

are write his truth in a book. That means we must use  
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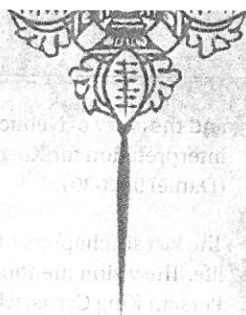
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## THE BOOK OF DANIEL



**Author:** Daniel, one of the "young men of Judah's royal family" who was taken captive from Jerusalem in 605 BC by the Babylonians. Daniel was trained to serve in the Babylonian royal court (Daniel 1:1-4). He tells the story, and he is the central character for the events in the book.

**Date:** Probably written sometime soon after the fall of Babylon in 537/536 BC. It records events of Daniel and his friends during the seventy years the Jews were in captivity by the Babylonians and the Medo-Persians.

Daniel's vision in chapter 8 gives details about the Greek Empire, its division into four kingdoms, and the desecration of the Temple in Jerusalem in 168 BC by a ruler of one of the Greek kingdoms. Those who believe that God can predict the future believe Daniel foretold these events. But those who do not believe that God can predict the future generally believe that Daniel was written in the second century BC after the events Daniel wrote about took place.

**Purpose:** The Temple in Jerusalem had been plundered, and Judah's people taken into Exile by the Babylonians. This event cast a shadow on the people's belief in God's ability to defeat the gods of other nations. Would the Jews survive as a distinct people? The book of Daniel shows the sovereignty of God over nations and his final triumph over kingdoms of this earth. The book shows that God is in control now, always has been, and for ever will be. Daniel also shows us that God hears and answers prayer. We can be certain that God will preserve his chosen people and establish his Kingdom. When God demonstrates his power, even the worst of heathen kings will proclaim that God is sovereign (Daniel 4:34-37; 5:25-27). Finally, Daniel serves as an example of how to faithfully serve God in a secular society, especially as a leader in politics and government.

**Overview and Story:** When King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon conquered Jerusalem, he took the elite of the society of Judah back to Babylon, including Daniel and his three friends, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Nebuchadnezzar tried to influence these men by giving them new names, a new language and literature, and new food. They were to be future leaders under his authority and inside Babylonian culture. These are the same methods by which many of us have lost parts of our culture. They are given new names, a new kind of education, and new types of food. But Nebuchadnezzar did not succeed. Belteshazzar (Daniel), Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego endured a series of temptations and persecutions but remained faithful to God (Daniel 2:20-23). The book of Daniel includes two of the Bible's best-known stories of God's deliverance: the blazing furnace (Daniel 3:13-27) and the lion's den (Daniel 6:10-24). Because of God's deliverance, both Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4:34-37) and Darius (Daniel 5:25-27) confessed that God is the only true God.

The first six chapters of Daniel tell the story of Daniel's life in Exile and his relationship with three kings: Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 1-4); Belshazzar, king of Babylon sometime after Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 5, 7-8); and Darius, the Mede (Daniel 6; 9). It includes Daniel's interpretation of two of Nebuchadnezzar's dreams (Daniel 2:17-45; 4:19-27).

and the story of Nebuchadnezzar's desire to be worshipped. It also includes Daniel's interpretation for King Belshazzar of handwriting that appeared on the wall of the palace (Daniel 5:13-30).

The last six chapters of Daniel contain a number of visions God gave Daniel later in life. The vision mentioned in 10:1 was given to Daniel in the third year of the reign of Persian King Cyrus, which would have been about 536 BC, when Daniel was probably in his eighties. Under Cyrus, Daniel witnessed the return of the exiles to Jerusalem! God revealed in these dreams and visions the story of the rise and destruction of future nations and the eventual establishment of a permanent Kingdom whose King will be God himself. This Kingdom will never have an end and cannot be destroyed by any human force.

