
The Book of Daniel:

The Sovereignty of God in the Times of the Gentiles

2008 February Elective Class | First Evangelical Church

About the teacher:

Greetings to each of you! I am thrilled to have this opportunity to meet many of you and to lead this overview of Daniel. I currently serve as the general director of the Bible teaching and discipleship ministry TRUTH SEEKERS FELLOWSHIP which was founded through the teaching of Tom Murray.

I grew up in Corinth Mississippi out east of Memphis, but attended college here in the city, completing my undergraduate work at Crichton College. There I met my wife Jill who is the daughter of Jim and Jan Allman as many of you know. Jill and I have two daughters, Hannah (10) and Sara (3).

After completing my degree at Dallas Theological Seminary we moved back to Memphis in 1998 and I began working with Tom at Truth Seekers in the winter of 2000. After Tom's "graduation" to be with our Lord in the Fall of 2005, I was asked to direct Truth Seekers Fellowship. It has been my great joy and privilege to share the truth of God's Written Word which leads us to the Living Word – our Lord Jesus – in the years I have spent with Truth Seekers.

My prayer for this overview of Daniel is that we will all be encouraged by the reality of all things are working together, moving toward the "summing up of all things in Christ" (Ephesians 1:10). *I also pray* that we can each be equipped and empowered to live with passion and purpose in the time and culture in which we have been placed to give witness to the power and glory of our King and His everlasting Kingdom.

Stacy W. Tyson

The lectures from this series will be posted on the First Evan website as well as on the Truth Seekers Fellowship website: www.tsfmemphis.org

You can email Stacy at stacy@tsfmemphis.org with any questions you may have.

Outline

Chapter 1

Introduction and Prologue

Hebrew: This section is designed to establish Daniel as trustworthy before his people even though he is a high-ranking government official (*ala Joseph*).

1:1-2	The Lord gives the Land to the Babylonians.
1:3-7	The young men are taken for training.
1:8	Daniel resolves to remain undefiled.
1:9-15	<i>Daniel and the young me are tested and prevail</i>
1:16	Daniel and the young men remain undefiled.
1:17-20	The young men excel in their training.
1:21	Daniel outlives the Babylonians,

*This chart is adapted from John Goldingay *Daniel* WBC, 8.

Chapters 2-7

The Sovereignty of the LORD over the Nations

Aramaic: Prophecies related to Gentiles and the nations to give the pagan kings insight to the times to come.

2	A	Prophecy of Four World Empires
3	B	God's power to deliver His people (from fiery furnace)
4	C	<i>Vision Interpreted:</i> God's judgment of a proud ruler (Nebuchadnezzar)
5	C'	<i>Vision Interpreted:</i> God's judgment of a proud ruler (Belshazzar)
6	B'	God's power to deliver His servant (from the lion's den)
7	A'	Prophecy of four world empires

Chapters 8-12

The End of Days

Hebrew: Prophecies related to Jews/Israel in relation to the Gentile kingdoms

8	A	Prophecies about Gentiles and Antiochus/Antichrist
9	B	The end times and the Jewish People
10-11	A	Prophecies about Gentiles and Antiochus/Antichrist
12	B	The end times and the Jewish People

Chapter 1

Daniel and His Friends are Tested

In this chapter, Daniel and his friends are deported to Babylon where they face their first test. After they are granted favor by God and the Babylonians, we see that Daniel outlives his Babylonian captors thus setting the stage for proving that Daniel's God is the Lord of an Eternal Kingdom.

1.1 The Renaming of the Youths

Daniel = "God/El is judge"
Belteshazzar = "Bel protect his life!"

Hananiah = "Yah (YHWH) is gracious"
Shadrack = "Command of Aku" (the moon god)

Mishael = "Who is what God is?" or "who is like God?"
Meshack = "Who is what Aku is?" or "who is like Aku?"

