

**The Book of Daniel:**  
**“His Kingdom Cannot Fail”**



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# Introduction to Daniel

## More than Children's Stories

### Historical Background:

- Divided Kingdoms after the reign of King Solomon (1 Kings 12:16-24)
  - Israel in the North (King Jeroboam)
  - Judah in the South
- Fall of Israel (Northern Kingdom) to Assyria in 722 BC; Judah spared (2 Kings 19)
- Fall of Judah to Babylon in three waves:
  - 605 BC (deportation)
  - 597 BC & 586 BC (destruction)
- Fall of Babylon to Medes & Persians
- Return to build Temple (Ezra; Haggai)
- Return to build Wall (Nehemiah)

### Overview of the Man:

- The name "Daniel" means "God is Judge (or Prince)." That's significant, as it corresponds with the content of the book.
- Daniel witnessed the fall of Judah in 605BC
- Daniel was taken to Babylon as the spoils of war as just a teenager; separated from family; a refugee.
- Daniel served under Nebuchadnezzar, the Great King of Babylon
- Daniel served under Cyrus, the Persian King prophesied in Isaiah 44:28 and 45:1
- Daniel served under Darius, the Median King
- Daniel saw great changes—the entire 70 year captivity, from 605 to 536
- Daniel was a contemporary of Jeremiah & Ezekiel as a teen & Zechariah & Haggai as an old man
- Daniel is noted as a man of "high esteem" (9:23; 10:11, 19). His conviction, courage, and confidence in God are exemplary.
- Daniel received prophecies, but he wasn't a "prophet proper," in the sense of the call of God to the prophetic office (cp. Isaiah & Jeremiah).

## Overview of the Book:

- Daniel is sometimes thought of as a children’s book, full of children’s stories:



- Daniel is actually a very “mature”—and very difficult—book of prophecy.
- Daniel is the “Apocalyptic” Prophecy of the OT
  - Revelation is its NT counterpart
  - Apocalypse (from Revelation 1:1) is “revelation” of things to come”
  - They are highly symbolic
  - They focus on visions (used 32x in Daniel)
  - They deal with the end of the age & beginning of eternity
  - They are written to encourage afflicted saints by assuring them of God’s present and future reign. They are meant to comfort, not confuse—for edification, not debate.
- At only 12 chapters, Daniel is the smallest of the Major Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel are the others)
- Daniel 1-6 is generally 6 historical narratives, while Daniel 7-12 is 4 prophetic visions
  - 6 chapters of deliverance in history (stories)
  - 6 chapters of deliverance in prophecy (visions)
- Daniel was written in Hebrew & Aramaic
- Daniel is referred to by Ezekiel (14:14, 20; 28:3) and Jesus (Matt 24:15; Mark 13:14).

# Thematic Overview of Daniel

## “His Kingdom Cannot Fail”

### 1. Historical Theme: God rules over Kings and Kingdoms

#### A. God rules through ordinary providence

- Kings are appointed by God (1:2; 2:21, 37, etc.)
  - “King” occurs 190 times; “kingdom” 69 times
- Psalm 75:5-7; Proverbs 21:1; Romans 13:1-7

#### B. God rules through amazing miracles

- God can break the rules of time & nature to accomplish His will in a visible, significant way
  - Humbling kings
  - Prophesying rulers with great specificity
  - Closing the mouths of lions & fires

#### C. God rules without rival

- God’s enemies—whether Antiochus or Antichrist—are no challenge to Him
- Antichrist will be no more successful than Antiochus

Robert D. Bell – *“The book of Daniel is a divinely inspired philosophy of history. Furthermore, the theme of the book is God’s control over history.” (The Theological Messages of the Old Testament Books, 355)*

W. Graham Scroggie – *“The book of Daniel is the greatest book in the Bible on godless kingdoms and the kingdom of God.” (Know Your Bible, 199)*

John F. Walvoord – *“Among the great prophetic books of Scripture, none provides a more comprehensive and chronological prophetic view of the broad movement of history than the book of Daniel.” (Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation, 7)*

### 2. Redemptive Theme: God’s King will rule for eternity (7:13-14).

#### A. The Kingdom is for Earth & Heaven

- It replaces a representative series of earthly kingdoms (2:44-45; 7:17-18, 27)

Michael Barrett – *“If the image represented earthly kingdoms, the only thing that can replace it is an earthly kingdom.” (God’s Unfailing Purpose, 87)*

- He has reigned in heaven; He will reign on earth (4:3, 34-36; 6:25-26; 7:13, 14)

### **B. The King is the God-Man (7:13-14)**

- He comes in the clouds of the heavens
- He is known as “the Son of man” (Jesus’ favorite term for Himself)
- Jesus applies Daniel 7:13-14 to Himself in Matthew 26:62-65; see also Matthew 24:30
- “Son of man” (v. 13) = “Most High” (v. 27)
- This Anointed One will be “cut off” (Daniel 9:26)

## **3. Practical Theme: God’s people can trust Him, even in the midst of chaos (11:32).**

### **A. The example of Daniel & friends (ch. 3, 6)**

- They are noted for conviction vs. compromise
- They are noted for courage vs. opposition
- They are noted for confidence in God

### **B. The “hope” of Prophecy (7:18, 22, 27)**

- The two “Apocalyptic” portions of Scripture (Dan & Rev) were written in the darkest of times, to “saints” who were tempted to despair. That matters:
- Prophecy is written to comfort, not frighten
- Prophecy is intended to bring peace, not debate

Michael Barrett – *“God never revealed the future to satisfy man’s natural curiosity about it. Both the purpose and the nature of prophecy work to fuel faith. God reveals the future to affect the present.” (God’s Unfailing Purpose, 5-6)*