Today, God's Kingdom is moving forwards through the physical presence of the church, which was founded by Christ himself. Many earthly powers have tried to destroy it without success. God will continue to protect and defend his church in times of persecution. He will preserve his church to the end. Forces of other religions and ideologies, atheism, and materialism are attempting to destroy God's Kingdom, just as the Babylonians, Assyrians, Greeks, and Romans of Daniel's vision thought they could destroy God's people. They will not succeed. God's Kingdom will continue to grow until "as the waters fill the sea, the earth will be filled with an awareness of the glory of the LORD" (Habakkuk 2:14). God's Kingdom will triumph most visibly after the return of Christ.

#### What Daniel Teaches Us:

- God is sovereign and guides history (Daniel 2:20-23). He gives to and takes power from those he wants. Manmade empires are temporary, but God's Kingdom is everlasting.
- Key elements in Daniel also prepare us for the ministry of Jesus: the understanding of the resurrection of the dead (Daniel 12:1-3), the Kingdom of God, and a heavenly Ruler who is the great Son of Man (Daniel 7:13-14).
- The Jews were living as refugees in other countries, like many Africans today. Because of the many problems and difficulties they faced, they might have been tempted to abandon their cultures—and even worse, their faith. Instead, they were a testimony to the nation where God had scattered them.
- Daniel's life reminds us that prayer is effective, even in times of hardship and persecution (Daniel 6). Steadfast faith and integrity allow God to use us in a hostile place.
- When God's people remain faithful and obedient to his Word, God can use them to change the hearts of kings and leaders. When we refuse to compromise our integrity it affects the power structures that surround us.
- Those in power over us can change our circumstances and even our identity to match their worldview—Daniel was given a Babylonian name—but they cannot change our hearts (Daniel 1:8).
- It is possible to serve in a non-Christian government with honour and integrity and positively affect the direction of the nation.

#### OUTLINE AND RHYTHM

##### Tests of Integrity in a Foreign Land (1:1-6:28)

###### Living in Nebuchadnezzar's court (1:1-21)

- First test of integrity—physical needs (1:1-7)
- Response of Daniel and friends (1:8-16)
- Results of integrity and faithfulness (1:17-21)

###### Nebuchadnezzar's first dream concerning his future

- Second test of integrity—faithfulness in delivery
- Daniel's response—commitment to truth (2:1-13)
- Results of integrity and faithfulness (2:14-49)

###### Nebuchadnezzar's desire to be worshipped (3:1-3)

- Third test of integrity—commitment to worship
- Daniel's friends' responses—faithfulness in worship
- Results of integrity and faithfulness (3:26-30)

###### Nebuchadnezzar's second dream and its fulfilment

- Fourth test of integrity—preaching God's judgment
- Daniel's response—warning about pride and sin
- Results of integrity and faithfulness (4:28-37)

###### Belshazzar's vision about his kingdom (5:1-31)

- Fifth test of integrity—personal wealth (5:1-16)
- Daniel's response—faithfulness to God alone (5:17-28)
- Results of integrity and faithfulness (5:30-31)

###### Darius' desire to be worshipped (6:1-28)

- Sixth test of integrity—prayer (6:1-9)
- Daniel's response—praying to God alone (6:10-18)
- Results of integrity and faithfulness (6:23-28)

##### Daniel's Visions of the Future (7:1-12:13)

###### Daniel's vision of four beasts (7:1-28)

- Daniel's vision (7:1-14)
- Interpretation (7:15-28)

###### Daniel's vision of a ram and a mighty goat (8:1-27)

- Daniel's vision (8:1-14)
- Interpretation (8:15-27)

###### Daniel's prayer and vision of seventy weeks (9:1-27)

- Daniel's prayer (9:1-19)
- Interpretation from Gabriel (9:20-27)

###### Daniel's vision of future kingdoms (10:1-12:13)

- Daniel's vision of the Messenger (10:1-21)
- Interpretation (11:1-12:13)

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Response of Daniel and friends (1:8-16)