Azariah = "Yah (YHWH) has/will help"
Abednego = "Servant of Nabu/Nebo"

***The renaming of these boys represents both a change in Origin and Destiny thus a new Meaning and Purpose for their lives. This was to signify that the old ways of serving the Hebrew God were over and now they would be overseen by the Babylonian deities.*

1.2 The Tests of the God's People in Daniel

- 1 | Chapter 1:
The Issue of Eating the King's Food (Ritual Defilement)
- 2 | Chapter 3:
The Issue of Worshipping Idols (Idolatry)
- 3 | Chapter 6:
The Issue of Petitioning Idols (Idolatry)

Chapter 2

Nebuchadnezzar's First Dream and Its Interpretation

Nebuchadnezzar is plagued by a dream and challenges the "wise men" and sorcerers of the land to tell him both the dream and its meaning with the threat of death if they cannot. Daniel intervenes and God grants him both the dream and its interpretation thus winning Daniel favor and honor and glory to God.

2.1 The Symbols of the Gentile Kingdoms:

The Kingdoms	<i>Symbols in CHAPTER 2</i> THE STATUE	<i>Symbols in CHAPTER 7</i> THE BEASTS
Babylon 605-539 BC	Golden Head	Lion
Medo-Persia 539-331 BC	Silver Chest and Arms	Bear
Greece 331-146 BC	Bronze Belly and Thighs	Leopard
Rome 146 BC – AD 395*	Iron Legs and Feet	The Terrible Beast

*By the end of the Roman Empire it had split into Western and Eastern segments. The last Roman Emperor ruled in the West until AD 476 and the Eastern division lasted until AD 1453

2.2 The Great Rock – The Kingdom to Come

- 1 | It is supernatural in origin – it will be established by God.
- 2 | It will be an everlasting Kingdom.
- 3 | It is of great power to destroy the other kingdoms.
- 4 | It's dominion is worldwide.

Chapter 3

Daniel's Three Friends are Tested with the Fiery Furnace

Daniel's three friends refuse to participate in idolatry (worshipping the statue of Nebuchadnezzar) and are thrown alive into a fiery furnace. God miraculously intervenes and rescues the men *in the midst of the furnace*, once again bringing praise and glory to God. However, they make it clear that the One True God alone is to be worshipped, regardless of whether He intervenes or not.

Chapter 4

Nebuchadnezzar's Second Dream and His Humbling

Through a dream and a period of humiliation, Nebuchadnezzar finally comes to understand the eternal nature of God and His Kingdom and gives glory and praise to the One True God of Heaven.

Chapter 5

Belshazzar and the Writing on the Wall

Because of Belshazzar's arrogance and pride, God decrees that the end of the Babylonian Empire will come swiftly. Daniel is honored again, but Belshazzar is killed the very night the writing appears on the wall.

Daniel 5:22-24 ESV And you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, though you knew all this, 23 *but you have lifted up yourself against the Lord of heaven.* And the vessels of his house have been brought in before you, and you and your lords, your wives, and your concubines have drunk wine from them. And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see or hear or know, *but the God in whose hand is your breath, and whose are all your ways, you have not honored.* 24 "Then from his presence the hand was sent, and this writing was inscribed.

Chapter 6

Daniel is Tested in the Lions Den

Because he will not pray to Darius, Daniel is thrown into the lion's den. Once again God intervenes saving Daniel and causing Darius to praise and give glory to God.

6.1 Who is this Darius the Mede?

- 1 | This may be another name for Cyrus the Persian.
- 2 | This may be another name for a governor named Gubaru whom Cyrus gave charge over the Babylonian empire. This is the best solution.

Chapter 7

Daniel's Vision of the Four Beasts and the Eternal Kingdom

Daniel has a vision of four beasts that represent four world empires. This vision parallels the first dream of Nebuchadnezzar in Chapter 2. Here, however, Daniel receives more detail on the One “like a son of man” who comes to receive authority in God’s Eternal Kingdom. He is also shown more detail about the fourth and final kingdom that will bring human history to a close.

>> *See the chart from Chapter two on the beasts of this vision.*

>> This chapter begins a sequence of 4 visions that appear in two groups. The visions came in the first and third years of King Belshazzar of Babylon and the first and third years of King Cyrus of Persian.