Thomas Long – *“Apocalyptic literature draws back the curtains and allows the reader to see the eschatological victory of God, which has already been achieved over whatever forces are, even at the moment, crippling the community of faith.” (“Preaching Apocalyptic Literature”)*

Daniel Bock – *““The intention of apocalyptic is not to chart out God’s plan for the future so future generations may draw up calendars but to assure the present generation that—perhaps contrary to appearance—God is still on the throne, and that the future is firmly in his hands.” (“Preaching Old Testament Apocalyptic”)*

## Concluding Thoughts:

### **Daniel is a faith-building book:**

- Kings & Kingdoms are under God's providential reign.
- Your circumstances are under God's providential reign.
- Even in the midst of unspeakable calamity—imagine what Daniel lived through!—God is wise, and good, and sovereign.
- God rules even when it doesn't feel like it.
- God sits on a throne, not the sideline.
- However bad the world's rulers may be now—and it's all relative—our ultimate hope is in the King of Kings & Lord of Lords.
- "There is a higher throne."

Michael Barrett – *“There is a throne that, while secluded from natural sight, governs absolutely with an unthwartable agenda. That throne is God's and that agenda is His perfect will. Two things are certain: the kingdoms of this world will fail, and the kingdom of God will prevail.” (God's Unfailing Purpose, 2)*

# Rejoice, the Lord is King

By Charles Wesley

Rejoice, the Lord is King:  
Your Lord and King adore!  
Rejoice, give thanks and sing,  
And triumph evermore.  
Lift up your heart,  
Lift up your voice!  
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

Jesus, the Savior, reigns,  
The God of truth and love;  
When He has purged our stains,  
He took his seat above;  
Lift up your heart,  
Lift up your voice!  
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

***His kingdom cannot fail,***  
He rules o'er earth and heav'n;  
The keys of death and hell  
Are to our Jesus giv'n:  
Lift up your heart,  
Lift up your voice!  
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

Rejoice in glorious hope!  
Our Lord and judge shall come  
And take His servants up  
To their eternal home:  
Lift up your heart,  
Lift up your voice!  
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

# Daniel 1

## Godliness in the Midst of the Ungodly

### 1. God is true to His word (1:1-7)

#### A. God warned His people of judgment

- Deuteronomy 29-30 (esp. v. 16-28)
- Jeremiah 25:1 (esp. v. 1-11)

#### B. God was faithful to His threat

- The fall of Israel to Assyria (722 BC) – 2 Kings 17
- The fall of Judah to Babylon – 2 Kings 25
- 605 BC – (Daniel's deportation)
- 597 BC & 586 BC

#### C. God would be faithful to His promise

- Promise of a remnant & return
- Isaiah 44:21-45:25 (350 years earlier)
- Jeremiah 29:1-14 (70 years earlier)

### 2. God calls His people to distinction, not defilement (1:8-16).

#### A. Daniel purposed in his heart.

- 15 years old, away from home, in a “public” college, literally being brainwashed, his very life in danger
- He resolved to honor God rather than “advance”
- Determination to be holy is not legalism
  
- Note: Why not just eat the meat?
  - He determined to maintain his Jewish identity
  - Note: The new names weren't random. They were being intentionally, entirely Babylonianized.
  - He resisted the decadence & idolatry of the palace.
  - He feared God more than men.
  - He was becoming what he would be.
  - “faithful in a very little...faithful in much.” (Luke 16:10)

**B. Daniel appealed to his superiors.**

- He appealed to chief eunuch, then to steward
- He maintained a gentle disposition even as he maintained an uncompromising position

**C. Daniel stood with his friends.**

- He learned to stand alone—but first had the blessing of likeminded friends.

**3. God advances His cause in the midst of calamity (1:17-21).**

**A. He may allow us to suffer.**

**B. He may give miraculous deliverance.**

- God did what seemed impossible – making people “chunky” on vegetables rather than rich foods.
- This was the first miracle of the book.

**C. He may advance us, for His glory.**

- “Diligent dependence”
- Their abilities—both natural and miraculous—were the result of God’s unmistakable blessing.
- God can put His people in strategic, powerful places.

**D. He will certainly do what is best.**

**Concluding Thoughts:**

- We live in Babylon. Our culture is anti-Christ and anti-Christian.
- If we do not “purpose in our hearts”—enabled by God’s grace—we will surely defile ourselves.
- You are becoming what you will be. Christlikeness is for now, not later.
- You are neither too old nor too young to pursue the purity God commands.
- By grace, “Purpose to pursue purity.”

# Daniel 2 (Part 1)

## God's Unrivaled Wisdom & Might

### 1. Man is incurably small (1:1-16)

#### A. The strongest of men are weak

- Nebuchadnezzar is named for the Akkadian god Nabu
- He was a RUTHLESS CONQUEROR, commanding his father Emperor Nabopolassar's armies in conquests of Egypt (at Carchemish in 605 BC; Jer 46:2), Jerusalem, Tyre, and other world powers. (See Jer 27:5-11)
- He was a POWERFUL RULER (605-562 BC) of an immense empire, taking the spoils of those he conquered back to Babylon. (M&P differed greatly.)
- He was an AMBITIOUS BUILDER, noted for the splendor of Babylon (many temples, massive walls, & hanging gardens – 1 of the 7 wonders of the world).
- Yet, Daniel 2 finds him worried & sleepless.
  - “Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown.”
  - “It's lonely at the top...and it's a long way down.”

