-27
 - b. 2 Tim 3:12
 - c. 1 Pet 4:12-19
9. A statue is unlikely to cause us to deny God today, but what other things might tempt us into idolatry?
10. When the time comes and your faith is put under pressure, how will you maintain faithfulness to God?

Study 4 DANIEL 4: PROUD KING HUMBLED

Introduction

The size and scale of Nebuchadnezzar's building projects was simply staggering. He built the hanging gardens of Babylon, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, over 50 temples and a city the size of Chicago with walls thick enough to have two chariots run side by side. The Ishtar Gate was made with some 15 million blue tiles and of it he said: "I placed wild bulls and ferocious dragons in the gateways and thus adorned them with luxurious splendour so that people might gaze on them in wonder." He had every right to be proud of his efforts.

Discuss

How would you describe to others what God has done for you in Jesus?

Investigate

Read Dan 4:1-3

1. Whilst reading note the use of first person ("I") by Nebuchadnezzar (vs 4). What impact does it have on the narrative?
2. Compare 4:1-3 with chapter 3. How is this proclamation different?

Read Dan 4:4-18

3. What is the purpose of the dream (vs 17)?

Read Dan 4:19-27

4. Complete the table below

	Dream Element		Interpretation
V9-12		V20-22	
V13-14		V23-26	
V15-16			

5. Daniel's response reveals something of his attitude to the king
 - a. What do you notice about how Daniel delivers this message? vs 19 & 27.

 - b. Is Daniel's advice to the king in vs 27 good? (Compare with Jonah 3 the Assyrian/Ninevites response)

6. Daniel is not judgemental, but thoughtful in his use of words and attitude to the King. Delivering this message was no easy task. Daniel is an example to us. How do you share the gospel message today? Are you as careful and loving with your words?¹

Read Dan 4:28-37

7. A year passes (Vs 28-30) what is wrong with Nebuchadnezzar's words? What happens next?

8. What does Nebuchadnezzar acknowledge about God's character and His kingdom? How does this compare to previous comments from him?

Reflection

In Daniel so far, we have seen that God delegates authority to kings (Dan 2:37) and he expects them to acknowledge His overarching rule, live humbly and rule wisely. We also see that God is not just the God of the Jews but of the whole world and can humble the proud no matter how great they are, for example Pharaoh and now Nebuchadnezzar.

9. In what ways are we tempted to be proud and ignore God?

10. Read Phil 2:5-11. Comparing this to Daniel Ch 4.
 - a. How is Jesus' attitude different? (vs 5-8)
 - b. How does God respond? (vs 9-11)
 - c. What does this imply for us? (vs 10 - 11)

Study 5 DANIEL 5: PROUD KING JUDGED

Introduction

It is the year 539BC and the Persian army is camped outside Babylon and have been attacking the city for some time. Belshazzar was acting ruler whilst Nabonidus was away on campaigns. As we come to Daniel 5, it is a holiday dedicated to the gods of Babylon – what will the king do in this situation?

Discuss

Can you recount an example where someone failed to learn the lessons of history? Why did they fail to do so?

Investigate

Read Dan 5:1-9

1. Belshazzar throws a massive party (more than 1000 guests). What is the significance of vs 2-4? What shows you about his attitude to God?

Read Dan 5:10-16

2. There are several responses to this writing on the wall recorded in the narrative so far. What impression do you form of
 - a. Belshazzar?
 - b. The Queen?

Read Dan 5:17-30

Daniel recounts events from Ch 4 which are now some 20 to 30+ years ago. Daniel's tone towards Belshazzar seems more direct when compared to how he spoke to Nebuchadnezzar in Dan 4:27

3. What does God expect of Belshazzar? (vs 21, 23)
4. How does Belshazzar respond to Daniel's interpretation? How does this compare to Nebuchadnezzar's response in Dan 4?

5. The writing pronounces judgement which then happens that night! Do you think this judgement of Belshazzar is fair? Why/why not?

Reflection

Belshazzar had a witness according to Daniel – the events in chapter 4, he failed to learn from history and hardened his heart in pride and was judged. His response was foolish in that he ignored God. What is true of a foreign King, is also true for God's people, we too are to learn from the past.

Read Heb 3:1-2 and 7-19

6. These verses recount Israel's history in Numbers 14. What are we called to do considering this history?

Daniel lived a long time in Babylon, and by now he is an old man (70-80yrs). He has lived faithfully, performing his duties, day in, day out, year after year, serving first under Nebuchadnezzar, then Belshazzar and now Cyrus. Whilst this and other chapters in Daniel are very dramatic, they represent only a few days out of all this time (9 events). In that regard he is a witness to us.