7.1 The Parallels in Revelation 7

This section of Daniel is helpful for interpreting and understanding the materials in Revelation 13 through 17. In Revelation 13 the final human kingdom is portrayed as “THE Beast” headed in the rule of Antichrist.

7.2 The One like a Son of Man

Daniel 7:13 is the most quoted verse from this book in the New Testament. Here we see the revelation of the coming Messiah, the One who will rule God’s eternal Kingdom. *This is the passage from which Jesus draws His “son of man” title.*

Chapter 8

Daniel's Vision of the Goat and the Ram

In this chapter, Daniel is shown another vision that concerns the rise of a third kingdom – Greece – and particularly the treacherous reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. The angel Gabriel comes to interpret this vision for him. *Beginning in this chapter to the end, more detail and emphasis is placed on the Gentile nations and their relationship to Jerusalem and the holy people Israel in the end times.*

>> This second vision of “beasts” takes place in ca. 550 BC – the third year of Belshazzar’s reign.

>> In **December 167 BC** Antiochus desecrated the Temple by building an altar in its precincts and offering pigs on it.

8.1 The Goat and the Ram

- 1 | The Goat is the Greek Empire; the first king is Alexander.
- 2 | The four horns are the four divisions of his empire under his generals (ANITPATER/CASSANDER took control of Greece and Macedonia, LYSIMACHUS ruled Thrace and Asia Minor, SELEUCUS I NICATOR took Syrian, Babylon and much of the middle east, and PTOLEMY I SOTER took Egypt and Palestine.
- 3 | The “little horn” is Anitochus IV Epiphanes

8.2 The 2,300 Days

- 1 | If this is to be taken as a reference to the sacrifices, then only 1,150 actual days would be in view since there were two sacrifices each day- morning and evening. This would span the later 3 years of Antiochus’ reign (ca. 167-164 BC)
- 2 | If this is to be taken just as days, then this would represent about six years and nearly four months, thus spanning the time from the beginning of Antiochus’ persecution (170 BC) till Judas Maccabeus cleansed and re-consecrated the Temple on December 14, 164 BC.

8.3 Parallels Between Antiochus and THE Antichrist of End Times

- 1 | They are both symbolized as little or small “horns”
- 2 | They both gain great power (Daniel 8:24, 11:39; 2 Thessalonians 2:9; Revelation 13:7-8)
- 3 | They are both “empowered” by Satan (see verses above)
- 4 | They both persecute God’s people
- 5 | They are both deceivers
- 6 | They are both ruled by arrogance and pride
- 7 | They both blaspheme the True God
- 8 | They are both destroyed by God’s intervention

Chapter 9

Daniel's Prayer for His People and The Seventy "Sevens"

By reading Jeremiah, Daniel comes to understand that the Babylonian captivity would only last for 70 years. Daniel prays that God would "remember" His words and bring an end to the captivity. In answer to the prayer, Daniel is given the prophecy of the "Seventy Sevens" by Gabriel.

- >> This narrative takes place in ca. 538 BC, about 12 years after the vision of chapter 8. At this point Daniel would have been over 80 years old.
- >> The "time of the evening sacrifice" would have been between 3:00 and 4:00 PM.

9.1 The Key Events of the Seventy Sevens

- 1 | to put and end to rebellion (finish transgression)
- 2 | to bring sin to completion
- 3 | to atone for iniquity
- 4 | to bring in everlasting righteousness
- 5 | to seal up the prophetic vision (vision and prophecy)
- 6 | to anoint the most holy place

9.2 The Timing of the Seventy Sevens

9.2.1 The Beginning date for the Seventy Sevens: The issuing of the decree

Daniel 9:25-27 NET So know and understand: From the issuing of the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until an anointed one, a prince arrives, there will be a period of seven sevens and sixty-two sevens.

- 1 | This could be Cyrus' proclamation issued in 538/537 BC (II Chronicles 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-4 and 6;1-5) which deals mostly with the rebuilding of the Temple.
- 2 | This could be the decree of Darius, given in the year 521 BC (Ezra 6:6-12) which also deals with the Temple.
- 3 | This could be the decree of Artaxerxes I in 458/457 BC (Ezra 7:11-26).