#### B. The wisest of men are foolish

- Magicians – Teaching Priests? (Exodus 7:11)
- Enchanters – Snake Charmers? Necromancers?
- Sorcerers – Pharmacologists?
- Chaldeans – Scholars, including Daniel (1:4)
- Wise men [of Babylon]
- Astrologers – Astronomers; their scholarship was remarkable, including the setting of a 365 day calendar & the prediction of eclipses.

Nebuchadnezzar shrewdly refused to tell the dream, insisting that his wise men—whom he apparently doubted—produce both the dream & its meaning.

Illustration: The shrewd teacher & the flat tire

Note: The magicians' claim in v. 11 was true, and profound!

Joseph A. Seiss – *““Here was a full grown heathenism of more than a thousand years. Here were the combined strength and wisdom of the most noted schools in the highest acme of their glory....If these men failed, it was the laying prostrate of all the wisdom, power, and art of man.” (Voices from Babylon, p. 47-49)*

#### C. The safest of men are mortal

- Nebuchadnezzar would not “live forever”

- Nebuchadnezzar’s cabinet members were to be torn limb from limb & their houses ruined
- Insert Daniel
  - This is the second of many miraculous deliverances in the book (v. 13).
  - He would save the charlatans... and get very little thanks for it.

## 2. God is infinitely great (1:17-23).

### A. God hears & answers prayer.

- Like the Jews in Esther, they approached the KING before approaching the king (v. 17-18)
- God answered the prayer, miraculously (v. 19a)
- Daniel praised as fervently as he prayed (v. 19b)
  - He thanked God privately (v. 20-23)
  - He thanked God publically (v. 27-28, 30)

Note: In chapter 1, we read of Daniel exceling far beyond his fellow students & even his teachers. In chapter 2 we read of Daniel deflecting any credit for his abilities to the God who gave them. “Non nobis, Domine” (Psalm 115:1).

### B. God alone is mighty (v. 20).

- He changes times & seasons (v. 21)
- He changes kings (as seasons – v. 21)

### C. God alone is wise (v. 20).

- He gives wisdom & knowledge to the wise (v. 21)
- He reveals deep & hidden things (v. 22)
- He controls mental/spiritual darkness & light (v. 22)

### D. God shares His wisdom & might (v. 27).

- Beautiful realization of “communicable” attributes
- “You did the impossible—and I’ll be sure that everyone knows it was You and not me!”
  - Biblical villains are always concerned that people think too little of them.
  - Biblical heroes are always concerned that people think too highly of them.
- Jeremiah 9:23-24

## Concluding Thoughts:

- Are we this amazed by God’s power?
- Are we this jealous for God’s glory?
- Pray big! And praise big!
- “Our God is awesome!”

# Daniel 2 (Part 2)

## A Vision of Kings, Kingdoms, and Eternity

History = "His Story"

- Daniel 2 predicts the change of world rulers with such precision that modern scholars labor (in vain) to prove that it was written after the various regime changes, by a pseudo "Daniel."
- It's a stunning prophecy of the rise & fall of Empires.
- It's a more stunning prophecy of the irresistible reign of Christ.

*Gold*

*Silver*

*Bronze*

*Iron*

*Clay*



### 1. MYSTERIES belong to the Lord (2:17-30)

Note: Dreams were typically for unbelievers, visions for believers.

#### A. Daniel gave God glory for his supernatural insight (2:17-30)

- Private humility (v. 19-23)
- Public humility (v. 26-30)

#### B. Nebuchadnezzar gave God glory for Daniel's supernatural insight (2:47)

- Through miracles in the book of Daniel...
  - God is glorified
  - God's servants are exalted
  - God's enemies are shamed & destroyed

Note: In a sense, the personal experiences of the Jews in Daniel is a foreshadowing of Christ's future triumph.

## 2. EMPIRES belong to the Lord (2:31-43).

The materials that make up the image are of decreasing value but increasing strength:

### A. God raised up Babylon (v. 37-38).

- Head of gold – unrivaled in majesty & glory (605 bc)
- God used Babylon as a tool of judgment

### B. God raised up Medo-Persia (v. 39a).

- Arms & chest of silver – shrewd, unequal allies (539 bc)
- God used Medes & Persians for return from Exile

### C. God raised up Greece (v. 39b).

- Torso & thighs of bronze – power & speed (331 bc)
- God used Greece to spread a worldwide language

### D. God raised up Rome (v. 40-43).

- Legs & feet of iron & clay – strong, but unstable (145 bc)
- God used Rome's "Pax Romana" for gospel advance

Note: The 4 metals of the colossal image represent 4 succeeding empires. Together, the entire image represents **the totality of human government** ("all together" – v. 35)

Michael Barrett – *"Many of Daniel's prophecies have already been fulfilled. Hindsight testifies to the absolute accuracy of his predictions and justifies the confidence that what is still future will take place just as precisely."* (God's Unfailing Purpose, p. 40-41)

Prophecy = Pre-Recorded History

## 3. VICTORY belongs to the Lord (2:44-45).

### A. Jesus reigns.

- He reigns sovereignly, controlling earthly Kings.
- He reigns spiritually, through the power of the gospel.

### B. Jesus shall reign.

- His Kingdom will DEMOLISH the kingdoms of men.

