

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

Faithful to God in a Hostile World

KEY VERSE • Daniel 2:20–22

BIG IDEA: God is sovereign over kings, kingdoms, history, and the future; therefore, His people can remain faithful to Him regardless of the culture around them.

1. THE HISTORICAL SETTING — Daniel 1:1–7

- 605 BC — Nebuchadnezzar attacks Jerusalem and carries Daniel and other young men to Babylon.
- 597 BC — A second deportation occurs.
- 586 BC — Jerusalem and the temple are destroyed.
- Daniel's ministry extends from the Babylonian Empire into the early Medo-Persian period — roughly 70 years of faithful service.

MAIN FOCUS: *Daniel's circumstances changed dramatically, but Daniel's God had not changed.*

2. THE MAN DANIEL

Daniel models a life of: **conviction • wisdom • prayerfulness • humility • courage • integrity • faithfulness**

Key references: Daniel 1:8; 1:17–20; 2:17–23; 2:27–30; 5:17–28; 6:4–5; 6:10; 6:23

Reflection: *What enables someone to remain faithful to God for an entire lifetime rather than merely during one season?*

3. THE STRUCTURE OF DANIEL

CHAPTERS	SECTION	MAIN EMPHASIS
1–6	Historical narratives	God is sovereign in the present. God rules history.
7–12	Prophetic visions	God is sovereign over the future. God has determined where history is going.

4. THREE MAJOR THEMES IN DANIEL

A. THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD • Daniel 2:21; 4:17, 25, 32; 5:21

Kings appear powerful, but there is a King above every king. The greater message is not merely “Look how courageous Daniel was,” but “Look how sovereign Daniel’s God is.”

B. FAITHFULNESS IN A PAGAN CULTURE • Daniel 1:8; 3; 6

Babylon attempted to reshape Daniel’s location, education, language, name, career, and culture — but it could not change his allegiance to God. Biblical faithfulness requires engagement without compromise.

C. THE KINGDOM OF GOD • Daniel 2:44; 7:13–14

Earthly kingdoms rise and fall, but God’s kingdom will not be destroyed. Daniel points forward to the “Son of Man” whose dominion and kingdom are everlasting.

5. UNDERSTANDING THE PROPHECY — Daniel 7–12

Interpretive principle: *Start with what the prophecy clearly teaches before debating every prophetic detail.*

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| ✓ Human kingdoms will rise. | ✓ Human kingdoms will fall. |
| ✓ God’s people will sometimes suffer. | ✓ Evil will not continue indefinitely. |
| ✓ God will judge evil. | ✓ God’s kingdom will ultimately triumph. |

FOUR GREAT TRUTHS TO CARRY THROUGH THE SERIES

1. GOD IS SOVEREIGN

Daniel 2:20–22 — Nothing occurring in Babylon surprises God.

3. GOD HUMBLING THE PROUD

Daniel 4:37 — Human pride cannot compete with divine sovereignty.

2. GOD CALLS HIS PEOPLE TO FAITHFULNESS

Daniel 1:8 — Faithfulness sometimes requires standing apart from the culture.

4. GOD’S KINGDOM WILL TRIUMPH

Daniel 7:13–14 — Every earthly empire is temporary. Christ’s kingdom is eternal.

A SIMPLE FRAMEWORK FOR THE CHURCH

Who is in control? God is. **How should God’s people live?** Faithfully.

Where is history going? Toward the triumph of God’s kingdom.

Because God rules history and controls the future, God’s people can live faithfully in the present.

SOURCE BASE: John MacArthur Study Bible; ESV Study Bible; Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament (John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, eds.).