

# The Book of Daniel: Bible Study Notes and Questions

## Overview of the Book of Daniel

Daniel was one of the intelligent young Jewish exiles in the first deportation of Jews to Babylon in **605 BC**. There were two other exiles of Jews in **597 BC** and finally in **586 BC** when Jerusalem was taken and burnt by the Babylonians. Zedekiah, the last king of Judah was taken to Babylon.

This Daniel is mentioned by name in **Ezekiel 14:14 & 20** and in **28:3**. His name means “God is my Judge” and he lived up to his name in character and behaviour continually throughout his life.

Although Daniel was regarded as a prophet (**Matthew 25:15 and Mark 13:14**), his office was a statesman high up in the administration of the courts of the Babylonian kings Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar. Later he served under Darius who made Daniel prime minister above all other rulers. In view of Daniel’s office, the Hebrew Old Testament (The Tanakh) has the book of Daniel in the section called “The Writings”. Daniel’s “secular” job did not hold him back from bible study and preaching.

The first six chapters are predominantly narrative with some prophetic themes in them. The last six chapters are mainly prophetic with limited narrative. **Chapter 2:4 to 7:28** was written in Aramaic (a Gentile tongue related to Hebrew), whilst the rest of the book was written in Hebrew.

There has been much contention over the dating of the Book of Daniel especially from liberal critics, their argument being three-fold linguistically, historically and theologically. Scholars have dated Daniel from the sixth century to the second century BC in the Maccabaen period (about **167-165 BC**). Porphyry, an antichristian philosopher in the third century AD was the first to contend against the orthodox position of dating the book in the sixth century BC.

However, much evidence shows Daniel is the author of the book as quoted by the Lord Jesus Christ (**Matthew 24:15 and Mark 13:14**); secondly the customs of Babylon and Med-Persian are made known rather than those in the time of the Maccabees; thirdly the book is inspired by the Holy Spirit; and finally, a manuscript was found near Qumran amongst the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947. It is believed that the manuscript was put together during or before the Maccabaen period.

The main theological theme in this book is the sovereignty of God. God will rule triumphant, the climax of his sovereignty is shown in **Revelation 11:15**: “*The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ and he shall reign for ever and ever.*” See **Daniel 2:44; 4:3, 17, 25, 32&34; 5:21; 7:11, 14&26-27; 8:25; 9:24-27; 11:45; 12:13**.

You may find it helpful to notice the kings of Babylon:

Nabopolassar **625-605 BC** Fall of Nineveh **612 BC**.

Nebuchadnezzar **605-562 BC** Jerusalem destroyed **586 BC**.

Evil-Merodach (son of Nebuchadnezzar) **562-560 BC**.

Neriglissar **560-556 BC**.

Lavorsoarchod **556BC** (3 months).

Nabonidus (son of Nebuchadnezzar) **556-539 BC**.

Belshazzar (son of Nabonidus) second ruler and co-regent with Nabonidus **553-539 BC**.

The Medo-Persians take over in **539 BC**.

## Questions and brief overview of the chapters

**Introduction:** There are a number of questions for each chapter. In some chapters there could be too many questions to deal with in one session of a group study (small group from 3 to 12 people). You may wish to be selective in which questions to study or extend the study of one chapter to two sessions or more, depending on what is helpful to the group of people meeting together. It is recommended to persevere in studying to some degree every chapter to have an overview of this inspired book. The writer believes everyone will benefit more by having a chance to read and study the chapters before each group study. Such preparation beforehand can be of great blessing in giving greater input into a group study rather than leaving the study solely to the leader or coordinator.

The miscellaneous questions after the chapter sections are intended for extended individual study but corporate study is also encouraged if such a small group wishes to pursue further study on the book of Daniel.

It has never been the writer's calling from the Lord to write an extensive commentary on the scriptural text in view of so much material available. Believers and even unbelievers are encouraged to search the scriptures in thinking for themselves. The writer does not wish to do the thinking for anyone. Each one of us has to work out what the scriptures teach. If we seek the Lord for the truth, we are promised that the truth will set us free (**John 8:32**).