- His Kingdom will REPLACE the kingdoms of men.
  - It will be a supernatural kingdom (v. 34, 44, 45)
  - It will be an irresistible kingdom (v. 35a, 44)
  - It will be a growing kingdom (v. 35b)
  - It will be a universal kingdom (v. 35b)
  - It will be an earthly kingdom (v. 44-45)
  - It will be an eternal kingdom (v. 44-45)

### **C. Jesus is the perfect King!**

- He is the “Stone” of Scripture (Daniel 2:34-35, 44-45; Genesis 49:24; Isaiah 28:16; Matthew 16:13-15; 1 Peter 2:4-8)
- He is the King of Kings
  - His earthly then eternal reign will fulfill “dominion” prophecies
  - His earthly then eternal reign will fulfill “kingdom” prophecies
- This is yet to come. But Jesus wins!
  - Revelation 11:15
  - The Hallelujah Chorus

### **Concluding Thoughts:**

- If God has so controlled the past, we can be certain He controls the future.
- If God has so controlled the past, we can be certain He controls the present.
- God’s sovereignty extends over the rise & fall of nations—and the daily challenges of teenagers. He is both transcendent & immanent. He is near!
- Set your hope in an unfailing Ruler, not in the frail regimes of politicians—the best of whom is temporary.

“His Kingdom cannot fail!”

# Daniel 3

## Walking through the Flames

Illustration: Martin Luther (1483-1546) at the Diet (Council) of Worms:

- Martin Luther at the Diet of Worms (Germany) in the Spring of 1521
- Luther was summoned to the “trial” to appear before Archbishop John Eck (the prosecutor) & the Holy Roman Emperor, Frederick the Wise.
- Asked to recant of his biblical, grace-saturated writings or perish, Luther refused to yield, choosing death over spiritual compromise.

*“Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason (for I do not trust either in the pope or in councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. Here I stand. I can do no other. May God help me. Amen.”*

## 1. The arrogance of idolatry (3:1-7)

### A. The King’s idol was a DIRECT DEFIANCE of God’s vision (3:1)

- God called Nebuchadnezzar a head of gold, who would eventually yield to other rulers (2:37 ff), and ultimately to Christ (2:44-45).
- Nebuchadnezzar made an entire image of gold, most likely in his own likeness, insisting that his kingdom would continue forever, yielding neither to men or God.
- An archeological discovery in Babylon from Nebuchadnezzar’s time speaks of a “statue” the King erected, and commands its respect.

*Gold*  
*Silver*  
*Bronze*  
*Iron*  
*Clay*



*Gold*  
*Gold*  
*Gold*  
*Gold*  
*Gold*

### **B. The King's idol was IMMENSE (3:1)**

- 90 feet tall and 9 feet wide
- Set up in a plain, to look even larger
- Very like the tower of Babel (Genesis 11:2)

### **C. The King's idolatry was a SPECTACLE (3:1-5)**

- Presented to all rulers (3:2), and used as a means of empire-wide unity
- Announced to all "peoples, nations, and languages" (3:4, 7)
- Accompanied by all kinds of instruments and musical styles (3:5, 7, 10, 15)
- It almost seems like there is some "mockery" in this perpetual listing of the officials and instruments

### **D. The King's idol was POWERLESS (3:1, 6)**

- It had to be made (3:1)
- It had to be set up (3:1)
- It had to be defended by capital punishment (3:6)
- Scripture repeatedly mocks dead idols and those who worship them (Psalm 115; 1 Kings 18:27; Isaiah 44:9-20; 46)

## **2. The courage of fidelity (3:8-18)**

### **A. Their accusers were moved by envy (3:8-12)**

- They "maliciously accused the Jews" (3:8)
- They manipulated the King (3:10-12)

## **B. The King was moved by arrogance (3:13-15)**

- “Who do you think you are?”
- “Do you know who I am?” (“I...I...my...”)
- “Who is your god compared to me?”

## **C. The Jews were moved by conviction (3:16-18)**

- “God is able to deliver us from the furnace and from your hand” (v. 16-17)
- “If God does not deliver us from Your hand, we still won’t bow to your idols” (v. 18, see v. 28)

Heroes LIVE by faith, are DELIVERED by faith, and sometimes DIE by faith (Hebrews 11:32-38)

H. C. Leupold – *“The quiet, modest, yet withal very positive attitude of faith that these three men display is one of the noblest examples in the Scriptures of faith fully resigned to the will of God. These men ask for no miracle; they expect none. Theirs is the faith that says: ‘Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him’ (Job 13:15).”*

# **3. The triumph of God (3:19-30)**

## **A. God ALLOWED their persecution (3:19-23)**

- Attribute: Sovereignty

## **B. God SHARED their persecution (3:24-25)**

- Attribute: Benevolence
- This is Christ—the very one Nebuchadnezzar resisted by the statue of gold & dared by his boast
- They expected to be in God’s presence. Ironic!

## **C. God QUENCHED their persecution (3:26-27)**

- Attribute: Omnipotence
- God is able to protect His servants from the fire; Nebuchadnezzar is not
- The deliverance was shockingly comprehensive

## **D. God was GLORIFIED thru their persecution (3:28-30)**

- Nebuchadnezzar was temporarily humbled
- Nebuchadnezzar exalted God
- Nebuchadnezzar forced tolerance of Judaism
- Nebuchadnezzar promoted the 3 Jews

Bob Jones Sr. – *“You’re arm is too short to fight with God.”*

## Concluding Thoughts:

### Rationale for “little” compromises:

- “We are in influential positions. We need to keep them. “If we are killed, who will be light in this dark place?”
- “God ordained this King, and we’re supposed to submit.”
- “We made our point. Now be reasonable.”
- “We know that worship is a matter of the heart. We could bow, but inwardly pray to God.”
- “The pressure from society is too much. We look weird, ignorant, even hateful.”

### We are living in a world that is very much like Babylon

- The church—both corporately & individually—will be tempted to make “little” compromises...on creation, evangelism, morality, etc.
- Like these 3 young men, we must determine now that we will not abandon the truth, whatever the cost.
- “If I perish, I perish.” (Esther 4:16)
- “We must obey God rather than men.” (Acts 5:29)
- “Here I stand.” (Martin Luther)

### If necessary, walk through the flames—with God!

- You will enjoy the presence of God, one way or the other.
- The very worst this world can do to you is send you to your Savior & eternal home.
- It is a privilege to be called upon to suffer for the sake of Christ, who suffered far more for us (Acts 5:41).
- If you don’t yet know this almighty, all-merciful Savior, I urge you to receive Him today. Repent of your sins. Believe on Jesus.

