

THE EVERLASTING KINGDOM
PREACHING THROUGH THE BIBLE: DANIEL
Daniel 2:44

I. INTRODUCTION

A. BRIEF DESCRIPTION

During the Babylonian Captivity, God sends his prophetic and apocalyptic message through Daniel: all wisdom and power belong to Him and He has not forgotten His chosen nation but will establish His people forever. Daniel also prophesies the rise and fall of four world empires.

B. TITLE

1. HEBREW

- Daniye'l = 'God is My Judge'

2. SEPTUAGINT

- Δανιηλ
- Latin and English titles—'Daniel'—are derived from the Greek

C. PLACE IN HEBREW BIBLE

1. PART OF THE WRITINGS

- One of eleven books in the 'writings'—*Ketuvim*

2. ONE OF THREE 'OTHER' BOOKS IN THE *KETUVIM*

- a. Three **Poetic**—Job, Psalms, Proverbs
- b. Five **Scrolls**—*Megillot* = Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther
- c. **Other**
 - 1. Daniel
 - 2. Ezra-Nehemiah
 - 3. Chronicles

D. AUTHORSHIP

1. DANIEL—INTERNAL EVIDENCE

- a. Daniel claimed to write the book—**12:4**
- b. Daniel used autobiographical first person from **7:2** onward

2. EXTERNAL EVIDENCE

- a. Jewish Talmud affirms Daniel as author

- b. Jesus quoted **Dan 9:27**—and attributed ‘Daniel the prophet’ as the source

Mt 24:15—*Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place . . .*

3. ARGUMENTS AGAINST DANIEL’S AUTHORSHIP

a. Basic argument

- Daniel was written during second century BC—during Maccabean period
- Its prophecies, language and historical errors—make earlier dating impossible

b. Prophecies

1. Challenge

- Daniel could not prophesy so precisely 350 years beforehand
- Daniel 11 contains over 100 specific prophecies that came true

2. Response

- This assumes divine prophecy is not possible and Daniel is fabricated
- Daniel’s accuracy is the very evidence his prophecies were divine

c. Language

1. Challenge

- Book contains late Aramaic, Persian and Greek words

2. Response

- Aramaic—is actually an *early* Imperial Aramaic form
- Persian—Daniel served until the advent of the Persian period
- Greek words (chapter 3) describe musical instruments—probably used by Greek mercenaries in Babylonian army

d. Historical errors

1. Challenge

- Certain persons—like Belshazzar and Darius—were not historical figures

2. Response

- Inscriptions discovered in 19th century—confirm Belshazzar’s identity
- Darius the Mede—has been identified with the historical person Gubaru

E. DANIEL THE AUTHOR

1. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION IN INTRODUCTION—1:3-7

- Deported as a youth—from Judea to Babylon
- From noble Judean family
- Outstanding wisdom—knowledge—handsome looks
- Trained three years—for court service to king
- Knew Chaldean (Babylonian) language and literature
- Renamed Belteshazzar—meaning ‘Bel Protect His Life’
- Accompanied by three other youth
 - **Hananiah = Shadrach**
 - **Mishael = Meshach**
 - **Azariah = Abed-nego**

2. CHARACTER

- a. Divine witness—through **Ezekiel’s** prophecy
 - 1. **Righteous**—God compared Daniel’s righteousness Job and Noah’s—**Ezek 14:14, 20**
 - 2. **Wisdom**—God told Ezekiel he was wiser than Daniel—**Ezek 28:3**
- b. ‘Highly esteemed’
 - 1. **chemdah**—greatly beloved—precious
 - 2. God’s word of encouragement to Daniel on his visions—**9:23; 10:11, 19**

3. PROMOTION

- a. By Nebuchadnezzar—made ruler of Province of Babylon—over all wise men—**2:46-49**
- b. By Darius—made one of three satraps over the kingdom—**6:1-3**

4. DATES

- c. 620 BC?—birth in Judea—*assuming* he was about 15 when deported
- 605 BC—deported—3rd year of King Jehoiakim—**1:1**
- 603 BC—interpreted first dream—for Nebuchadnezzar—2nd year of his reign—**2:1ff**
- 538 BC—continued in royal service—until 1st year of King Cyrus—**1:21**
- 536 BC—received revelation in 3rd year of Cyrus—**10:1,4**

