

DANIEL – The Key to Revelation

Week 1 – Introduction to the Book of Daniel

9/6/26 – PM

TEXT: Daniel 1:1-8

Prophecy is “history written in advance”, and proves the foreknowledge of God. Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2:45 – “the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter; and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.”

Rev. Clarence Larkin, a great theologian of prophecy, lived from 1850-1924. He was a Baptist pastor, Bible teacher, and author, who wrote great works on dispensationalism in the early 20th century. He reminds us that prophecy is two-fold. **It is “descriptive”, and it is “predictive”**. The prophets of the Bible did not find their deductions from human reasoning, but from the Holy Spirit imparting them. 2 Peter 1:21 – “for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but Holy Men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”

In his book on Daniel, he gives the illustration of 16 detailed prophecies in reference to Christ’s first coming that were literally fulfilled in the last week of His earthly life:

1. Sold for 30 pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12)
2. Betrayed by a friend (Psalm 41:9)
3. Forsaken by his disciples (Zechariah 13:7)
4. Accused by false witnesses (Psalm 35:11)
5. Dumb (mute) before his accusers (Isaiah 53:7)
6. Spit upon and scourged (Isaiah 53:5)
7. Hands and feet pierced (Psalm 22:16)
8. His garments divided by lot (Psalm 22:18)
9. Mocked by his enemies (Psalm 22:7-8)
10. Given gall and vinegar (Psalm 69:21)
11. Prayed for his murderers (Isaiah 53:12)

12. Not a bone was broken (Psalm 34:20)
13. Crucified with thieves (Isaiah 53:12)
14. His forsaken cry (Psalm 22:1)
15. His side was pierced (Zechariah 12:10)
16. Buried with the rich (Isaiah 53:9)

*The compound probability that all these prophecies would be fulfilled in the same individual – and when we account that these prophecies were made by different prophets during a period of 600 years, and half of them made about 1000 years before Jesus was born – and to see them happen with such marvelous accuracy of his crucifixion – we must admit that the men who foretold these incidents MUST have been indwelt by the spirit of God.

And so it is with Daniel. He was given visions and interpretations concerning the “time of the Gentiles”, while sharing with us the history of the Jewish people and their captivity. Dr. Schofield says that Daniel’s vision sweeps the whole course of Gentile world-rule to its end in catastrophe, and to the setting up of the Messianic kingdom. The book has four broad divisions:

1. Daniel’s personal history from the conquest of Jerusalem to the second year of Nebuchadnezzar. (ch.1)
2. The visions of Nebuchadnezzar and their result (ch. 2-4)
3. The history of Daniel under Belshazzar and Darius (ch. 5-6)
4. The 4 prophetic visions of Daniel himself (ch. 7-12)
 - a. Daniel’s visions are all related to the times of the gentiles, from Nebuchadnezzar to the coming Anti-Christ.
 - b. It is these visions that give us the “key to Revelation”, and the chapters that we will spend most of our time studying.

I. Daniel – Facts about the man and his ministry

- a. He was of royal blood in Israel (1:3)
- b. He was well trained and cultured. Physically fit and skillful in wisdom and knowledge. Academically proven (1:4)

- c. He had godly parents (1:8) – refused to break God’s laws
- d. Possibly 18-20 years old when taken captive
- e. Spent his entire ministry in Babylon (approx. 70 yrs.)
- f. Lived to be an old man (possibly over 90), but the time and manner of his death are not revealed.
- g. He lived through 4 kings:
 - i. Nebuchadnezzar
 - ii. Belshazzar (grandson of Nebuchadnezzar and “crown prince” of Babylon. His father was King Nabonidus, who lived in Arabia for a decade, leaving Belshazzar as ruler in Babylon. For a long time, critics doubted his existence because secular histories omitted him until 19th century archaeological discoveries proved his existence and role.)
 - iii. Darius, the Median King
 - iv. Cyrus, the Medio-Persian
- h. Daniel was a contemporary of the prophets Jeremiah (who also prophesied about Babylon and the 70 years of Jewish captivity.) Also, Ezekiel, who was part of the second deportation of the Jews from their land, 8 years after Daniel was carried away. Ezekiel mentions Daniel three times in his writings. And finally, Ezra, who was part of the first group that returned to Jerusalem and wrote the book bearing his name.
- i. Daniel was written in Babylon in 535-533 B.C. and covers about 73 years of time.
- j. Jesus himself gave approval and authenticity to Daniel in Matthew 24:15 (read).
- k. The Book of Daniel is written in two languages
 - i. Hebrew, the language of Judah and Jerusalem
 - ii. Aramaic, the ancient language of Syria, and substantially identical to the Chaldaic language of ancient Babylon.

1. What is written concerning the gentile empires is written in Aramaic, and what is written concerning the Jews is written in Hebrew.