The intention of these Bible study notes and questions has been to provoke believers in Jesus Christ, and even interested unbelievers, to search the scriptures in reading the entire text. In doing so, the writer believes the Lord will reveal himself to us as believers and even bring unbelievers to know him personally (**Acts 17:10-12**).

**Chapter 1:** *Daniel and three other young men, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah were amongst the Jewish captives. They proved to be faithful men who rose to high positions in Babylon.*

**Questions:** **1)** What do we know had happened to Judah (Southern Kingdom of Israel) up to the time Daniel was taken into exile? See **1:1-3**.

**2)** How was God working in Daniel's life along with Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah? See **1:3-21**.

**3)** How does God train us to be his servants in view of what he was doing in Daniel's life? See **1:3-21**.

**4)** What do we understand about the relationship between Daniel and Melzar (the prince of the eunuchs)? See **1:8-16**.

**5)** Why did Nebuchadnezzar want to train up Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah? See **1:3-5, 18-21**.

**6)** What was the result of Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah's obedience to the Jewish dietary laws? See **1:8-20**.

**Chapter 2:** *The dream of King Nebuchadnezzar of a large statue was interpreted by Daniel.*

**Questions:** **1)** Consider carefully the response King Nebuchadnezzar had towards the dream? See **2:1-3**.

**2)** Why were the magicians, astrologers and the sorcerers not able to tell the dream and its interpretation to the king? See **2:4-11**.

**3)** How did Daniel show wisdom in hearing about the dream? See **2:14-18**.

**4)** What do we know of Nebuchadnezzar's character in response to the magicians, astrologers and the sorcerers? See **2:12-15**.

**5)** What do we learn of Daniel's spiritual maturity in **2:17-23**?

**6)** Why did Daniel stress carefully who could interpret the dream of the king? See **2:24-30**.

- 7) What had God revealed of the future to King Nebuchadnezzar when the dream was interpreted by Daniel? See **2:31-45**.
- 8) What did the stone that the king saw in the dream represent? See **2:34, 35&45**.
- 9) Is it true to say God will set up his visible kingdom on earth? See **2:44 and Revelation 20:1-6**.
- 10) Describe the King's reaction to the interpretation of the dream and how things changed for Daniel and his three friends? See **2:49**.
- 11) What does it mean when Daniel sat 'in the gate of the king' in **2:49**?
- 12) What evidence in this chapter do we see that King Nebuchadnezzar used the occult for guidance in his decisions? See **2:2&11**.

**Chapter 3:** *Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were cast into a burning fiery furnace for refusing to worship the image of gold made by King Nebuchadnezzar.*

- Questions:**
- 1) Why did King Nebuchadnezzar make an image of gold? See **3:1-3**.
  - 2) What confidence had Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in refusing to worship the image? See **3:12-18**.
  - 3) How does this chapter teach us of idol worship? See **3:1-11**.
  - 4) Describe the miracle that took place when the three Jews were put into the furnace in **3:20-27**?
  - 5) Who is the fourth person in the furnace with the three Jews in **3:24-25**?
  - 6) What did King Nebuchadnezzar learn about the God of Israel? See **3:28-29**.
  - 7) Show how the king respected these three Jews? See **3:30**.
  - 8) Whilst Daniel was not mentioned in this chapter, how do you think he could have responded to the king's decree to worship the image?

**Chapter 4:** *King Nebuchadnezzar has a dream of an enormous tree cut down. God brought judgement upon him for seven years by removing him from his kingdom. After that time, Nebuchadnezzar was restored to his kingdom having honoured God as King of heaven.*

- Questions:**
- 1) How was God dealing with King Nebuchadnezzar in this chapter (**4:1-37**)?
  - 2) What explanation did King Nebuchadnezzar give to why Daniel could interpret vision? See **4:8, 9&18**.
  - 3) Why was Daniel so reluctant to tell King Nebuchadnezzar the interpretation of the dream in **4:19-23**?
  - 4) What did Daniel plead with the king to do? See **4:27**.
  - 5) What could have happened to King Nebuchadnezzar for seven years? See **4:16, 23-26&33-34**.
  - 6) What particular sin had caused Nebuchadnezzar to fall temporarily from power? See **4:30-31**.
  - 7) Is there evidence after all that had happened to King Nebuchadnezzar that he had become a believer in the God of Israel? See **4:2-3, 34&37 and 2Peter 1:19-21**.