F. SETTING

1. BABYLONIAN CONQUEST

- 626—**Nabopolassar** rebelled against Assyrians—after Ashurbanipal’s death

- 612—Nabopolassar defeated Assyrians
- 605—**Nebuchadnezzar** [Nabopolassar's son]—defeated Egypt
- 605—First deportation of first Judeans to Babylon
- 597—Jehoiakim's rebellion crushed—replaced with son Jehoiachin
- 597—Jehoiachin and court deported—uncle Zedekiah placed on throne
- 587—Final Jewish rebellion crushed—final deportation—Gedaliah appointed governor

2. KINGS/RULERS DANIEL SERVED

- a. **Nebuchadnezzar II** (605-562)
 - Longest ruling Babylonian king (43 years)
 - Subject of **Dan 2-4**—two dreams interpreted—and fiery furnace
- b. **Evil-Merodach** (562-560)
 - —aka Amel-Marduk—freed Jehoiachin—see **II Kgs 25:27-30**
- c. **Neriglissar**—(560-556)
 - Nebuchadnezzar's son-in-law
 - High official [Rabmag] in Nebuchadnezzar's court—aka Nergal-sar-ezer—**Jer 39:13**
 - Assassinated Evil-Merodach
- d. **Labashi-Marduk**—(556)
 - Son of Neriglissar
 - Ruled only 3 months—deposed by Nabonidus
- e. **Nabonidus** (556-539)
 - Assyrian (not Chaldean)—usurped Babylonian throne
 - Ignored chief Babylonian god Marduk—promoted moon god 'Sin'
 - Spent 10 years outside of Babylon—restoring temples to 'Sin'
- f. **Belshazzar**
 - Nabonidus's son—ruled as regent in his absence
 - Worked to restore status of Marduk in Babylon
 - Subject of **Dan 5**—handwriting on the wall
- g. **Cyrus II the Great** (538 onward)
 - King of Persia (559-530) and Media (549-530)—conquered Babylon (539)
- h. **Darius the Mede** (538)

- Son of Ahasuerus—**Dan 9:1**
- Appointed as king over Chaldeans [by Cyrus?]
—age 62—**Dan 5:30; 9:1**
- Identity = Governor **Gubaru** (Ugbaru)—Cyrus’s general who helped defeat Babylon
- Subject of **Dan 6**—Lion’s Den

G. STYLE

1. CHAPTERS 1-6

a. Narrative

- Giving historical details about Daniel and his companions
- Using interaction with rulers to predict future events of Gentile world

b. First chapter—in Hebrew

c. Chapters 2-6—in Aramaic

2. CHAPTERS 7-12

a. Apocalyptic

- Long-term look at future—stresses God’s sovereignty over history
- Uses highly figurative imagery

b. Chapter 7—continues in Aramaic

c. Chapters 8-12—switch back to Hebrew

3. NOT PRIMARILY A ‘PROPHETIC’ BOOK

- a. Daniel contains specific prophecies—that were fulfilled once in history
- b. But—main purpose was **not** to lay out a predictive roadmap of the future
- c. Message also has a *sensus plenior* meaning—symbolic application in other ways
- d. Unlike prophetic books
 - Daniel does not highlight sin, punishment, restoration
 - It does not make public proclamations to the people
 - It focuses on hope for political restoration of Israel
- e. Jewish Bible does classify Daniel as a prophetic work—but puts it in the *Ketuvim*

H. BIBLICAL CONTEXT

1. REBUILDING OF JERUSALEM—**Dan 9:25**

- This predicted decree to rebuild Jerusalem—was issued by Artaxerxes—and enabled Nehemiah to accomplish this—**Neh 2:1-8**

2. CHRIST—THE STONE THAT CRUSHES—**Dan 2:34-35; 45**

a. A great stone will crush all worldly kingdoms

b. Christ is that stone—He affirmed this in **Mt 21:42-44**

1. The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone—**Ps 118:22-23**

2. The kingdom will be taken away from those who stumble on this stone

3. It will fall upon them and scatter them like dust

3. CHRIST—THE SON OF MAN—**Dan 7:13-14**

○ Coming on clouds of heaven

○ The Ancient of Days gives Him dominion over all nations

4. CHRIST FULFILLS ORACLE OF 70 WEEKS—**Dan 9:24-27**

a. He came as Messiah—'69 weeks'—after decree to rebuild Jerusalem

b. He put a stop to the need for sacrifices—in the middle of the 70th week

c. Some scholars say—70th week—was completely fulfilled with destruction of Temple

d. Other scholars say—70th week was partly fulfilled—will be finished in His Second-coming