### Isaiah 43:1-2

*“Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.”*

# Daniel 4

## “God Resists the Proud”

### Introduction:

The passage starts with a letter to “all people, nations, and languages” (4:1)

- Ironic, in light of 3:4 and 3:29
- Nebuchadnezzar is the narrator

The narrative has 2 doxologies as its “bookends” (4:3, 34-35)

- Its purpose is to magnify God
- “Most High” is used 6 times
- Praise focuses on “King” & “Kingdom”

The narrative takes place in 3 scenes, over 8 years

### **Scene 1: The King’s Dream (4:4-27)** **< Nebuchadnezzar & Daniel >**

#### **A. SETTING of the Dream (4:4-9)**

- “Ease” turned to “alarm” (4:4-5)
- An angelic message accompanied dream (4:13)
- The King avoided Daniel (4:6-9, 18), like King Ahab avoided Micaiah (1 Kings 22:8)

#### **B. CONTENT of the Dream (4:10-18)**

- Tree of universal import chopped down (4:10-15a)
- Mixed metaphor starting in 4:15b (Tree → Beast)
- 7 periods of time (years) with a “beast’s mind”
- Goal & moral (4:17, 25) – “Most High” vs “lowliest”

#### **C. MEANING of the Dream (4:19-27)**

- Daniel’s grief (4:19)
- Daniel’s explanation (4:20-26)
- Daniel’s invitation (4:27)

## **Scene 2: The King's Judgment (4:28-33)**

### **< Nebuchadnezzar & God >**

#### **A. Nebuchadnezzar's Boast (4:28-30)**

- 1 year later, after 3 ignored warnings (ch. 2, 3, 4)
- "Great Babylon" – and it was great
- "I built...my mighty power...glory of my majesty"
- Cp. Isaiah 14:12-17

#### **B. God's Rebuttal (4:30-33)**

- Immediate judgment (4:30, 33)
- A fitting sentence – the BOASTER became a BEAST
- No genius, no glory, no majesty, no might
- Ox's diet, eagle's feathers, bird's claws
- Moral: Until you know that (a) the Most High rules over the kingdoms of men, & (b) He gives it to whoever He wants.
- "You didn't make Babylon. I made YOU!"

**Isaiah 42:8a** "I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other."

## **Scene 3: The King's Return (4:34-37)**

### **< Nebuchadnezzar & God, 7 years later >**

#### **A. His humiliation HUMBLLED him**

- He spoke of God's might, majesty, and sovereignty—not his own (4:34-37)
- Mercifully, his reason & reign were restored (4:36)

#### **B. Hopefully, his humiliation SAVED him**

- His response was ongoing praise—not a threat
- He spoke of what God did "for me" (4:2)
- He spoke of God as His own (4:2-3, 34-37), not Daniel's (2:47) or Daniel's friends' (3:28-29)
- He was turned from a beast to a man (7:4)
- Note: Was his temporary affliction worth it?!

#### **C. His humiliation GLORIFIED God**

#### **D. Hopefully, his humiliation will TEACH us**

I believe we'll meet Nebuchadnezzar in heaven one day. I hope so!

Michael Barrett – *“My opinion is that Nebuchadnezzar’s transformation was more than a mere behavioral transformation or attitude adjustment; it was, rather, a spiritual transformation of the soul.” (God’s Unfailing Purpose, 141)*

## Concluding Thoughts:

### 1. God is GRACIOUS.

- He humbles the proud—for his own good
- He forgives the penitent

### 2. God is GLORIOUS.

- He has no rival
  - He alone is mighty
  - He alone is majestic
  - He alone is sovereign
  - World rulers are on His leash

**Proverbs 16:18** “Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.”

**James 4:6 and 1 Peter 5:5** “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

# Daniel 5

## Weighed and Wanting

### Overview:

#### How much time has passed?

- Daniel 1 = 605BC; Daniel 5 = 539BC
- Daniel must be around 80 years old
- Nebuchadnezzar has been dead 23 years, succeeded by weak descendants, including Belshazzar, co-regent with his father, Nabonidus

#### Belshazzar shared his grandfather's pride, but not his grandeur.

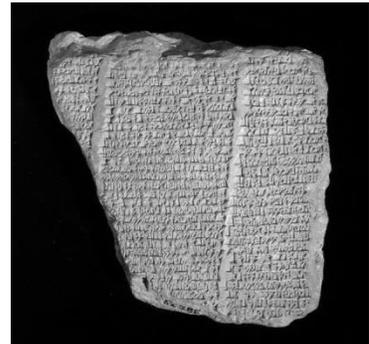
- Nebuchadnezzar's lesson died with him
- Belshazzar too is judged—but with finality

Here we see the fulfillment of the chapter 2 prophecy of a regime change.

#### Daniel and Archeology:

“When the third year was about to begin, he [Nabonidus] entrusted the ‘Camp’ to his eldest son, the firstborn, the troops everywhere in the country he ordered under his command. He let everything go, entrusted the kingship to him and, himself, he started out for a long journey.”