**Chapter 5:** *Daniel interprets the writing on the wall to Belshazzar, the king of the Chaldeans in Babylon.*

- Questions:**
- 1) How had Belshazzar sinned so grievously against God? See **5:1-4**.
  - 2) Why was the king so troubled in **5:5-9**?
  - 3) What did the queen recognise in Daniel that other men did not have? See **5:10-16**.
  - 4) Why was there no excuse for Belshazzar not knowing the Most High God? See **5:10-16**.
  - 5) What do we understand by the writing on the wall in **5:25-28**?
  - 6) Did Belshazzar take the proclamation of Daniel to heart in **5:29-31**?
  - 7) Show how the sudden end of the Babylonian Empire will be typical of the end of Gentile power when Jesus Christ returns to earth to rule. See also **Revelation 18:20-24; 19:1-21**.
  - 8) What do you think had happened to Daniel after the death of King Nebuchadnezzar?
  - 9) What do we know of Belshazzar's character in this chapter?

## Chapter 6: *Daniel was delivered from the lion's den.*

- Questions:** 1) Do you think Darius was a wise ruler? See **6:1-2, 6-10&24-27.**
- 2) Show the testimony and influence that Daniel had on Darius. See **6:2-3, 14, 16-23&28.**
- 3) Why did the presidents and princes oppose Daniel in **6:3-7?**
- 4) Why was the king forced to put Daniel in to the lion's den? See **6:7-16.**
- 5) Look carefully to show how the leaders had lied to the king in requesting a decree to get rid of Daniel. Read **6:7-15.**
- 6) Is it true to say that the conspirators against Daniel had refused to repent in view of Daniel's deliverance from the lion's den? See **6:22-24.**
- 7) Do you think Darius had become a believer as a result of Daniel's testimony? See **6:25-27.**
- 8) Show how Daniel's deliverance from the lion's den can speak prophetically of the godly remnant of Israel being delivered at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.
- 9) What spiritual lessons can be learnt from this chapter bearing in mind that Daniel was an old man in his eighties at this time.

## Chapter 7: *Daniel's dream of the four beasts and its interpretation.*

- Questions:** 1) Why was the vision given at night? See **7:1-2, 7&13.** You may find it helpful to read **Joel 2:2 and 1Thessalonians 5:2.**
- 2) What do you understand of the four winds of heaven? See **7:2.**
- 3) What does the sea represent? See **7:2-3.** Read also **Isaiah 17:12 and Revelation 17:15.**
- 4) What do the four beasts represent? See **7:1-8&17 and Revelation 13:1-18.**
- 5) What could the three ribs represent in the mouth of the bear? See **7:5.**
- 6) What do the ten horns represent? See **7:7, 20 and Revelation 17:12-16.**
- 7) What is known of the little horn? See **7:8, 11, 20-21&25 and Revelation 17:12-16.**
- 8) Who is the "ancient of days" in **7:9-11?**
- 9) Does the title "Son of man" apply to Jesus Christ in **7:13?** It is helpful to read **Matthew 26:64 and Mark 14:62.**
- 10) Is it true to say that **7:13-14** reveals the Second Coming of Jesus Christ? See also **Matthew 24:30; Mark 13:26 and Luke 21:27.**
- 11) Which kingdom was revealed in the visions in **7:14, 18, 22&27?**
- 12) Why was Daniel troubled by the visions? See **7:15&28.**
- 13) Who helped Daniel to understand the visions in **7:16?**
- 14) Why did Daniel desire to know the truth of the fourth beast? See **7:7&19-26.**
- 15) Who are the saints referred to in **7:18, 22, 25&27.**
- 16) What will happen to the fourth kingdom on earth? See **7:22&26-27** and compare with **Revelation 19:19-21.**
- 17) Is there evidence that the prophecy of the fourth kingdom is yet to be fulfilled?

