

I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed: "Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and keep his commandments, Daniel 9:4 NIV

Week 43 Daniel

The book of Daniel can be neatly divided into two sections, but the purpose of the entire book is to inform us that God rules over all. Psalms 8, 138 & 139 bring out the theme that God is Lord of all the earth. During Old Testament times, people believed that the god you worshipped was limited to the territory of the people who worshipped him. God revealed to the people that He was present everywhere. The first section of the book of Daniel tells us how to live as godly people in a foreign and hostile land. It is as relevant to us in our present situation as it was to the Israelites in Babylon; we are sojourners in a sinful and hostile world. The second section of the book of Daniel is about future world events and their impact on God's people. The purpose of this section is to encourage Christians during times of suffering and persecution by reminding them that history is His Story and He is in fully in control.

According to Genesis 10:9, the founder of Babylon was Nimrod. The Hebrew name for the land of Babylon is the land of Shinar and the city as Babel; see Genesis chapter 11.

The book of Daniel was written in two languages; Hebrew and 2:4 – 7:28 Aramaic. The order of the chapters in the book does not represent the events in chronological order. For example the events of chapter five occur after chapter eight.

There is a good possibility that Daniel and Ezekiel knew each other in Jerusalem. God called Ezekiel to serve in Babylon in the area of the Kebar River or Canal while He called Daniel to serve in the palace of the king of Babylon. Ezekiel preached to the Jewish people while Daniel witnessed to the heathen kings and their courts. Daniel served in the court of Babylon through many kings from Nebuchadnezzar to Cyrus the Great.

The book of Daniel provides us with examples of true devotion to God. Daniel and his three friends had been taught to love the LORD. Now they were being indoctrinated by pagans. Yet they stood firm. Let's examine ourselves and determine if our devotion to God is as intense. How much have we been indoctrinated by our world? If we find ourselves lacking, what are we to do about it? We can do what Daniel did.

Oh you can say, well that was way back then and our world is not like that, we are not required to demonstrate such devotion. Shouldn't devotion be to God and not be dependent on circumstances. We should be as fully devoted to God in good times as harsh times. No one knows when we, right here in the good old USA, will be required to actually give up our life for our belief in God. It is happening right now as you read this to our missionaries in other countries and those they reach for Christ.

Day One: Daniel 1: Captivity & Indoctrination

1. What happened to the articles from the temple in Jerusalem? Who caused it to happen? Daniel 1:2

2. Describe the young men of nobility & royalty that Ashpenaz was ordered to train to serve in the king's palace.

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3. What were Ashpenaz's instructions regarding the young men?

The common language of Babylon was Aramaic also called Syriac or Chaldee but these men would be taught the ancient & complicated language of Babylon also.

4. What were the names of these 4 special young men & the new names given by Nebuchadnezzar? Daniel 1:6 & 7.

D_____ (which means God is my Judge) became

B_____ (which means favored by Bel. Bel is also called Marduk or Merodac, the chief Babylonian god.) H_____ (which means the

Lord shows grace) became S_____ (which means under the command of Aku the moon god). M_____ (which means who is like God) became

M_____ (which means who is like Aku). A_____

(which means the LORD helps) became A_____ (which means servant of Nego/Nebo/Nabu, the god of learning & writing, & son of Bel).

5. What do you learn about the character of Daniel and his 3 friends? Daniel 1:8-14.

Ezekiel 4:13 describes some of the exiles eating defiled food.

6. Have you ever resolved to stand up for Christ? How?

Prayer: Read Daniel 7:9 & 10 & 13 & 14. This passage clarifies Ezekiel's vision as to who is on the throne. This is who we address in prayer and we pray through the One like a Son of Man.

Day Two: Daniel 3: The Image of Gold

We will cover chapter two next week.

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7. What did King Nebuchadnezzar have built on the plain of Dura? Daniel 3:1.

8. What were the instructions concerning the statue? Daniel 3:4-6.

9. What did the tattletales report to the king? Daniel 3:8-12.

10. The three men were given one more chance. Can you think of some excuses they could have used to save their lives?

Prayer: Psalm 63:1. O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you.

