



Chapter count: 12

Original language: Hebrew and Aramaic

Author: Daniel

Scope of historical events mentioned: From the third year of Jehoiakim (about 605 B.C.) to the third year of Cyrus (about 535 B.C.).

The Book of Daniel (Daniel means “*God is my Judge*”) is a book of prophecy with probably the most memorable dreams and visions: the metal man of chapter 2 and the four beasts of chapter 7. The narrative begins with the conquest of Nebuchadnezzar II against Judah, when **Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah**—four young men who were as steel in principle—were taken as captives to the heathen land. Daniel’s firm decision in chapter 1 proved him and his friends to be useful witnesses for God. These faithful men stood before the greatest monarchs, and God was pleased to reveal Himself with them. It was during this era that **the Son of God** appeared in person for the last time, and the next would be when He was born in Bethlehem.

HISTORY

FROM BABYLON TO MEDO-PERSIA

Babylon sieges Jerusalem, and Daniel and his friends are taken to the heathen city. They choose to stand true to God. The king has a dream, and God gives Daniel the interpretation. Years later, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah are thrown into a furnace after refusing to worship a heathen image, but the Son of God appears with them in the fire. Nebuchadnezzar became mad for 7 years, but is afterward restored. (The 4th chapter are the words of Nebuchadnezzar.) Nearly 70 years after the events of chapter 1, Cyrus (the Great) conquers Babylon. Daniel is saved when he is thrown into the lions’ den in the reign of Darius the Mede.

CHAPTERS 1-6

VISION OF THE FOUR BEASTS

(Chapter 7 was a vision in the days of Babylon.) Daniel sees four beasts come up from the sea: a lion with wings; a bear with three ribs between its teeth; a leopard with four heads and four wings; and a fourth, terrible beast with ten horns. Three of the ten horns are plucked up, and a little horn—with mouth and eyes—grows from the vacancy. It speaks blasphemous words and thinks to change times and laws. The little horn is prophesied to occupy 1,260 literal years.

CHAPTERS 7, 8 & 9

PROPHECY

PROPHECIES OF THE MESSIAH

From chapter 7, Daniel sees the Son of man, brought before the Ancient of Days, playing a major role in the judgment in heaven when the books are opened. In chapter 8, Daniel sees a goat trampling on a helpless ram. The prophet hears the words, “Unto 2300 days, then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.” In the days of Darius the Mede, Daniel intercedes for his people, and another prophecy is given to him: “70 weeks” are cut off (from the 2300) for the Jews—it would be at that time that the Messiah will come.

THE LAST VISION

Daniel prays for 3 weeks, and an angel appears to explain to him the things that occurred: a supernatural being, whom the angel was wrestling against, was influencing Cyrus (such that the Jews cannot return to Jerusalem), but Michael came to the aid of the angel. The events that will transpire (which would involve God’s people) from the days of Persia to the end of the world are then outlined: Greece will conquer Persia, and pagan Rome will arise, followed by a spiritual warfare of the greatest magnitude. But Michael stands up for His people, and they will be saved. Daniel is bidden to close the book of prophecy, until the “time of the end.”

CHAPTERS 10-12

A chiastic structure is especially evident in the book of Daniel. For example: Chapter 2 and 7 both outline history in four main elements—4 metals, and 4 beasts. Both chapters have a special regard to a fifth aspect: the feet and toes of iron and clay in chapter 2, and the horns of the fourth beast in Chapter 7; Chapters 3 and 6 talk about the trials of Daniel and his friends; Chapters 4 and 5 tell the fall of Babylon’s kings, with a striking difference in the outcome. The chiastic structure is also noticeable in the book of Revelation when one reads the first and the last chapters of the book.