## Chapter 8: *Daniel's vision of a Ram and a Goat and its interpretation.*

- Questions:** 1) Where did Daniel see the vision? See **8:1-3.**
- 2) What did the Ram and the Goat represent? See **8:3-7&20-21.**
- 3) What do we understand about the power of the Ram and the He-goat? See **8:3-8.**
- 4) What is known about the little horn in **8:9-12?**
- 5) Is this little horn the same as that in **chapter 7:8, 11, 20-21&25?**
- 6) Read **8:11-14** and show the evidence that the sanctuary in the temple was desecrated.
- 7) Who are the saints in **8:13-14?** See also **Revelation 11:1-3.**
- 8) Who gave Daniel understanding of the vision? See **8:15-19.**
- 9) What effect did the vision have on Daniel? See **8:17-18&27.**
- 10) Who is the "king of fierce countenance" in **8:23-25?**

- 11) Is this king the same as the little horn in **8:9-12** and could he be the future world ruler (the Antichrist)?
- 12) Why did the vision remain closed in **8:26**?
- 13) What was Daniel doing during the rule of Belshazzar? See **8:27**.

**Chapter 9:** *Daniel prayed on behalf of his people, Israel. Whilst still praying, he was given a revelation by the angel, Gabriel. He was told of seventy weeks determined for his people, Israel.*

**Questions:** 1) What did Daniel understand of God's word to Jeremiah in **9:2**?

It is helpful to read **Jeremiah 25:11; 29:10-14 and 2Chronicles 36:21**.

- 2) What can we learn from the way Daniel sought the Lord? See **9:3-4**.
- 3) What can we learn from the content of the prayer of Daniel in **9:3-19**?
- 4) Show how God responds to Daniel's prayer in **9:19-27**.
- 5) What do we understand by the Seventy Weeks in **9:24**?
- 6) What happens after the seven and sixty weeks in **9:25-26**?
- 7) Has the Seventieth Week been fulfilled in **9:27**?
- 8) What will happen after the Seventy weeks are fulfilled in **9:27**?
- 9) Who confirms the covenant with many for one week in **9:27**? You may find it helpful to read **Matthew 24:15-16; Mark 13:14; 2Thessalonians 2:3-4&8**.
- 10) Where does the church age come in relation to the Seventy Weeks in **9:24-27**?
- 11) Do the Seventy Weeks apply only to Israel and not to the church?

**Chapter 10:** *Daniel was given a revelation of things to come after much prayer for three weeks. A messenger was sent to give Daniel revelation of events to come as seen **chapters 11 and 12**.*

**Questions:** 1) Why was Daniel mourning three full weeks? See **10:2-3**. Read also **Ezra 1:1-4; 4:1-5&24**.

- 2) What evidence do we see of Daniel being clearly a man who sought the Lord continually? See **10:2-3&12**.
- 3) What did Daniel see by the great river Hiddekel (Tigris)? See **10:4-6 and Revelation 1:13-16**.
- 4) Describe the effect of the vision on Daniel in **10:8** and compare with **Acts 9:3-6**.
- 5) Why did the men who accompanied Daniel hide themselves? See **10:7**. It is helpful to read **Acts 9:7; Isaiah 2:19-21 and Revelation 6:14-17**.
- 6) What happens to Daniel after he heard the words of this certain man he saw in the vision in **10:9**?
- 7) Who was speaking to Daniel in **10:11-15&19-21**?
- 8) How was Daniel encouraged after he saw the vision? See **10:10-14&18-21**.
- 9) What is known of Michael? See **10:13&21** and see also **12:1**.
- 10) What evidence do we see of a conflict taking place? See **10:13&20**.
- 11) Does this chapter prove that there is a spiritual battle taking in place in high places? See **10:13&20**. You may find it helpful to read **Ephesians 6:11-18 and Revelation 12;7-9**.
- 12) Is it true to say that Satan, the devil, has assigned special rulers to influence governments to oppose the people of God? See again **10:13&20**.
- 13) Who is the vision for? See **10:14**.
- 14) How do we know the vision is still to be fulfilled in the future? See **10:1&14**.
- 15) How do we know that Daniel's prayers were heard by God? See **10:12**.
- 16) Why did Daniel become so weak again in **10:15-17**?
- 17) What lessons can we learn from Daniel's experience of weakness? See **10:8,15-19**.