7. How do you keep living a faithful life during the "normal" routine of life?

8. How do you do so over a long period of time?

Study 6 DANIEL 6: WORSHIP KING OR GOD?

Introduction

In the year 539BC Babylon is captured by the Medes and Persians. (Dan 5:31) Darius¹, (also known as Cyrus) comes to rule. This is a shift in power from the Babylonians to the Medes and Persians as predicted in Chapter 2 (Gold head to Silver chest). Even so, Daniel is still in the service of the king.

Discuss

Belief in God costs something, particularly when the world is in opposition to Jesus. Discuss how you have seen principle in action.

Investigate

Read Dan 6:1-9

1. What does vs 4-5 tell us about Daniel's way of life and integrity? Can the same be said of you?
2. Why might Darius have agreed to the proposed edict?
3. In pronouncing this edict, Darius is setting himself up against God. Given the previous chapters what do you expect will happen to him?

Read Dan 6:10-18

4. Did Daniel have a choice in his response to this edict? What was at stake?
5. Daniel goes home and prays immediately after hearing the edict! Why would he do that?
6. How would you describe the behaviour of the chief ministers and satraps?

7. In the table below, for the two chapters, compare the attitudes and responses of the following people.

	Dan 3:12-15	Dan 6:15-18
Officials		
King		
God's people		

Read Dan 6:19-28

8. Daniel was saved because he was innocent and righteous vs 21-23. Can this be applied to Christians in general? Why/why not?
9. In vs 23-28 Darius now issues a new decree. How does this relate to the themes we have seen in Daniel so far?

Reflection

Looking at history we see the folly of worshipping idols or man (no matter how impressive). Rather we must worship the true God regardless of the cost. Even a pagan king can see God is able to save and has an eternal kingdom! There are patterns between Daniel 6 and Jesus. Daniel is righteous, targeted by officials, prays, delivered over to death, put in a sealed "tomb", but is delivered by God's power. So too Jesus, who is targeted by the Sanhedrin, prays in Gethsemane, delivered over to death via Pontius pilot, killed, put in a tomb, and raised to life by God's power.

Read 1 Peter 5:6-11

10. How are we to live today considering God's eternal plan in Jesus?

Study 7 DANIEL 7: HUMAN KINGS VS GOD'S KING

Introduction

First year of Belshazzar (~550BC). The chapters are out of chronological order for a reason. The focus shifts to Daniel's dreams rather than the king's dreams and from current events to the distant future.

Discuss

Are God's kingdom purposes advanced by human power? Why/why not?

Investigate

Read Dan 7:1-8

1. Complete the following table, what do you notice?

Vs	Beast	What given/told
4		
5		
6		
7		

Read Dan 7:9-18

2. Vs 9-10 paints a majestic scene, what event is about to happen?
3. Who ultimately gives authority to the beasts? Given chapters 1-6 is this a surprise?
4. Compare the human figure/son of man with the beasts/kings, how are they different?
5. In vs13-14 the son of man comes into God's presence and is worshipped². What does this tell us about this person? Who can do this?

6. Daniel is told in vs18 that the people of God receive the kingdom. How do you reconcile this statement with vs 14? (Hint: Eph 1:19-23)

Read Dan 7:19-28

7. Daniel wants to know more, what is the outcome of the war against God's people? (conclusion in vs26-27)

The son of man

8. Who is the enigmatic son of man? With the advantage of history, we have the gospels and Jesus's words. How does he use this phrase in relation to himself?
 - a. Mark 2:10, 2:28,
 - b. Mark 8:31, 8:38, 10:45,
 - c. Mark 14:61-62
 - d. Matt 28:18-20

Reflection

The warning here is not to get lost in the details and focus on mapping to events and rulers in history – though it can be done there are multiple options. The point of the passage is that the outcome is known. Human rule will fail, and God's plans will be established and in that, Daniel can put his trust despite what he sees around him. Rule that does not recognise that it has been delegated from God is beastly and will be judged.

9. Whilst Daniel could see this, we have seen Jesus' death and resurrection since. How does this encourage us as we face uncertainty and trouble today?

Study 8 DANIEL 9: END TO SIN, EVERLASTING RIGHTEOUSNESS

Introduction

It is the first year of Darius' (Cyrus) rule (~539BC) and Daniel is studying the scriptures, that is reading Jeremiah (most likely Jer 29). There he reads that after 70 years God would restore his people to the land. Imagine reading these words after having lived faithfully in exile all that time – it would be exciting to dare to hope that God would act in his lifetime.

Discuss

Have you ever held onto a hope for a long time and then came to a point where it might be met? What was it like?

Investigate

Read Dan 9:1-19

1. How does Daniel approach God in prayer?

Daniel's prayer is marked by two things, confession in vs 4-14 and petition in vs 15-19.