Results of integrity and faithfulness (1:17-21)

#### Nebuchadnezzar's first dream concerning his future kingdom (2:1-49)

Second test of integrity—faithfulness in delivering God's Word (2:1-16)

Daniel's response—commitment to truth (2:17-45)

Results of integrity and faithfulness (2:46-49)

#### Nebuchadnezzar's desire to be worshipped (3:1-30)

Third test of integrity—commitment to worship (3:1-15)

Daniel's friends' responses—faithfulness in worshipping God alone (3:16-25)

Results of integrity and faithfulness (3:26-30)

#### Nebuchadnezzar's second dream and its fulfilment (4:1-37)

Fourth test of integrity—preaching God's judgement (4:1-18)

Daniel's response—warning about pride and sinfulness (4:19-27)

Results of integrity and faithfulness (4:28-37)

#### Belshazzar's vision about his kingdom (5:1-31)

Fifth test of integrity—personal wealth (5:1-16)

Daniel's response—faithfulness to God alone (5:17-29)

Results of integrity and faithfulness (5:30-31)

#### Darius' desire to be worshipped (6:1-28)

Sixth test of integrity—prayer (6:1-9)

Daniel's response—praying to God alone (6:10-22)

Results of integrity and faithfulness (6:23-28)

### Daniel's Visions of the Future (7:1-12:13)

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Daniel's prayer (9:1-19)

Interpretation from Gabriel (9:20-27)

#### Daniel's vision of future kingdoms (10:1-12:13)

Daniel's vision of the Messenger (10:1-21)

Interpretation (11:1-12:13)



<sup>30</sup>That very night Belshazzar, the Babylonian\* king, was killed.\*

<sup>31</sup>\*And Darius the Mede took over the kingdom at the age of sixty-two.

### Daniel in the Lions' Den

**6**<sup>1</sup>Darius the Mede decided to divide the kingdom into 120 provinces, and he appointed a high officer to rule over each province. <sup>2</sup>The king also chose Daniel and two others as administrators to supervise the high officers and protect the king's interests. <sup>3</sup>Daniel soon proved himself more capable than all the other administrators and high officers. Because of Daniel's great ability, the king made plans to place him over the entire empire.

**5:30a** Or Chaldean. **5:30b** The Persians and Medes conquered Babylon in October 539 B.C. **5:31** Verse 5:31 is numbered 6:1 in Aramaic text. **6:1** Verses 6:1-28 are numbered 6:2-29 in Aramaic text.

### APPLICATION

#### A MAN OF PRAYER • Daniel 6

Is it easier to do the right thing and be punished, or to do the wrong thing and go free? Many of us would choose to do the wrong thing—like give a bribe to avoid going to court for a traffic offence or speak a lie to avoid shame.

When Daniel was faced with the choice of not praying and saving his life or continuing to pray and being thrown into the lions' den, he chose the lions' den and kept praying. We all have much to learn from this devout man of integrity, but his story is especially important for leaders and politicians. Daniel was working in conditions similar to those in which many politicians are operating today in Africa.

Daniel was the most capable of all the administrators and high officials in the kingdom. This caused jealousy in the other officials, so his enemies convinced King Darius the Mede to make it a crime to pray to anyone except to Darius himself. Daniel, however, remained faithful to the God of Israel—not

just in word but also in action. His enemies tried to attack him through his faith, which they thought was a weakness. In fact, his faith was his greatest strength.

Because Daniel chose to do the right thing even in the face of death, the king observed God's power and then honoured God. He gave a decree that everyone in his kingdom should acknowledge the God of Daniel as the one and only living God.

When we do the right thing, no matter what the cost or circumstances, we proclaim the God we serve. Our actions may be sending a message to a corrupt police officer or to a struggling governor who needs courage. Any time we do the wrong thing to get ourselves out of trouble, we are missing an opportunity to proclaim the message of Christ without words. Daniel was an example of a man who maintained his integrity by trusting in God. Not even his enemies could find fault in him. Can the same be said of you?