**Chapter 11:** *The angel continues to reveal future things to Daniel. Numerous prophecies are given in 11:2-35 which can be proved from history that they were fulfilled. A brief outline has been given of the history from the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC to the beginning of Roman rule spreading in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC.*

**A) 11:2:** There were four kings of Persia after Cyrus died in **529 BC**. They were probably Cambyses (**529-522BC**); Pseudo-Smerdis (**522-521BC**); Darius Hystaspes (**521-486BC** – see **Ezra chapters 5 and 6**); and Xerxes 1 (Ahasuerus **486-465BC**) who was the husband of Esther the Jewess, who saved the Jews from a great slaughter intended by Haman, the Agagite and chief of princes. It was Xerxes 1 that wished to extend his Empire but failed to fully invade Greece being driven back. The cost of the war left the Empire in a poor state economically and as a result the Medo-Persian Empire began to decline.

**B) 11:3:** The rise of the Greek Empire to extend over much of the known came about under the rule of Alexander the Great (**336-323BC**) who had great dominion. He was the he-goat foretold in **8:5-8**.

**C) 11:4:** After the death of Alexander the Great in **323BC**, his Empire was divided up into four parts being ruled by four generals. Lysimachus took Thrace, Bithynia and much of Asia Minor; Cassander took Macedonia and Greece; Ptolemy took Egypt and Seleucus took Syria to Babylon.

**D) 11:5-35:** The Greek Empire begins to decline with conflict between the northern kingdom of Syria (Seleucid kingdom) and the southern kingdom of Egypt (Ptolemaic kingdom).

**D.1)** There are a series of wars. See **11:5-20**.

**D.2)** There is a specific prophecy that foretells the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes (**11:21-31**), the little horn I **8:9-12**. He was a very wicked ruler who murdered thousands of Jews and stopped the daily sacrifices in the temple in Jerusalem. He desecrated the temple by ordering an idol to be erected in the sanctuary and offered a sow (female pig) upon the altar. There were apostate Jews that had given their allegiance to Antiochus Epiphanes (Epiphanes means 'Glorious One').

**D.3)** The atrocities of Antiochus Epiphanes led to faithful Jews called the Maccabees making a successful revolt through the leadership of Judas Maccabaeus, known as the 'The hammer'. Jerusalem was released from the rule of Antiochus Epiphanes. The temple practices were restored and a spiritual revival came about amongst the Jews. The temple was rededicated on **25 December 165BC**. Persecution had the effect of bringing revival, because of the purging and separation of the true believers from those who were false.

Eventually the Greek Empire was absorbed under the authority of the Romans. In the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, Rome began to extend its power and took Egypt from him. As seen above Antiochus eventually lost his grip on Israel and died in Syria of malnutrition being a very broken man unable to eat.

**E) 11:36-45:** The coming world ruler, the Antichrist, will rise to world domination in the future.

**Questions:** **1)** Who is speaking in **11:1** and to which person does the word 'him' refer to? Is this verse a continuation from **10:21**?

**2)** Is it true to say that Darius was supported and protected by an angelic being when he took charge of Babylon? See **11:1**.

**3)** What can be learnt about the conflict between the northern kingdom of Syria and the southern kingdom of Egypt in **11:5-20**?

**4)** What is known of this evil ruler in **11:21-31** particularly in **verses 28 to 31**?

**5)** Look carefully at **11:32-35**. Do these verses show a distinction between the faithful and the unfaithful Jews?

**6)** What does **11:36-45** reveal of the coming world ruler (the Antichrist)?

7) In view of the prophecies in chapter 11, does this explain why Daniel was in deep sorrow/  
See again **10:15-17**.

8) What is meant by “the abomination that makes desolate” in **11:31** and who is responsible for such an abomination? How does it represent an even greater abomination and desolation in Israel? How does it represent an even greater abomination and desolation in Israel?  
See **Daniel 9:27; 12:11; Matthew 24:15-21 and Mark 13:14-20**.