2. Using the table below what do you learn about God and Israel in Daniels Confession vs 4-14?

vs	God	Israel
4-6		
7-8		
9-14		

3. What can we learn about true confession from this section?

4. In vs 15-19 Daniel petitions God.
 - a. What does he ask for?

b. Upon what basis does he ask for this?

5. As Christians, is praying any different today?

Read Dan 9:20-27

Vs 23 talks of understanding the vision. Daniel has been reading Jeremiah and wanting an end to the exile. However, Gabriel points out that God's purposes in history go beyond the return from exile and so Daniel needs to think beyond the seventy years of Jeremiah to seventy sevens (some bibles use weeks).

6. In vs 24 the climax to God's purposes will occur when several things are achieved - what are they?

7. How might Daniel have interpreted the events and times predicted? What sense of the future history could he make of it?¹

8. How is Gabriel's response an answer to Daniel's prayer? Why is this answer sufficient?

Reflection

When reading the Bible, we see that God's redemptive purposes started in Genesis and continue throughout the Old Testament, finding their fulfilment in Jesus (2 Cor 1:20). As we look back to Jesus, we can see that the list of things in vs 24 have happened in a complete way. We are fortunate to be able to do so. Daniel had to look forward in faith, not receiving the things promised in his lifetime.

Read Heb 11:13-16 & 12:1-3

9. How are people like Daniel meant to be a witness to us?

10. How are we to respond?

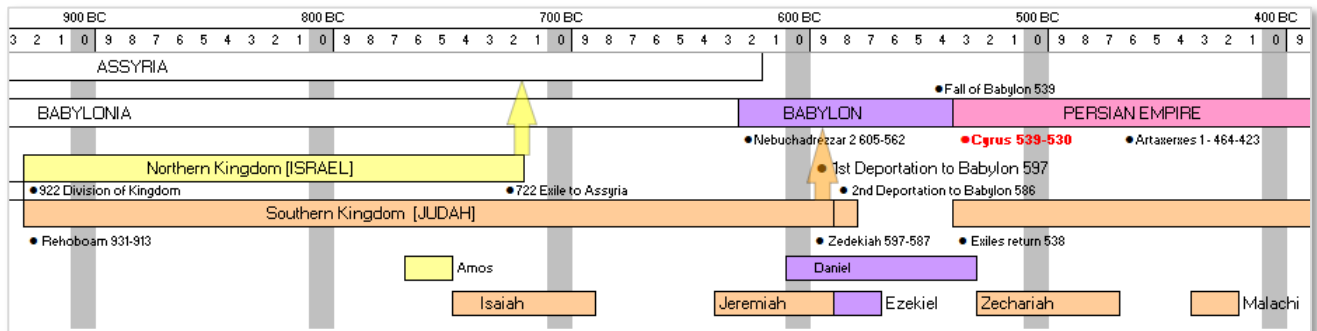
Study 9 DANIEL 10-12: KINGDOMS WAR, RIGHTEOUS RESURRECTED

Discuss

Does it matter if you believe God is at work in historical processes? Why/Why not?

Introduction

Dan 1:21 we are told that Daniel lives to see Cyrus arrive. Cyrus captures Babylon in 539 BC. He is a benevolent king and seeks to stabilise his empire. The bible mentions Cyrus in a couple of places in relation to God's plans, so we will start with a review of these.



Approximate timing of events/prophets

Part 1 – Background

Read Isaiah 45:1-6 & 13.

1. Written some 150 years prior to the capture of Babylon by Persia, how is Cyrus described?

Read Ezra 1:1-4.

2. What part does God play in these events?

3. How does Cyrus describe himself and his role in the Israelites return? How does he compare to Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel?

Read Jer 29:10-14

4. Based on these passages what do you think the people returning to the promised land expect/hope for?

Read Dan 10:1-3

Note the timing. It is now the third year of Cyrus. By now, the Jews who returned home had begun work on rebuilding the temple (Ezra 3:8), and messages could well have returned to Daniel who remained behind that things were progressing.

5. Prior to Daniel receiving this revelation from God, what might Daniel expect/hope for, particularly considering the dreams/visions in Ch 2, 7 and 8?

Part 2 – Study

Read Dan 10:3-11:1

6. There is a lot of dramatic detail in this passage, what are we told about:
 - a. Daniels initial response to the revelation? (vs 2-3)
 - b. What the message was about? (vs14, 20-21)

Summary Chapter 11

If you have time read whole chapter, but otherwise it describes the future kings of Persia and Greece and how they deal with each other in detail (intrigue, marriage, deaths, wars)¹. Each period of trouble is only for a time and the kings come and go.