I. THEMES

1. AFFIRMATION—GOD IS SOVEREIGN OVER HUMAN HISTORY

2. ENCOURAGEMENT—OF JEWS DURING CAPTIVITY

3. GOD SUSTAINS THE RIGHTEOUS WHO ARE FAITHFUL

4. ASSURANCE—GOD WILL RESTORE HIS PEOPLE AND HIS PERMANENT KINGDOM

5. TRUST—IN GOD—AND HIS PROMISE OF A COMING MESSIAH

J. OUTLINE

1. DANIEL'S PERSONAL HISTORY—**CHAPTER 1**

2. NARRATIVE EVENTS AND GOD'S PLAN FOR GENTILES—**CHAPTERS 2-7**

a. Nebuchadnezzar's Dream—The Great Statue—**chapter 2**

b. The Fiery Furnace—**chapter 3**

c. Nebuchadnezzar's Tree-vision, Humiliation, and Restoration—**chapter 4**

d. Belshazzar—and Handwriting on the Wall—**chapter 5**

e. The Lion's Den—**chapter 6**

- f. Daniel's Vision of Four Beasts—**chapter 7**
- 3. GOD'S PROPHETIC PLAN FOR ISRAEL—**CHAPTERS 8-12**
 - a. Vision of the Ram and the Male Goat—**chapter 8**
 - b. Vision of the 70 weeks—**chapter 9**
 - c. Vision of Israel's Future—**chapters 10-12**
 - 1. Preparation of Daniel—**chapter 10**
 - 2. Revelation of 69 weeks—**11:1-35**
 - 3. Revelation of 70th week—**11:36-12:3**
 - 4. Conclusion and Sealing of Book—**12:5-13**

II. BIBLICAL TEXT

31 *"You, O king, were looking and behold, there was a single great statue; that statue, which was large and of extraordinary splendor, was standing in front of you, and its appearance was awesome. 32 The head of that statue was made of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, 33 its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. 34 You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them. 35 Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.*

36 *"This was the dream; now we will tell its interpretation before the king. 37 You, O king, are the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the strength and the glory; 38 and wherever the sons of men dwell, or the beasts of the field, or the birds of the sky, He has given them into your hand and has caused you to rule over them all. You are the head of gold.*

39 *After you there will arise another kingdom inferior to you, then another third kingdom of bronze, which will rule over all the earth.*

40 *Then there will be a fourth kingdom as strong as iron; inasmuch as iron crushes and shatters all things, so, like iron that breaks in pieces, it will crush and break all these in pieces. 41 In that you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it will be a divided kingdom; but it will have in it the toughness of iron, inasmuch as you saw the iron mixed with common clay. 42 As the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of pottery, so some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle. 43 And in that you saw the iron mixed with common clay, they will combine with one another in the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, even as iron does not combine with pottery.*

44 *In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.* **45** *Inasmuch as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future; so the dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy.”*

III. EXPOSITION

A. GOD’S OMNISCIENCE AND SOVEREIGNTY OVER HISTORY

- Nobody could tell the king his dream
- God used Daniel to show that only God knew the dream—v28
- Not for Daniel’s glory—but God’s—v 30—and to help the king
- God’s mercy—Daniel interceded for the wise men—so they would not be destroyed
- Only God is sovereign—controls and knows the future of all kingdoms

B. THE APPARENT MEANING OF THE STATUE

1. MOST SCHOLARS SAY—IT REPRESENTS THE FOLLOWING KINGDOMS

- Head = Babylonia
- Breast and Arms = Persia
- Stomach and Thighs = Greece
- Feet = Rome

2. PARALLELED BY FOUR BEASTS—IN [CHAPTER 7](#)

- Babylonian = lion with eagle’s wings
- Persian = bear with ribs in teeth
- Greek = leopard with four bird’s wings and four heads
- Roman = iron teeth and ten horns—and a little horn with human eyes and mouth

3. THREE OF THE KINGDOMS PARALLELED—IN [CHAPTER 8](#)

- Ram with two horns = Media (Babylon) and Persia
- Shaggy goat with one horn between its eyes = Greece

