

Daniel

Context

Historical Context

- Daniel's name means "God is my judge"
- Ezekiel referred to Daniel as being "*righteous and wise*"
- Hebrews 11:32-33 refers to Daniel as one of, "*the prophets who through faith stopped the mouths of lions.*"
- Book of Daniel spans the length of the entire Babylonian Exile
- Daniel taken captive to Babylon in 605 BC
- Babylonians later conquered by the Medes & Persians
- Chronology of the historical narrative: ch. 1-4, 7, 8, 5, 9, 6

Redemptive-Historical Context

- The people of God captured by the Gentiles
- The people of God persecuted and afflicted by the Gentiles
- Who sovereignly rules the earth?

Key Theme

The Most High, the God of Daniel, sovereignly reigns and rules supreme over all mankind. Therefore His people are brave in the face of persecution.

"The Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he wills." Daniel 4:25

Message

- God is God over all peoples of the earth, not just the Jews.
- God has humbled even the great king Nebuchadnezzar, conqueror of Judah.

Daniel 4 & 5 - The Most High Rules; All Others Are Humbled

- Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a tree
- Belshazzar's vision of writing on the wall

Daniel 3 & 6 - The Persecuted People of God Are Brave

- Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace
- Daniel in the lion's den

Daniel 2, 7 & 8- The Kingdom of Christ

- Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a large statue crushed by a rock
- Daniel's dream of four beasts and the Ancient of Days

Daniel 1 & 9 - Exile and Return

- Daniel and his friend stay faithful during the exile
- Yahweh is faithful to bring His people back from exile
- The true return from exile is accomplished by _____ alone

Daniel 10-12 - The Future of the People of God

- Predictive prophecies about the future of the people of God

How does Daniel speak to our life as exiles in this world?

- Chapters 4 & 5 - People who set themselves up against the Most High will be humbled, to their everlasting benefit or regret.
- Chapters 3 & 6 - Remain steadfast as servants of a sovereign Lord even when you suffer persecution and opposition for your faith.
- Chapters 2, 7 & 8 - The earthly kingdoms/powers around us are passing away. Learn from Daniel's hope in God and thank God for the end of exile because of Christ.
- Chapters 10-12 - Look to the eternal reward that is waiting for followers of the Most High when we arrive at our final home with God.

A Study Outline for Daniel

I. Chapter 1-9 – God alone is sovereign; His people are afflicted by pseudo-sovereigns

A. Ch. 1 – Exile; People of God afflicted

B. Ch. 2 – Four empires brought low by God's king (type in history)

C. Ch. 3 – King sets himself up as god;
People of God afflicted

D. Ch. 4 – Nebuchadnezzar brought low

D. Ch. 5 – Belshazzar brought low

C. Ch. 6 – King sets himself up as god;
People of God afflicted

B. Ch. 7 – Four empires brought low by God's king (eschatological)

B. Ch. 8 – Four empires brought low

A. Ch. 9 – Return from Exile; Messiah afflicted

II. Chapter 10-12 – Visions of the future

Discussion

1. What are some of the images the world sets up and demands that we conform and bow down to?

How do we keep the commandment “you shall have no other gods before me?”

2. In what ways are you acting in pride towards God? How could you humble yourself before him?
3. The physical exile of God’s people merely reflected an ongoing spiritual exile. Read 1 Peter 1:1. What does Peter mean by calling believers “*strangers in the world?*”

What does it mean to live in the world as an exile—and yet still live in the world?

For Further Study & Meditation

- I. What does Daniel teach us about God?

God is merciful - 9:9

God is powerful - 3:17, 4:35

God is provident - 4:29, 31, 37

God is righteous - 9:7, 16

God is true - 4:37

God is wise - 2:20-22

God is wrathful - 9:16

- II. Christ in Daniel

1. The stone that became a great mountain - 2:35

2. Kingdom as standing forever and consuming all other kingdoms - 2:44

3. Coming Messiah who shall be cut off - 9:25, 26

Daniel identifies date - triumphal entry

4. None like the *Son of Man* - 7:13

Christ used this title himself in Matt 16:26, 19:28, 26:64

Humanity of Jesus, one who approaches Almighty God and is given universal authority.