*(Persian Verse Account of Nabonidus)*



#### Historical Context:

Clarence Larkin – *“The feast of Belshazzar was given in a spirit of contempt and defiance. The city of Babylon was in a state of siege. The armies of the Medes and Persians were encamped outside its walls. But Belshazzar knew that the walls of the city were impregnable; and he was confident that his soldiers from their position on the lofty walls would be able to destroy any who should attempt to batter down the gates.” (The Book of Daniel )*

## Scene 1: Belshazzar's Party (5:1-4)

### A. It was probably lecherous (5:1)

- Thousands of Lords
- Wives & concubines (v. 3)
- Wine, consumed in some ostentatious way

### B. It was certainly blasphemous (4:10-18)

- The very feast was a spectacle of his pride, lust, and supposed invincibility
- Worship of metals (the same as those representing the kingdoms)
- The *coup de gras* was the abuse of Temple vessels, which had been brought from Jerusalem some 66 years earlier (1:2; 5:2-4; 5:23)

### C. It was reckless (5:30a)

- The last night of Babylon's existence was spent in a drunken orgy

## Scene 2: God's Response (5:5-16)

### A. It was an overt sign (5:5)

- No subtlety or symbolism this time
- God, seeing such overt blasphemy, said "Enough!"

### B. It was a terrifying sign (5:6-9)

- Ominous: "The writing was on the wall."
- The King turned pale (v. 6, 9, 10)
- The King trembled (v. 6)
- The King "called loudly" for hapless advisors (v. 7)
- The sudden change is almost comical

### C. It was a miraculous sign (5:10-16)

- Only the nearly-forgotten Daniel could interpret it
- You wonder if the name "Daniel" & home of "Judah" concerned the King, in light of his actions
- How readily politicians in crisis call for prophets!

## Scene 3: Daniel's Sermon (5:17-28)

### A. No gifts, no grief, no second chance (v. 17)

- Like Abraham in Genesis 14:21-24
- No sorrow, as in Daniel 4:19
- No invitation, as in Daniel 4:27

### B. Review of Nebuchadnezzar's fall (v. 18-21)

- God elevated him (v. 18-19)
- Pride humbled him (v. 20-21)
- The key point: "The Most High rules" (v. 21)

### C. Belshazzar's sin & sentence (v. 22-27)

- You have not humbled yourself (v. 22)
- You have opposed God, abusing His vessels and worshiping idols, while not honoring God (v. 23)
- You have been counted & condemned ("Mene")
- You have been weighed & found wanting ("Tekel")
- You will be defeated & succeeded ("Peres")

## Scene 4: Babylon's Fall (5:29-30)

### A. It was prophesied

- Daniel 2
- Isaiah 44:28 – 45:7 (175 years before)  
Note: Cyrus conquered Babylon on behalf of Darius
- Jeremiah 25:11-14
- Habakkuk 2:6-20

### B. It was deserved

- Genesis 15:16 – "The iniquity of the [Babylonians] was complete"

### C. It was sudden

- One night...with no shots fired
- The Euphrates was dammed & Babylon damned

### D. It was understated

- Babylon's fall recorded in a simple sentence.

Michael Barrett – *“If Nebuchadnezzar’s personal story gives hope to sinners, Belshazzar’s issues a warning.” (God’s Unfailing Purpose, 140)*

- Don’t confuse the DELAY of judgment with the DELETION of judgment. (See 2 Peter 3 and Habakkuk 2:3.)  
*“The wheels of justice turn slowly, but grind exceedingly fine.”*
- Don’t assume you have more time. “Your breath is in God’s hand” (5:23).

## **Concluding Thoughts:**

### **1. God judged a wicked man.**

- Let that sober you, individually.

### **2. God judged a wicked nation.**

- Let that humble us, collectively.

### **3. God worked on behalf of His people.**

- It was time for the Temple vessels to be awakened—and returned home.
- It was time for God’s people to return home.

### **4. God carried out His word.**

- Both warnings and promises.

# Daniel 6

## Lie Down Among the Lions

### Overview:

#### **Daniel is old, yet unchanged.**

- Daniel 1 = 605BC; Daniel 6 = @ 535BC
- Daniel must be around 80-85 years old
- The young Daniel determined not to defile himself for the sake of political advance (chapter 1). The elderly Daniel is equally steadfast (chapter 6).

#### **Daniel is conscientious, yet persecuted.**

- His work habits & personal faith make him the target of persecution.
- “Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” (2 Timothy 3:12)

### **Scene 1: Daniel’s Success (6:1-5)**

#### **A. Daniel excelled in his profession (6:1-4)**

#### **B. Daniel excelled in his faith (6:5)**

- His enemies knew that he was committed to obeying “the law of his God” (v. 5).
- His enemies knew that he was a man of prayer.
- His enemies knew that he was a man of conviction.
- The king knew that he was “the servant of the living God” who “served God continually” (v. 16, 20).

#### **C. Daniel’s conscience was clear before God & King (6:22)**

- Acts 24:16

#### **Note: Is your testimony before the world this strong?**

- Daniels’ testimony was exemplary. Is yours? Too often Christians are noted for doing as little as possible or expecting special favors.
- You may not be the brightest or most committed employee your company has. You should be the most conscientious.
- You should be this hard to criticize.

