

Daniel: Courageous Living in Chaotic Times

An Overview

TITLE: The book of Daniel is named after its author. The Hebrew name *Daniye'l* or *Dani'el* means either “God is my judge” or “My Judge is God.” The Greek form *Daniel* in the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) is the basis for the Latin and English titles.

AUTHOR: Jewish and conservative Christian scholars through the years have almost universally considered Daniel the author. This is evident by Daniel’s own claim (Dan 12:4) and by his use of the autobiographical first person (7:2 ff.). This is also confirmed by Early Church Fathers such as Jerome and the ancient historian Josephus. Most importantly, Jesus Himself considers Daniel the author (Matt 24:15).

DATE/SETTING: Daniel’s story starts in 605 B.C., when he is taken captive to Babylon; and it continues for more than sixty years. He serves as a palace official first for the Babylonians and then for their successors, the Persians. The book was written no later than 530 B.C.

THEME: The theme of Daniel is rather simple: *God is large and in charge*. Throughout the book, our sovereign God is revealed as the one true God who judges and destroys the rebellious world powers and will faithfully deliver His covenant people according to their steadfast faith in Him.

KEY WORDS: Though the words “king” and “kingdom” occur over and over again, the key idea is the plan of God for Israel that will end in the establishment of the Messiah Christ as ruler on the earth.

KEY PHRASE: Jesus’ favorite phrase for describing Himself is “Son of Man.” It is likely that He was drawing on Dan 7:13–14.

KEY VERSES:

Dan 2:20–22: “Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, for wisdom and power belong to Him. ‘It is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men and knowledge to men of understanding. It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with Him.’”

Dan 4:34–35: “But at the end of that period, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever; for His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom *endures* from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, but He does according to His will in the host of heaven and *among* the inhabitants of earth; and no one can ward off His hand or say to Him, ‘What have You done?’”

Dan 7:14: “And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and *men of every* language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.”

KEY PRINCIPLES:

1. God is sovereign over the kingdoms of the world.
2. God is able to deliver but offers no guarantee that He will do so in every instance.
3. The future is in God’s hands and under His sovereign control.

CHRIST IN DANIEL: One of the key portraits of Christ in Daniel is that of the coming Messiah who will be cut off (a reference to the cross, 9:25–26). However, Christ is also portrayed as the great stone who will crush the kingdoms of this world (2:34, 45), the son of man (7:13), and the Ancient of Days (7:22). The vision in 10:5–9 is most likely a Christophany, an appearance of Christ (cf. Rev 1:12–16).

DANIEL IN SCRIPTURE: Daniel is mentioned once in the New Testament, in Matt 24:15. There Jesus refers to the abomination of desolation in Dan 11:31. There is also an allusion to Daniel in Heb 11:33: “who by faith . . . shut the mouths of lions,” referring to Daniel’s experience recorded in Dan 6. Only twice in the Old Testament, outside of Daniel, is Daniel mentioned. In Ezek 28:3 Daniel is marked out as a man of wisdom. In Ezek 14:14, 20, Daniel is noted as a man of righteousness. He is named there with Job and Noah—truly a select crowd.

NUTSHELL OUTLINE: The book of Daniel can be divided in half (chaps 1–6 and 7–12). The following outline suggestions reveal that chaps 1–6 are historical while chaps 7–12 are prophetic. (The word “end” occurs fourteen times in chaps 7–12.)

1. Daniel’s Victories (chaps 1–6).
2. Daniel’s Visions (chaps 7–12).

1. God is sovereign over all things (chaps 1–6).
2. God is judge over His enemies (chaps 7–12).

Copyright © 2010 Keith R. Krell. All rights reserved. All Scripture quotations, unless indicated, are taken from the *New American Standard Bible*, © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1975, 1977, and 1995 by The Lockman Foundation, and are used by permission.

Permissions: Feel free to reproduce and distribute any materials written by Keith Krell, in part or in whole, in any format, provided that you do not alter the wording in any way or charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction. It is our desire to spread this information, not protect or restrict it. Please include the following statement on any distributed copy: By Keith Krell, Timeless Word Ministries, 2508 State Ave NE Olympia, WA 98506, 360–352–9044, www.timelessword.com.