#### AN EXAMPLE OF INTEGRITY • Daniel 6:5

Darius appointed Daniel and two others as administrators over the kingdom's 120 provinces so that the king would not lose revenue through the activities of corrupt officials. Corruption is a huge challenge to good governance anywhere in the world and in any generation. It has devastated many societies, making millions of citizens poor while making a few fabulously rich. Sometimes even the most committed Christians, under pressure of a bad economy, are tempted to participate in corrupt practices.

Daniel provides us a different model. A Christian who desires

#### GOD IS YOUR PROTECTOR • Daniel 6:10-11

The government officials' reaction to the king's plan to put Daniel in charge of the entire empire is not unusual. Daniel was a Jew in Babylon who was trusted by the king. But Daniel's colleagues hated him because of the honour he received for serving the king well. They plotted against him, using his worship of God and ethnicity as an excuse. Daniel was thrown into the lions' den, but God saved him.

It can be difficult to celebrate the success of individuals with whom we compete. Instead, people who are jealous of another person's success frequently make every effort to destroy the person who has risen to the top of his or her career through hard work. We should never be jealous of a person's successes.

**5:30** Isa 21:4-9; Jer 51:11, 31, 39, 57. **5:31** Dan 6:1; 9:1. **6:1** Esth 1:1. **6:2** Ezra 4:22; Esth 7:4; Dan 2:48-49; 5:16, 29. **6:3** Gen 41:40; Dan 5:12. **6:4** Gen 43:18; Luke 23:14-15; Phil 2:15. **6:5** Acts 24:13-16. **6:6** Neh 2:3. **6:7** Pss 59:3; 62:4; 64:2-6. **6:16** Dan 6:16. **6:17** Matt 12:14.

<sup>4</sup>Then the other administrators and high officers began searching for some fault in the way Daniel was handling government affairs, but they couldn't find anything to criticise or condemn. He was faithful, always responsible, and completely trustworthy. <sup>5</sup>So they concluded, "Our only chance of finding grounds for accusing Daniel will be in connection with the rules of his religion."

<sup>6</sup>So the administrators and high officers went to the king and said, "Long live King Darius! <sup>7</sup>We are all in agreement—we administrators, officials, high officers, advisers, and governors—that the king should make a

law that will be strictly enforced. Give orders that for the next thirty days any person who prays to anyone, divine or human—except to you, Your Majesty—will be thrown into the den of lions. <sup>8</sup>And now, Your Majesty, issue and sign this law so it cannot be changed, an official law of the Medes and Persians that cannot be revoked." <sup>9</sup>So King Darius signed the law.

<sup>10</sup>But when Daniel learned that the law had been signed, he went home and knelt down as usual in his upstairs room, with its windows open towards Jerusalem. He prayed three times a day, just as he had always done, giving thanks to his God. <sup>11</sup>Then the officials went together to Daniel's house and found him praying and asking for God's help. <sup>12</sup>So they went straight to the king and reminded him about his law. "Did you not sign a law that for the next thirty days any person who prays to anyone, divine or human—except to you, Your Majesty—will be thrown into the den of lions?"

"Yes," the king replied; "that decision stands; it is an official law of the Medes and Persians that cannot be revoked."

<sup>13</sup>Then they told the king, "That man Daniel, one of the captives from Judah, is ignoring you and your law. He still prays to his God three times a day."

<sup>14</sup>Hearing this, the king was deeply troubled, and he tried to think of a way to save Daniel. He spent the rest of the day looking for a way to get Daniel out of this predicament.

<sup>15</sup>In the evening the men went together to the king and said, "Your Majesty, you know that according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, no law that the king signs can be changed."

<sup>16</sup>So at last the king gave orders for Daniel to be arrested and thrown into the den of lions. The king said to him, "May your God, whom you serve so faithfully, rescue you."