4 | This could be the decree of Artaxerxes I in 445/444 BC
(Nehemiah 2:5-8)

The issue of setting strict dates for this prophetic timetable is very difficult. No matter which view is taken there are problems to be overcome. In the final analysis there is only two types of views on these “seventy sevens”: 1) these numbers are to be taken as literal periods of time, or 2) they are to be taken as only symbolic and figurative periods of time.

I take the view that these numbers represent literal, historical periods of time. I follow the basic approach of Stephen Miller (*The New American Commentary*) and Gleason L. Archer (*The Expositor's Bible Commentary*) who begin this dating with the decree to Ezra given in 458/457 BC. This seems to fit the evidence better than the other two dates.

With the starting date of 458/457 BC we add to it the first period of “sevens” or $7 \times 7 = 49$ years and this would bring us to the date 409/408 BC. Although this text does not tell us what is supposed to happen around this date it is interesting to note that this is about the time that rebuilding projects of Nehemiah and Ezra were completed in Jerusalem. Miller notes that in the Elephantine Papyri another governor had replaced Nehemiah by 407 BC. This makes it possible and probable that Nehemiah's work was completed by 409/408 BC (Miller, *Daniel*, NAC, 266).

To this first set of “sevens,” we now add the other set of 62 “sevens” and come up with 69 weeks of years or 483 years. By adding this to the date 458 we come to the year AD 26/27 (we gain a year moving from BC to AD because there is no year 0). *This is the time when Jesus would have been baptized by John at the beginning of His ministry!*

9.2.2 Jerusalem is rebuilt again in Ezra and Nehemiah's time.

...It will again be built, with plaza and moat, but in distressful times.

9.2.3 The Anointed one, Christ, will be cut off.

26 Now after the sixty-two sevens, an anointed one will be cut off and have nothing.

9.2.4 The Temple will be destroyed again by the people of the coming prince – Antichrist.

As for the city and the sanctuary, the people of the coming prince will destroy them. But his end will come speedily like a flood. Until the end of the war that has been decreed there will be destruction.

9.2.5 In the final period of Seven, Antichrist will bring a covenant of peace but will break it midway through. He will be destroyed in the end.

27 He will confirm a covenant with many for one seven. But in the middle of that seven he will bring sacrifices and offerings to a halt. On the wing of abominations will come one who destroys, until the decreed end is poured out on the one who destroys."

*The following charts seeks to bring all of this together:

7 "SEVENS" (49 YEARS)	62 "SEVENS"	THE SEVENTIETH "SEVEN"
The time in which Ezra and Nehemiah restore Jerusalem	Add to the first 7 "sevens" brings us to the beginning of Christ's ministry.	The final "seven" is the Tribulation of the End Times in which Antichrist comes to power.
<i>"Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city..."</i>	Literally "Seventy sevens" that are meant as "weeks" of years: 1 week = 7 years So, 70 weeks = 490 years	
<i>9:25a "Know then and understand that from the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be a period of seven weeks and sixty two weeks..."</i>	The word is taken as that of Artaxerxes in 458/457 BC. 7 Weeks (49 years) + 62 Weeks (434 years) for a total of 69 Weeks or 483 years 483 years after 458/457 BC is 26/27 AD which is the time in which Jesus began His public ministry.	
<i>9:25b "...It will again be built, with plaza and moat, but in distressful times.</i>	This is probably the time signified by the first period of "sevens" – 7x7 or 49 years. This would be the time between 458/457 BC till 409/408 BC the times in which Ezra and Nehemiah were doing their work in troubled times	
<i>9:26a "Now after the sixty two weeks, an anointed one will be cut off and have nothing.</i>	This comes after the total 483 years. Thus Jesus' crucifixion ("being cut off") took place about 3 years after the beginning of His ministry in AD 26/27	
<i>As for the city and the sanctuary, the people of the coming prince will destroy them. But his end will come speedily like a flood. Until the end of the war that has been decreed there will be destruction.</i>	The later half of this verse probably speaks to the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem under Titus in AD 70.	
<i>9:27 He (the prince to come, Antichrist) will confirm a covenant with many for one week. But in the middle of that week he will bring sacrifices and offerings to a halt. On the wing of abominations will come one who destroys, until the decreed end is poured out on the one who destroys."</i>	The final period of 7 YEARS (The Seventieth Seven) is taken to be the Tribulation referred to by Jesus (Matthew 24:15ff.) and foreseen in Revelation 6-19 since the historical events immediately after the life of Christ do not seem to fulfill what is revealed here.	

