



Series: Bible Survey

Lesson: 40–41. Daniel

- **Introduction**

- Author: Daniel

- Taken to Babylon as a youth of noble birth during the first deportation (605 BC) to be assimilated for service to the king
 - Became a well-respected official for multiple kings in two different empires
 - Confirmed as a prophet and as the author of the book by Christ in Matt. 24:15
 - Known for his wisdom and righteousness (cf. Ezek. 14:14, 20; 28:3)

- Date: Covers events and prophecies from 605–536 BC

- Context:

- Daniel began his ministry from Babylon when Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and Habakkuk were all still prophesying right before and after the fall of Jerusalem, but he is the lone prophetic voice that continues throughout the Exile.

The pause on Israel's time as the focus of redemptive history begins early in his ministry, and though Israel will still receive attention after the Exile, the focus is shifting toward how God is working through other nations of the world (paving the way for the 'mystery' that is the Church spreading through them).

- WARNING: Avoid these two errors studying Daniel:

- Getting so caught up in the obvious moral examples of the first half that you miss the larger theological points
- Getting so caught up in the details and debates about the eschatology of the last half that you miss the larger theological points

- Main themes:

- God is in control of _____...
- ...and bringing it to His _____

- **Narratives of _____ in Exile (1–6)**
 - Most of the narratives serve to show examples of faith under Gentile rule and how God was protecting and preserving His faithful people.
 - They are careful to show God's role so no one assumes the people are the heroes.
 - These were chances for God to make Himself known on a global scale without Christ's First Advent and completed canon to testify about Him.
 - Nebuchadnezzar missed the point of his vision from chapter 2:
 - The vision was showing that his empire was just one of many and that God would ultimately supersede them all.
 - Instead, he latches onto one detail that leads to chapter 3...
 - What was Nebuchadnezzar's _____?
 - Other texts show him to be violent with no recognition of God when destroying His people, city, and Temple.
 - Having visions for others to interpret creates some parallels with Pharaoh, and he is clearly self-absorbed, even if he respects 'the God of the Jews' during the first three chapters.
 - Nonetheless, chapter 4 seems to be an account of God humbling the mightiest king on earth to lead him to actual repentance and conversion, though it's difficult to be certain.

- **Apocalyptic Visions of the _____ (7–12)**

- Apocalypse: a revelation by God during a time of persecution or major crisis concerning future events given through a mediator to a human messenger to teach about His eschatological triumph over human powers that relies heavily on symbols and numerology (via Miller & Hansen).
- Antiochus IV (Epiphanes) vs. the _____
 - Passages that speak of a great enemy arising from the Greek Empire refer to the former (i.e., ch's 8 & 11), a great persecutor of the Jews who tried to annihilate them after doing everything he could to restrict and defile their worship.
 - Passages that speak of a great enemy arising after the Roman Empire refer to the latter (i.e., ch7; see also 9 & 12) because he will arise at the end of the 'times of the Gentiles' (cf. Luke 21:24).
 - The reason Daniel alternates between them and uses the same 'little horn' imagery for them is because Antiochus IV points toward the Antichrist in an evil form of typology that plays throughout human history.
 - Daniel's Jewish brethren are supposed to be prepared for persecutions to come that will keep escalating until the final one by the Antichrist, but God will always deliver them until the final time when the Messiah sets up the Kingdom.

- Who does Daniel encounter at the beginning of chapter 10?
 - Some see the similarities between the description of this being and Daniel's reaction in verses 5–9 compared to other passages and conclude that this was a _____.
 - Others see the messenger's apparent difficulty with demonic forces and need for Michael's help in the rest of the chapter as proof that this must just be a particularly impressive angel.
 - Those who believe the beginning describes Christ see a second person, an angel, waking Daniel up in verse 10 and relaying messages for Christ.
- Chapter 11 is a remarkably specific prophecy of Greek affairs leading to and including Antiochus IV so there would be no doubt when he arrived about who he was, what was happening, and God's knowledge of it.
- Chapter 12 seems to be a continuation of chapter 11's prophecy, but the details show it is an example of prophetic escalation.

- Much is stated about the _____ (cf. ch's 7, 9, 12) that is picked up on and expanded by Jesus in the Gospels (e.g., Matt. 24), building toward Revelation.
 - There are too many specific details, numbers, etc. that need to be accounted for and wouldn't otherwise be consistent with how specific the rest of the book is for those parts to be figurative.
 - There are some details that are admittedly difficult, but careful cross-reference with the rest of Scripture shows there are still specific referents for them.
- Despite all the details of persecutions to come, the focus is the header to the section in chapter 7: the ultimate outcome of the Ancient of Days giving the Kingdom to the Son of Man.
 - All of human history is moving toward that event.
 - All trials and persecutions to come are supposed to be endured in the hope that that is the end of the story.

Discussion:

1. What is the value of human examples in Scripture when the hero is always God?
2. Why would God give visions to pagan kings?
3. Why is so much detail and weight given in Scripture to the Tribulation if we're not going to be around for it?
4. How should we watch the news in light of Daniel?

FOR REFLECTION: How are you being called to stand up to an ungodly culture? Is your hope in the future strengthening you to do it?

Blanks: human history, appointed end, Faithfulness, spiritual, Future, Antichrist, theophany, Tribulation