### Chapter 12:

**12:1:** *Distress and deliverance will come to Israel.*

**12:2-3:** *Resurrection to eternal life and eternal death foretold.*

**12:4-13:** *Daniel instructed to keep the prophecies of the book sealed to the time of the end.*

**Questions:** 1) What is understood by Michael standing up for the Children of Israel in **12:1**?  
See also **Revelation 12:1-9**.

2) What will happen to the children of Israel assuming **12:1&7** is still to be fulfilled?  
See also **Jeremiah 30:4-10**.

3) Consider carefully what is being revealed about the resurrection in **12:2-3&13**.  
You may find it helpful to read **Isaiah 26:18-21; Matthew 27:51-53; 1Thessalonians 4:16-18; Revelation 11:3-13; 20:4-6&11-15**.

4) Who are the two men on each side of the river in **12:5-6** and who was speaking to Daniel in **12:7-13**? See also **Revelation 11:1-3**.

5) What evidence do we have from **12:4-13** that we are in the last days?

6) Why was Daniel not given understanding of all that he wrote down? See **12:4, 8-9&13**.

7) What significant prophecies are shown in **12:7-13**? See also **Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14; Revelation 11:1-3; 12:1-17; 13:1-18**.

### Miscellaneous Questions

1) What can we learn from the character of Daniel who was used mightily by God in high places?  
Read carefully **Daniel 1:18-21; 2:14-49; 4:19-27; 5:10-31; 6:1-28**.

2) What proof do we have that Daniel wrote this book? See **Daniel 7:2, 15 & 28; 8:1, 15&28; 9:2&22; 10:2&11-12; 12:5; Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14**.

3) What does the book of Daniel teach us about the Kingdom of God?  
See **2:44; 4:3, 17, 25, 32&34; 5:21; 7:14 & 27**.

4) How does the book of Daniel give such an invaluable contribution to bible prophecy? You may find it helpful to make a list of the prophecies that are still to be fulfilled. Read carefully **2:27-45; 4:34; 7:1-28; 8:1-27; 9:20-27; 11:35-45; 12:1-13**.

5) What does the book tell us of who God is?  
See **2:18-23, 28-29, 44 & 47; 3:17, 25 & 33; 6:16 & 20-27**.

6) What do we know of the character of king Nebuchadnezzar?  
See **1:1-7, 17-21; 2:1-49; 3:1-30; 4:1-37 and Jeremiah 27:4-8**.

7) What do we know of the religion in the time of king Nebuchadnezzar?  
See **1:20; 2:10-13; 3:1-12; 4:7**.

8) When was Daniel taken to Babylon and how do we know that he resided there for over seventy years. See **1:1&21; 2:1; 7:1; 8:1; 9:1-2; 10:1,4; 11:1**.

## Bibliography

The list of resources available will be helpful in finding out more about the prophecies in the book of Daniel and to show especially how **chapter 11:2-35** have been fulfilled in every detail.

Please note that the author does not necessarily agree with the views held by the writers of the reading material below.

1. **BAXTER J Sidlow**: *Explore the book*. Zondervan; first printing in six volumes in one 1966; ISBN 0-310-20620-0.
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3. **HUTCHINGS Noah W**: *Exploring the Book of Daniel; unsealing the sealed book*. Copyright: Hearthstone Publishing first edition 1990. ISBN 0-9624517-0-3.
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- 5) **KELLER Werner**: *The Bible as History*. Copyright 1956 by Hodder and Stoughton. ISBN 0-340-19045-0.
- 6) **MACDONALD William**: *Believers Bible Commentary*. Thomas Nelson Publishers; copyright 1995 by William Macdonald. ISBN 0-8407-1972-8.
- 7) **PAWSON J. David**: *Unlocking the Bible Omnibus*. Published in Great Britain in 2003 by Harper Collins Publishers; copyright David Pawson. ISBN 0-716666-4.
- 8) **WALWOORD John F**: *The Prophecy Knowledge Book*. Victor Books; copyright 1990 by Scripture Press Publications. ISBN 0-89693-509-4.

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