II. The Carrying Away of Judah and the Destruction of Jerusalem

- a. For reference, 2 Kings 24-25, 2 Chronicles 36:8-23 tell of the events that resulted in Daniel and his contemporaries being carried off to Babylon.
 - i. 605 B.C. – Daniel and his company – certain children of Israel, the kings seed, and certain princes – you might say “the cream of the crop” – and “part” of the vessels of the Temple (1:2-3)
 - ii. 597 B.C. – King of Judah, Jehoiachin, all the princes, all the mighty men of valor, 10,000 captives, all the craftsmen and smiths (7,000) were taken from Jerusalem, leaving only the poorest and basest of people. ALL the treasures of the temple are taken this time. This is considered the “main deportation” of the Jews from Jerusalem, eight years after Daniel was taken. By this time, Daniel and his friends have settled and adapted in Babylon. They have passed the test of their faith, and have been promoted to the King’s palace as servants.
 - iii. 586 B.C. – Jerusalem is wasted and burned on the 9th of Av, the fifth month of the Jewish calendar. This date becomes known as “Tisha B’av”, the day of national mourning and fasting for the Jewish people. It commemorates a number of national disasters in Jewish history – the greatest of which was the destruction of both of the great temples in Jerusalem on the same date. Solomon’s temple by the Babylonians in 586, and the second temple (Herod’s temple) destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D. Besides the destruction of the temples, Jews also remember this date as the day that the 10 spies brought fear to the hearts of Israel causing them not to enter the promised land. On this date in 135 AD, the Romans crushed a Jewish

revolt in the city of Betar, killing approximately 580,000 civilians. The Jews were expelled from England on Av 9, 1290. They were expelled from France on Av 10, 1306. Queen Isabella expelled Jews from Spain on Av 7, 1492. Germany started WWI on Av 9, 1914, which caused massive upheaval in European Judaism and whose aftermath led to WW2 and the Holocaust. On Av 7, 1941, Nazi leadership prepared for the “final solution”, which would culminate in the murder of approximately 1/3 of the world’s Jewish population.

III. Daniel’s Early History in Babylon (Chapter 1)

- a. “Daniel” – means “God is my judge” in Hebrew. His name reflects his life – that divine (God’s) judgment supersedes the laws or judgments of earthly kings.
- b. Daniel is taken to Babylon during the reign of Jehoiakim. Though he and his friends are put through “Babylon University”, they prove that their faith in God and His word is greater than the worldly influences. They “mastered” the material, but they did not let the material “master” them. They were given Babylonian names, but their names did not change who they were (1:6-7)
- c. A crisis of conviction (1:8-16)
 - i. Purposed in his heart not to be defiled. It was a test of food. It was forbidden (not Jewish diet), likely bloody, and had most likely been offered to idols. After 10 days, they proved to be healthier and have a better countenance than all the others.
 - ii. God blessed them (1:17) with knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom. And – he gave Daniel understanding in visions and dreams (which would be tremendously helpful in the future.)
 - iii. King Nebuchadnezzar communed and questioned with the four of them, and they were found “10 times” better than all of his magicians and astrologers in the realm of Babylon. (vs. 19-20)

OTHER QUOTATIONS USED IN LESSON 1

"The Book of Daniel", Rev. Clarence Larkin, published 1929

- 1) *"The key to all prophecy is the Jew. If the Jewish nation had not forsaken God and neglected His sabbaths, there would have been no "Times of the Gentiles." The "Times of the Gentiles" began when God transferred earthly rule from the Kings of Israel to the Gentile king Nebuchadnezzar, and they will continue until Israel again becomes the "Head of the Nations." Daniel is distinctly the Prophet of the "Times of the Gentiles." His vision sweeps the whole course of Gentile World Rule until the setting up of the Messianic or Millennial Kingdom of Christ. Daniel was not a prophet in the same sense that Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Minor Prophets were prophets. Their mission was to go to the people and proclaim the Word of the Lord, while Daniel's mission was to record what was revealed to him through visions. While he did not have the "Prophetic Office," he had the "Prophetic Gift." The Book of Daniel is the Apocalypse of the Old Testament, as the Book of Revelation is the Apocalypse of the New Testament, and one cannot be understood without the other, and it is worthy of note that as Daniel is thrice called the man "greatly beloved," the Apostle John is called the "beloved disciple." To these two men was accorded the privilege of seeing in vision the whole "course of time" from B.C. 606, on down to the Second Coming of Christ." (p. 14-15)*
- 2) *"Of Daniel himself we know more than of any of the other prophets. He was of the Tribe of Judah, and of noble, if not royal, blood. He was probably twenty years of age when he was taken to Babylon, and in a short time he rose to a very high position in the Empire, which he held during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. At his death Daniel went into retirement*

and is not heard of again until he was summoned to pronounce the doom of Belshazzar. He lived through the whole period of the "Seventy Years Captivity," and became the "Chief President" over the 120 Princes of the Kingdom, under was a man "greatly beloved" of God. He associated with kings and politicians. He led a public life. He held office, yet his character was never impeached. He talked with angels. The Lord Himself appeared unto him, and he had visions of God. He was the Prophetic Statesman of his day. It was given to him to study the "Signs of the Times," to know the outcome of all the world's boasted civilization and to see that the nations of the earth should degenerate in political power until the clay of democracy, socialism, and anarchy should so weaken the nations that there would be no cohesion among them, and that the only salvation for a chaotic world would be the return of Christ, and the setting up of his Millennial Kingdom." (p. 16, emphasis added)

**Pastor's note – Understand that this paragraph was written by Rev. Larkin over 100 years ago. His description of the coming state of the world truly identifies where we are today (2026) with the rise of socialism and anarchy, and the chaos of our current times.*