<sup>17</sup>A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den. The king sealed the stone with his own royal seal and the seals of his nobles, so that no one could rescue Daniel. <sup>18</sup>Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night fasting. He refused his usual entertainment and couldn't sleep at all that night.

<sup>19</sup>Very early the next morning, the king got up and hurried out to the lions' den. <sup>20</sup>When he got there, he called out in anguish, "Daniel, servant of the living God! Was your God, whom you serve so faithfully, able to rescue you from the lions?"

<sup>21</sup>Daniel answered, "Long live the king! <sup>22</sup>My God sent his angel to shut the lions' mouths so that they would not hurt me, for I

**6:28** Or of Darius, that is, the reign of Cyrus the Persian. **7:1** The first year of Darius (or perhaps as late as 553 B.C.).

**6:8** Esth 1:19; Isa 10: Dan 6:12; Matt 24:4.

**6:9** Pss 118:146; 3.

**6:10** 1 Kgs 8:48; Pss 34:1; 5; Dan 9:4-1; 1 Thes 5:17.

**6:11** Ps 37:32; Dan 6:6.

**6:12** Esth 1:19; Dan 3:8-12; Acts 16:19.

**6:13** Esth 3:8; Dan 3:12; Acts 5:29.

**6:14** Mark 6:26.

**6:15** Esth 8:8; Ps 94:20-2; Dan 6:8, 12.

**6:16** Job 5:19; Ps 37:39-41; Jer 38:5.

**6:17** Lam 3:53; Matt 27:66.

**6:18** 2 Sam 12:16; Esth 6:1; Rev 18:22.

**6:20** Jer 32:17; Dan 3:17; Hos 12:6.

**6:22** Ps 91:11-13; Acts 12:11; 2 Tim 4:17; Heb 11:33.

**6:23** Ps 118:8; Isa 26:3; Dan 3:17, 28.

**6:24** Deut 19:18-19; 2 Kgs 14:6.

**6:25** Ezra 1:1-2; Esth 3:12; 8:9; Hos 1:10; 1 Pet 1:2.

**6:26** Ps 93:1-2.

**6:27** Job 33:14-16; Jer 36:4; Dan 2:1, 26-28; 4:5-9; Joel 2:28.

**7:2** Rev 7:1.

**7:3** Rev 13:1.

**7:7** Rev 12:3; 13:1.

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When we do the right thing, no matter what the cost or circumstances, we proclaim the God we serve. Our actions may be sending a message to a corrupt police officer or to a struggling governor who needs courage. Any time we do the wrong thing to get ourselves out of trouble, we are missing an opportunity to proclaim the message of Christ without words. Daniel was an example of a man who maintained his integrity by trusting in God. Not even his enemies could find fault in him. Can the same be said of you?

to please God can live a life of integrity and honesty even in the most corrupt places—and have it be said that no fault can be found in him or her. Personal integrity is a virtue that shines like light in darkness. It is noticeable, and it is rewarded both on this earth and in eternity.

Whether we work in public or private organizations, we can—even in the most corrupt environment—exhibit the Christian virtues of integrity and honesty for the benefit of the people we serve. This is what our Christian civil servants and politicians must do.

We should never plot evil against him or her. It will just come back to hurt us in the end.

In Ghana, this is called the "pull-him-down syndrome." The attitude is so common that politicians and public and civil servants will seek protection from demonic sources. Even some Christians feel threatened to the point of running to prayer camps and seeking out so-called prophets for protection.

Daniel recognised that God was his Protector. He went to God in prayer, and God heard him. Whenever we are tempted to seek protection elsewhere, let us remember that God is our Protector. Then we are free from jealousy and can celebrate the success of others.

law that will be strictly enforced. Give orders that for the next thirty days any person who prays to anyone, divine or human—except to you, Your Majesty—will be thrown into the den of lions. 8 And now, Your Majesty, issue and sign this law so it cannot be changed, an official law of the Medes and Persians that cannot be revoked. 9 So King Darius signed the law.