## Scene 2: The Satraps' Scheme (6:6-9)

### A. They gave vent to their own vice (v. 6-8)

- They were jealous
- They were deceitful (v. 7)
  - "All" didn't include Daniel, their manager
  - They pretended to act in the king's interest
- They were prejudiced (v. 13)

### B. They appealed to the King's vice (v. 9)

- He was vain
  - He made himself "god" (or the gods' mediator) for a month
  - Illustration: "Kyrios Kaisar" – "Caesar is Lord"
  - God tolerates a lot in Daniel—but not blasphemy
- He was rash
  - He signed a capricious, irrevocable law that made prayer a capital crime—thoughtlessly

## Scene 3: Daniel's Prayer (6:10-13)

### A. He prayed without hesitation (v. 10)

- He knew, he went home, and prayed
- "As he had done previously"
  - He refused to yield to the State (see Acts 5:29)
  - Religious freedom is personal, not political

### B. He prayed without shame (v. 10-11)

- He opened the window
- His enemies saw him pray or assumed he would

### C. He prayed without fear (v. 10-11)

- The king—not Daniel—was worried & sleepless
- He surely prayed for help in this situation (v. 11)

### D. He prayed toward Jerusalem (v. 10)

- 1 Kings 8:46-53
- Aren't you glad we pray through Christ, and not toward an earthly location?! (John 4:23-24)

### **Note: Too busy to pray?**

- Daniel was one of the most important people in the world, serving on the cabinet of 2 world rulers. Yet, he made time to pray with clock-like consistency. He would rather die than go 30 days without prayer.
- Prayerlessness is the ultimate expression of pride for the Christian.
- You are neither so busy nor so clever that you can dispense with divine assistance.

## **Scene 4: God's Triumph (6:14-24)**

### **A. The King was unable to deliver Daniel (v. 14-15)**

- He was "distressed" (v. 14)
- He was powerless to undo his own folly (v. 14-15)
  - Esther 1:10 & 8:8 @ the unchanging laws of M/P
  - Much like Herod's killing of John the Baptist

### **B. God was able to deliver Daniel (v. 16, 20)**

- Kings are finite; God is infinite
- God performed a miracle (Hebrews 11:33)
- God, who made a King a beast, made beasts like babes
  - "That's impossible."
  - Right. That's what makes it a miracle.
  - God can indeed be "a magician," Pope Francis notwithstanding.
  - No Miracles = No Bible & No God

### **C. God's triumph was absolute (v. 23-24)**

## **Scene 5: God's Glory (6:25-28)**

### **A. The King issued a pointless decree (6:25-26)**

- There is no conversion by coercion
- That was the error of Constantine
- That was the error of the Crusaders

### **B. The King correctly exalted God (v. 26-27)**

- "He is the living God" (v. 26a; see also v. 20)
  - Vs. "dead" gods
  - "God's not dead..."
- His kingdom is eternal (v. 26b)
  - The big lesson: "His Kingdom cannot fail."

- His delivers & rescues (v. 27)
  - Sometimes through miracles
  - Sometimes through providence
  - Sometimes through martyrdom

## **Concluding Thoughts:**

### **1. God may choose to give life-saving deliverance.**

- Hebrews 11:32-35a

### **2. God may choose to give soul-sustaining grace.**

- Hebrews 11:35b-38

### **3. Either way, surrounded by such witnesses, we run with endurance the race set before us.**

- Hebrews 12:1

# Daniel 7

## Tribulation & Triumph

### Chiastic Structure

Daniel 2-7 has an unmistakable structure, which we call “chiasm”:

**Chapter 2 – Vision of 4 Nations (image)**

*Chapter 3 – Test & Deliverance (furnace)*

**Chapter 4 – Message & Judgment (King Nebuchadnezzar)**

**Chapter 5 – Message & Judgment (King Belshazzar)**

*Chapter 6 – Test & Deliverance (lions)*

**Chapter 7 – Vision of 4 Nations (beasts)**

### Overview of Daniel 7

**We’re no longer progressing chronologically.**

- Chapter 6 was under the Medes & Persians; chapter 7 is back under Babylon

**We’re moving from history to prophecy**

- Daniel is now the recipient of visions, not merely the interpreter.
- The genre is “apocalyptic.” It’s a depiction of the culmination of time. It’s highly symbolic. It describes both final “tribulation” and ultimate justice.
- That means it’s going to be difficult interpreting.

Daniel 18:27 – *“And I, Daniel, was overcome and lay sick for some days. Then I rose and went about the king's business, but I was appalled by the vision and did not understand it.”*

Matthew Henry – *“The six former chapters of this book were historical; we now enter with fear and trembling upon the six latter, which are prophetic, wherein are many things dark and hard to be understood, which we dare not positively determine the sense of, and yet many things plain and profitable, which I trust God will enable us to make a good use of.”*

## Interpreting Prophecy

- Prophecy requires & produces HUMILITY:
  - We can interpret the portions that have already been fulfilled with great clarity
  - We should interpret the portions that have not yet been fulfilled with some hesitancy
- Prophecy requires CAUTION:
  1. Write your eschatology in pencil
  2. Beware of speculation & dogmatism
  3. Don't make eschatology a deal-breaker
  4. Focus on the BIG PICTURE, not minutiae

Michael Barrett – *“If someone puts a gun to my head and tells me to deny Christ’s Atonement, I’ll tell him to pull the trigger. If he tells me to deny my eschatology, I’ll tell him to put the gun down and let’s talk.”*

## Part 1: The Vision of 4 Beasts (7:1-8)

### Symbols:

- Winds & sea are symbols of all the earth (v. 2-3)
- Beasts are symbols of 4 earthly kingdoms (v. 17)



### A. Lion with Eagle’s wings = Babylon (7:4)

- “Heart of man” = Nebuchadnezzar, conversion(?)

## **B. Bear = Medes & Persians (7:5)**

- Lopsided to show greater power of Persians
- Ribs, “devour” = ferocity of conquest

## **C. Leopard with Birds’ wings = Greece (7:6)**

- Rapid in its conquest
- 4 heads = 4 successors of Alexander the Great

## **D. Most Ferocious Beast = Rome (7:7-8)**

- More powerful than preceding beasts
- “Devoured...broke...stamped” (v. 7, 19, 23)
- 10 Horns & 1 great Horn are yet future, even to us

### **Application: Don’t worry. Relax.**

- From man’s perspective, these 4 beasts are terrifying.
- From God’s perspective, these beasts—including the last one—are on a SHORT LEASH.
- He who shut the mouths of literal lions can shut the mouth of the “roaring lion” Satan (1 Peter 5:8-9).

