

# *Daniel*

## *"Godliness through Struggle"*

### **Background Information**

The book is named for the prophet who is its principle character.

Unlike most prophets, Daniel gave prophecies *directly* to both Jews and Gentiles.

The name Daniel means "God is my Judge."

Much of the middle portion of the book was written in Aramaic, which is similar to Hebrew, but was more widely used, especially in economic and political discussions.

The book clearly has the Babylonian exile as its major historical backdrop.

### **Time Covered and Outline**

Daniel was deported to Babylon as a young man (most scholars suggest he was about 15), and lived in Babylon for the remainder of his life. His prophecies cover a long range of time, about 70 years, and he prophesied under two major world empires: the Babylonians and the Medo-Persians (see Daniel 2 and 6:1-2).

The book contains many visions and prophecies, but outlining the book is quite simple. The following outline is taken from *The MacArthur Bible Handbook*, pages 220-221.

- I. The Personal Background of Daniel (chapter 1)
  - A. Conquest of Jerusalem (1:1-2)
  - B. Conscription of Jews for Training (1:3-7)
  - C. Courage of Four Men During Trials (1:8-16)
  - D. Choice of Four Men for Royal Positions (1:17-21)
- II. The Prophet Course of Gentile Dominion (chapters 2-7)
  - A. Dilemmas of Nebuchadnezzar (2:1-4:37)
  - B. Debauchery and Demise of Belshazzar (5:1-31)
  - C. Deliverance of Daniel (6:1-28)
  - D. Dream of Daniel (7:1-28)
- III. The Prophetic Course of Israel's Destiny (chapters 8-12)
  - A. Prophecy of the Ram and Male Goat (8:1-27)
  - B. Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks (9:1-27)
  - C. Prophecy of Israel's Humiliation and Restoration (10:1-12:13)

### **Major Themes**

God's sovereignty

The coming Messiah

Visions of the church

The rise and fall of world empires

## God's Character in Daniel

Merciful (9:9)

Powerful (3:17)

Providence (4:29-31)

Righteous (9:7)

True (4:37)

Wise (2:20-22)

Wrathful (9:16)

## Jesus in Daniel

Many prophecies in Daniel deal with Jesus as well as His Church. Jesus is "One like the Son of Man" (7:13; Matthew 16:26), but would also be cut off (9:25-26).

The vision of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2 is one of the clearest predictions of the church in the entire Old Testament, and even gives us a historical timeframe for when it was to be built.

## Key Words in Daniel

Vision (Hebrew *chazon*); from a word that meant "to see." 8:1; 8:13; 8:15; 8:26; 9:21; 9:24; 11:14

Interpretation (Aramaic *peshar*); literally, "to untie." 2:6; 2:30; 4:7; 4:18; 5:7; 5:15; 5:17; 7:16

## Elsewhere in the World...

Confucius, the Chinese philosopher, was a historical contemporary of Daniel, being born during the lifetime of Daniel and beginning to teach around Asia.

## Elsewhere in Scripture...

Since Daniel lived such a long time and had such a long time of work, his book overlaps with several others. Daniel 1-2 occurred just before the rebellion of King Jehoiakim (2 Kings 24).

The rest of Daniel, which occurred further in his life, is contemporary with the work of Ezekiel, and leads to just before the decree of Cyrus, recorded in the final verses of 2 Chronicles and first verses of Ezra 1.