10 But when Daniel learned that the law had been signed, he went home and knelt down as usual in his upstairs room, with its windows open towards Jerusalem. He prayed three times a day, just as he had always done, giving thanks to his God. 11 Then the officials went together to Daniel's house and found him praying and asking for God's help. 12 So they went straight to the king and reminded him about his law. "Did you not sign a law that for the next thirty days any person who prays to anyone, divine or human—except to you, Your Majesty—will be thrown into the den of lions?"

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21 Daniel answered, "Long live the king! My God sent his angel to shut the lions' mouths so that they would not hurt me, for I

7:1 The first year of Belshazzar's reign (who was co-regent with his father, Nabuchadnezzar) was 556 B.C. (or perhaps as late as 553 B.C.).

6:8  
Esth 1:19; 3:12  
Isa 10:1  
Dan 6:12-13  
Matt 24:35

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Pss 118:9;  
146:3  
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1 Kgs 8:48-49  
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1 Thes 5:17-18

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Ps 94:20-21  
Dan 6:8, 12

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Job 5:19  
Ps 37:39-40  
Jer 38:5  
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Lam 3:53  
Matt 27:66  
6:18  
2 Sam 12:16-17  
Esth 6:1  
Rev 18:22

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Acts 12:11  
2 Tim 4:17  
Heb 11:33

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Ps 118:8  
Isa 26:3  
Dan 3:17, 28  
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Deut 19:18-19  
2 Kgs 14:6  
6:25  
Ezra 1:1-2  
Esth 3:12; 8:9  
Hos 1:10  
1 Pet 1:2

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Ps 93:1-2  
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Dan 4:3  
7:1  
Job 33:14-16  
Jer 36:4  
Dan 2:1, 26-28;  
4:5-9  
Joel 2:28

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Rev 7:1  
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Rev 13:1  
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Rev 12:3; 13:1

have been found innocent in his sight. And I have not wronged you, Your Majesty."

23 The king was overjoyed and ordered that Daniel be lifted from the den. Not a scratch was found on him, for he had trusted in his God.

24 Then the king gave orders to arrest the men who had maliciously accused Daniel. He had them thrown into the lions' den, along with their wives and children. The lions leaped on them and tore them apart before they even hit the floor of the den.

25 Then King Darius sent this message to the people of every race and nation and language throughout the world:

"Peace and prosperity to you!

26 "I decree that everyone throughout my kingdom should tremble with fear before the God of Daniel.

For he is the living God,  
and he will endure for ever.

His kingdom will never be destroyed,  
and his rule will never end.

27 He rescues and saves his people;  
he performs miraculous signs and wonders

in the heavens and on earth.

He has rescued Daniel  
from the power of the lions."

28 So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.\*

#### Daniel's Vision of Four Beasts

7 Earlier, during the first year of King Belshazzar's reign in Babylon,\* Daniel had a dream and saw visions as he lay in his bed. He wrote down the dream, and this is what he saw.

2 In my vision that night, I, Daniel, saw a great storm churning the surface of a great sea, with strong winds blowing from every direction. 3 Then four huge beasts came up out of the water, each different from the others.

4 The first beast was like a lion with eagles' wings. As I watched, its wings were pulled off, and it was left standing with its two hind feet on the ground, like a human being. And it was given a human mind.

5 Then I saw a second beast, and it looked like a bear. It was rearing up on one side, and it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And I heard a voice saying to it, "Get up! Devour the flesh of many people!"

6 Then the third of these strange beasts appeared, and it looked like a leopard. It had four bird's wings on its back, and it had four heads. Great authority was given to this beast.

7 Then in my vision that night, I saw a fourth beast—terrifying, dreadful, and very

7:1 The first year of Belshazzar's reign (who was co-regent with his father, Nabuchadnezzar) was 556 B.C. (or perhaps as late as 553 B.C.).