### **I Run to Christ**

(by Chris Anderson)

*I run to Christ when chased by fear*

*And find a refuge sure.*

*“Believe in me,” His voice I hear;*

*His words and wounds secure.*

*I run to Christ when torn by grief*

*And find abundant peace.*

*“I too had tears,” He gently speaks;*

*Thus joy and sorrow meet.*

*I run to Christ when worn by life*

*And find my soul refreshed.*

*“Come unto Me,” He calls through strife;*

*Fatigue gives way to rest.*

*I run to Christ when vexed by hell*

*And find a mighty arm.*

*“The Devil flees,” the Scriptures tell;*

*He roars, but cannot harm.*

*I run to Christ when stalked by sin  
And find a sure escape.  
“Deliver me,” I cry to Him;  
Temptation yields to grace.*

*I run to Christ when plagued by shame  
And find my one defense.  
“I bore God’s wrath,” He pleads my case—  
My Advocate and Friend.*

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## **Part 2: God’s Triumph (7:9-14, 18, 26-27)**

### **A. The Ancient of Days is King & Judge (v. 9-12)**

- Throne conveys ABSOLUTE SOVEREIGNTY (v. 9; cp. Ezekiel 1:13-21)
- Appearance conveys POWER & PURITY (v. 9; cp. Revelation 1:14)
- Fire, Court, Books convey JUDGMENT (v. 9-11; cp. Revelation 20)
- 100 million saints conveys TRIUMPHANT PRAISE (v. 10; compare Revelation 5:11)

#### **Key Lesson: God is in enthroned & unthreatened**

- He is “Ancient” & His reign “Eternal”
- Heaven is in order even while earth is in chaos

### **Revelation 4**

Daniel Bock – *“The intention of apocalyptic is not to chart out God’s plan for the future so future generations may draw up calendars but to assure the present generation that – perhaps contrary to appearance – God is still on the throne...and that the future is firmly in His hands.” (Preaching Old Testament Apocalyptic, 52)*

### **B. The Son of Man is Given Dominion (v. 13-14)**

- Clouds of Heaven conveys DEITY
- Son of Man conveys HUMANITY
- Dominion
- Universal & Unending Reign (Revelation)
- Jesus claims this is HIM (Mark 14:61-62)
  - The title “Son of Man” is used 81 times in the 4 Gospels

#### **Key Lesson: Jesus wins!**

## Revelation 5:

- Jesus owns the “title deed” to the Universe
- Jesus breaks the seals – judgment is a good thing

Revelation 11:15 – *“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.”*

## C. The Antichrist will be damned (v. 8, 11, 20-22)

- The Antichrist will usurp authority from other earthly leaders (v. 8, 24-25)
- The Antichrist will “speak great [pompous] things,” blaspheming God (v. 8, 11, 20, 25a; Rev 13:5) & deceiving the world (Matthew 24:23-26)
- The Antichrist will “wear out” the saints (v. 25b)
  - Persecution is “normal” & will increase
  - 3½ years of “Tribulation” (Rev 13:5, 7)
- The Antichrist will be judged—easily (v. 11, 26)

Note: The Antichrist is “The Beast” of Revelation 13 & following

**Key Lesson: The Antichrist is fierce, but his fighting is futile!**

## D. The Saints of the Most High will reign (v. 18, 27)

- God’s people can anticipate persecution (v. 21, 25)
  - Like what? Like Daniel 3 & 6
  - Matthew 24:9-14
  - Application: We’ve been forewarned; beware of an “escapist” strategy
- God’s people will not be overwhelmed by the persecution (Matthew 24:22)
- God’s people will not be persecuted forever
- God’s people will REIGN with Him (v. 18, 27; Rev 5:10; 20:4; 2 Tim 2:12)

Revelation 13:10 & 14:12 – *“Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.”*

**Key Lesson: Whether we live or die, our eternity is secure. We win with Christ!**

## Conclusions:

### Doctrinal Lessons

#### 1. Nations rise and fall.

- Apparent chaos on earth is scripted in heaven

## **2. God reigns over all.**

- He CONTROLS human governors.
- He will REPLACE human governors.

## **3. Expect tribulation.**

- The world hates God and the godly.
- That's true now, and it will crescendo until the coming of the Antichrist.

## **Prophetic Lessons**

### **1. Prophecy is meant to encourage, not confuse.**

- Daniel & Revelation aren't "sweaty palms" books.
- Jesus is the "Star," not the Beasts or the Horn.

### **2. Prophecy assures us that evil will not prevail.**

- "Apocalyptic" literature is addressed to traumatized people in need of hope.
- It tells us "He's got the whole world in His hands."

### **3. Prophecy assures us that life isn't random.**

- Jesus wins, and we can share in His triumph.
- Write that in ink, not pencil.

## **Practical Lessons**

- Take hope that God is working out His COSMIC plan to be triumphantly glorified in the universe.
- Take hope that God is working out His PERSONAL plan to be triumphantly glorified in your life.
- If you don't know the "Son of Man" as your Savior, you're in trouble. Receive Him now.

### **This Is My Father's World**

(by Matalbie Dancock)

*This is my Father's world.  
O let me ne'er forget  
That though the wrong seems oft so strong,  
God is the ruler yet.  
This is my Father's world: the battle is not done:  
Jesus Who died shall be satisfied,  
And earth and Heav'n be one.*