7. Read 11:31-35. What will happen in the future to God's people? How is this different to what Daniel has experienced in his lifetime?

Read Dan 12:1-4

This passage provides the clearest description of resurrection in the Old Testament.

8. Given Ch 11 why might this be an important message? What hope does it provide for Daniel?

Reflection

Daniel received a revelation but was told to seal it up Dan 12:4. Many years later we read of another revelation given to John. His revelation contains wars and points to future events using similar language. Interestingly in Rev 22:10 he is told to **not** seal up the words.

9. Our hope in the resurrection is sure given Jesus' ministry (John 5:24-30), how does that help you to endure in your faith?

Supporting Notes

Study 1:

1. Babylonia is another name for the land of Shinar, is also found in Gen 11 – the tower of Babel where man sought to make a name for themselves without God.
2. Food offered to idols unlikely (all food was offered to the gods in Babylon and this is a new testament issue), if unclean animals then why the drink as well, points to becoming dependant on and obliged to and Daniel resolving not to join them. Compare to 2Kings 25:27-30 we see king Jehoiachin eating at kings table – assimilation completed.

Study 2:

1. God is king of all the earth. He delegated/appointed authority to mankind in Gen 1:27-28 to rule. In Dan 2 we see similar language applied to a foreign King, the implication being that just as Adam was called to exercise the rule of God so too was Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel should therefore seek to honour and obey this king. Note: God given responsibility comes with expectations and any king or kingdom that sets itself up independently of God will be swept away like chaff (Dan 2:35).
2. Historically people look to map the statue to kings/kingdoms. Typically: Head of Gold = Babylonian, Body of Silver = Medes and Persian, Belly/Thighs of bronze = Greek and Feet of Iron and Clay = Roman empires. However, depending on other parts of Daniel and what you want to map events to, other options are possible. This seems to depend on your presuppositions and world view, something to be aware of if you explore this topic and wonder why there are so many different answers.

Study 3:

1. Sets up. This phrase is repeated many times in chapter 3 (vs 1,2,3,5,7,12,14,18) The repetition makes it sound comical (try reading out loud), but interestingly it also provides a contrast to Dan 2:44 where God will “Set up” a kingdom that will never be destroyed.

Study 4:

1. This question is prompted by Helm, D. *Daniel for you*: chapter 9. Helm focuses on how Daniel approaches telling a powerful (and sometimes quick to react) king bad news. He explores Daniel’s tender heart (wanting the best for Nebuchadnezzar), his honesty (he identifies the king as the subject of the dream), his bravery – “he didn’t shirk from speaking Gods’ word into the life of the most powerful man in the world” p78. It is also a witness to us in how we are to share the good news today.

Study 5:

1. Belshazzar had a witness according to Daniel – the events in chapter 4, he failed to learn from history and hardened his heart in pride. He is not unique in this regard; it is the human condition.

Study 6:

1. Darius being another name for Cyrus is possible, though other views exist if you read commentaries.
2. There is a broad pattern in Daniel²:
 - a. God’s people believe in God and primary allegiance is to him. They depend on him

² Reid, A. *Kingdoms in Conflict* p131-133

- b. God's people will meet opposition
- c. God hears his peoples suffering and will vindicate them

This pattern is seen in Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, and Daniel and it is also seen in Jesus. Jesus was faithful to God at all times, was envied by the chief priests who sought to trap him, prayed on the eve of his betrayal, brought before Pilate who sympathised but failed to stop the plan, was handed over to death, placed in a cave that was sealed, three days later was vindicated and resurrected.

Study 7:

1. It is easy to read this from our perspective and so assume it is the son of man coming in the clouds to earth. But this does not match the text. In vs 13-14 this person approaches the Ancient of Days, not us!

Study 8:

1. Today people are quick to analyse the times and events looking to match things precisely. (Just google and you will be met with many opinions). Yet Daniel could not do this as it was in the future. However, it does provide him with comfort as it shows that God is in control of the times and events. Whilst they may be turbulent and enigmatic, his purposes will be achieved and no opposition, however grand, will stop them. In this regard it is easy to overlook Dan 9:24 which is far more important statement - the end of sin!

Study 9:

1. Many say this prophesy (and the one in chapter 8) is too detailed and amazingly accurate and so the only possible explanation is that it was written AFTER the events occurred (approx. 2nd century BC). It is worth reading the apocryphal book 1 Maccabees as it provides names and details of events. This is where it is worth being aware of people's presuppositions – if you believe in an all-powerful God then prophecy is no issue. But if you do not, then prophesy is very problematic and must be minimised or explained away. Denying prophecy is dangerous as the Bible “becomes a set of guidelines on what man must do rather than what God has done”³.

³ Pawson, D. *Unlocking the Bible* p637