Chapter 10

Daniel's Distressing Vision of a Great War and The Angelic Interpreter

Chapters 10-12 contain Daniel's final prophecies. The contents of this vision span from the time of the Persian Kingdom to the establishment of the Kingdom of God. Here Daniel receives the visions concerning wars that lead to the end.

>> The third year of Cyrus' rule would have been 536/535 BC which would have been 2 years after receiving the vision of chapter 9 and a short while after the first return of the Jewish exiles to Judah.

Chapter 11

The Interpretation of the Vision of the Great War

The contents of the vision that disturbed Daniel in 10 are revealed in this chapter and in 12. The prophecies here concern key events leading to the end of history. At the heart of these prophecies are two people: Antiochus and Antichrist. It is fitting that these major events are revealed in this way since Antiochus is a pre-figuring of Antichrist.

Ecclesiastes 3:14-15 NET I also know that whatever God does will endure forever; nothing can be added to it, and nothing taken away from it. God has made it this way, so that men will fear him. 15 Whatever exists now has already been, and whatever will be has already been; for God will seek to do again what has occurred in the past.

11.1 Basic Outline of the Prophecies

- 1 | Prophecies about Persian (11:2)
- 2 | Prophecies about Greece (11:3-4)
- 3 | Prophecies about Egypt and Syria (11:5-20)
- 4 | Prophecies about Antiochus IV (11:21-35)
- 5 | Prophecies about Antichrist the End Times (11:36-12:3)

Chapter 12

The End of Days

**The material in 12:1-3 belongs with the material at the end of chapter 11. This is one of the places where the chapter division has been unfortunately placed in the middle of a section. (*Remember the chapter and verse divisions were place centuries after the writing of the Bible*)

In this final chapter, Daniel receives instruction to preserve these prophecies as well as new information about the end times that is to be “sealed up” until the time comes. This chapter has one of the clearest expositions of the resurrection in the Hebrew Scriptures (cf. Job 19:26; Psalm 17:15; Isaiah 26:19 for others)

12.1 How Long till the End of Days?

- 1 | “*time, times and half a time*” = 3 ½ years. This would more than likely correspond to the latter 3 ½ years of the final “seven” which is the time of the Tribulation which precedes the return of Christ.
- 2 | The “abomination that brings desolation” refers to the Antichrist entering the Temple and declaring Himself to be god. (cf. Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:15)

12.2 1,290 days and 1,335 days

In 12:7 the “time, times and half a time” or 3 ½ years would be about 1,260 days. This is the number used in Revelation for the latter 3 ½ years of the Tribulation (cf. Revelation 11:3 and 12:6). Here we see that from the time the sacrifices are stopped and to abomination is set up there will be 1,290 days. The problem here is that we don’t know what the end point of this number is.

- 1 | If the 1,290 days begins at the beginning of the final 3 ½ years this would place us 30 days after the return of Christ to the Earth. *Some have speculated that this may be the time in which Christ judges the nations before His earthly reign.*
- 2 | If the 1,290 is to take us to the end, to the coming of Christ, this would place the abomination 30 days before the 3 ½ years.
- 3 | The 1,335 are related to the 1,290 days. If we take the first option above this would place us 75 days after the return of Christ, perhaps the beginning of His earthly reign after He has restored the earth. If we take the second view this would place us 45 days after the return of Christ. In either case, we are in the time following the end of this present history and the beginning of the earthly reign of Christ.