Day Three: Daniel 3. Into the Fire

11. How did the three friends demonstrate faith in the LORD? Daniel 3:16-18.

What a statement of faith! Take time for a faith check-up. How does ours compare to theirs?

Revelation 13:15 describes another statue that people will be required to bow down & worship upon penalty of death.

12. What was the king's response? Daniel 3:19-20.

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The furnace had a large opening at the top so fuel & vessels full of ore could be added. There was a door at the bottom through which the melted metal was removed. There was an opening in the wall so the smelters could check on the progress of their work. There were holes in the walls for a bellows to pump air into the furnace to make the fire hotter.

13. What happened to the soldiers who threw the men into the furnace?

14. What startled Nebuchadnezzar? What did he do? Daniel 3:24-26.

15. What was the result of the witness of these three men? Daniel 3:28-30.

Prayer: Read Isaiah 43:2-3a and be grateful that He is the LORD your God who sees you through every trial.

Day Four: Daniel 5. The Writing on the Wall

Nebuchadnezzar died in 562 BC after ruling 43 years after which several kings ruled for a brief time then Nabonidus became king and ruled 17 years. He appointed Belshazzar (his son) as co-regent. The reference in verse 2 of him being Nebuchadnezzar's son is just in the ancestral sense. Nabonidus was either a son or son-in-law of Nebuchadnezzar. While Nabonidus was off trying to regain land taken by Cyrus & the Persians, Belshazzar stayed in Babylon. On October 12, 539 BC Belshazzar gave a banquet for a thousand of his important men. In the meantime the Medo-Persian army was outside the city of Babylon but Belshazzar felt safe because they had stocked the city with supplies to last 20 years and the double walls of the city were 12 feet thick. Do we also feel safe in our present day Babylon? The selfish mindset of the majority in our nation is no different than that of ancient Babylon.

16. What was significant about the vessels Belshazzar used for the wine? 5:2-4

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17. How did God respond? 5:5 & 25

18. How did help arrive & what was offered as a prize? 5:11-13. This person was offered the office of third highest ruler in Babylon with Nabonidus being first and Belshazzar second.

19. What was the interpretation? 5:26-28. Job 20:4-7 applies aptly to Belshazzar.

The New Testament equivalent of TEKEL is Matthew 25:41.

20. What was the result of Belshazzar's action regarding the gold vessels? 5:30-31.

Prayer: Father in heaven Your Word is the handwriting on the wall for us. May we take heed!

Day Five Daniel 6; Another Boss

King Cyrus ruled the Persian Empire from 539 to 530 BC. Darius the Mede is only mentioned in the book of Daniel. He is not to be confused with Darius 1st in the books of Ezra, Haggai & Zechariah nor with Darius 2nd in the book of Nehemiah. As a new administration takes control, Daniel was given another opportunity to glorify God. In chapter 2 of Daniel, King Nebuchadnezzar had dreams (2:1) and demanded his "wise men" to interpret the dreams. It seems he didn't really trust them because he also demanded they tell him the dream. When he was told that there was not a man on earth who could do this, King Nebuchadnezzar became so angry that he ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon. This included Daniel & his three friends. When Daniel learned of their impending death he asked to speak to the king. Daniel requested he be allowed time to interpret the dream. He immediately returned to his residence & explained the matter to his friends and

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they sought the LORD. Daniel praises the LORD for answered prayer (2:20-23) and reveals the dreams to the king thus saving the lives of all the wise men of Babylon.

21. What were the first actions Darius took? Daniel 6:1-3.

22. Describe Daniel's work ethic & the complication that occurred. 6:4 & 5.

In our world today, could our co-workers find accusations to bring charges on our work ethic? Could they find enough evidence to convict us of being Christian?

23. What plan did they hatch up & what was Daniel's response? 6:6 – 10

24. What was the king's reaction when he learned about Daniel? 6:14 & 16.

25. What was the result of Daniel's witness for the LORD? 6:26-28

Prayer: Our Father in heaven may we be ever mindful of Daniel's example so that we will be strong witnesses for You.

HOMEWORK

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Read Daniel chapters 2 and 7-12 in preparation for next week. You will receive a handout with fill in the blanks that will be answered as we view a power point presentation on these difficult chapters.