4. SPLENDOR AND POWER—MEASURED IN CORRUPTIBLE METALS

- Gold = Babylonian Empire
- Silver = Persian
- Bronze = Greek
- Iron and Clay = Roman

C. TRANSITORY NATURE OF WEALTH, POWER, AND HEGEMONY

1. BABYLON—AT ZENITH 66 YEARS

- Nabopolassar defeated Assyrians—612
- Nebuchadnezzar defeated Egypt—605
- Defeated—539

2. PERSIA—AT ZENITH 208 YEARS

- Cyrus defeated Nabonidus—539
- Defeated—331

3. GREECE—AT ZENITH 183 YEARS

- Alexander defeated Darius III—331
- Macedonia—first part of his empire to fall—was defeated 148

4. ROME—AT ZENITH ABOUT 500 YEARS

- Defeated Macedonia (148)—Seleudics (64)—Ptolemies (30)
- Romulus Augustulus—deposed by German King Odovacer—476

5. OTHER EXAMPLES OF WORLD POWERS

a. Byzantine Empire—1058 years

- From Theodosius's death (January 395) to conquest by Ottoman Turks (May 1453)

b. Chinese dynasties

- 25 dynasties!—from 2070 BC to 1912—average time = 159 years
- Longest was 800 years—Eastern Zhou (1056-256 BC)

6. **Illustration—Ozymandius**—by Percy Shelley—1818

I met a traveler from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert... near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed:
And on the pedestal these words appear:
'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!'
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

❖ Poem memorialized Egyptian Pharaoh Ramses II (ruled 1279-1213 BC)

- 19th Egyptian dynasty (1292-1189 BC)
- 7.25-ton stone statue—from Thebes—arrived London 1821
- Now in British Museum

7. Transitory nature is true in other realms

- a. Colonial empires—Britain—France—Germany—Portugal—Spain
- b. Economic powerhouses—Britain—America—Japan/Germany—China
- c. Forgotten airlines
 - Braniff (1928-82)
 - TWA (1924-2001)
 - PanAm (1927-1991)
 - Eastern (1926-1991)
 - Northwest (1926-2010) absorbed by Delta
 - Concorde (1976-2003)—\$8000 per ticket (1997)
 - Current big four—American, Delta, Southwest, United
- d. Forgotten computer companies
 - Compaq—Atari—Packard Bell—Kaypro—Wang
- e. Technology—records—8-track—cassettes—cd's—wireless

❖ Only God is sovereign—omniscient—omnipotent—and permanent

❖ All earthly power—wealth—superior knowledge—are temporary

D. THE POWER OF GOD'S KINGDOM IN CHRIST

1. THE STONE THAT CRUSHES—**Dan 2:34-35; 45**

- A great stone will crush all worldly kingdoms
- It will fall upon them and scatter them like chaff
- It will become a great mountain and fill the whole earth

2. THE STONE—AS THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Is 2:2 and **Mic 4:1**—the mountain of the house of the Lord

- Will become the chief mountain—raised above all hills
- And all the nations will stream to it

3. THE STONE—AS CHRIST

- He affirmed that He was this stone—in **Mt 21:42-44**
- Quoting **Ps 118:22-23**—*the stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone*

- He said—the kingdom will be taken away from those who stumble on this stone

E. THE KINGDOM WITHOUT END

1. IT WILL NEVER BE DESTROYED—BUT WILL ENDURE FOREVER—v44

2. BROUGHT BY CHRIST—THE SON OF MAN—Dan 7:13-14

- Coming on clouds of heaven—v13—reiterated by Christ in Mark 13
- The Ancient of Days will give Him dominion over all nations—v14
- Everlasting kingdom—inhabited by the saints

7:18—*But the saints of the Highest One will receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, for all ages to come*

7:27—*Then the sovereignty, dominion and greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.*

3. INAUGURATED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

a. Prophetised to Mary

Lk 1:32-33—*He will be great and will be called the son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.*

b. Claimed by Christ

Mt 28:18—*All authority has been given to Me on heaven and on earth.*

4. THE INTERIM REIGN OF CHRIST

I Cor 15—*24 then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. 25 For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. 26 The last enemy that will be abolished is death. 27 For He has put all things in subjection under His feet. But when He says, “All things are put in subjection,” it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him. 28 When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all.*

5. FULFILLED IN HEAVEN

Rev 22—*3 There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; 4 they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. 5 And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever.*