

# Daniel

**Authorship:** Daniel is named as the author both internally (8:1; 9:2; 10:2) and externally (Matthew 24:15).

**Date and Location:** Daniel's book records events from his life during the reigns of the Babylonian kings Nebuchadnezzar (605-562 B.C.) and Belshazzar (553-539 B.C.), and during the first years of Persian rule under Darius and Cyrus. The first verses of chapters 2; 7; 8; 9; and 10 cite specific dates (the writings are not recorded in strict chronological order – see Outline). His writings would have been compiled sometime shortly after the last one (10-12) was finished, c. 536.

**Occasion:** Daniel's early ministry as a young man was initiated by Nebuchadnezzar (1-4). During the last years of Babylon, God initiated visions of the future (7-8), and then Daniel was called to interpret the handwriting on the wall (5). Daniel's encounter with the lions (6) and his final visions of the future (9-12) came when he was a very old man, shortly after the time the Persians defeated Babylon.

**Background:** During Nebuchadnezzar's first raid on Jerusalem in 605 B.C., he took several of its foremost citizen's captive to Babylon. Among these is a teenager named Daniel (1:1-6; 2 Kings 24:1). Soon after he arrived in Babylon, Daniel was selected for service in the royal court. He excelled in that role and soon rose to a position second only to the king (2:48). Such was Daniel's reputation and influence that, when Babylon fell to Medo-Persia in 539 B.C., Daniel occupied the number two position under the new rulers as well (6:1-3). While distinguishing himself in the government affairs of Babylonia and Persia, Daniel remained unswervingly faithful to the God of Israel. His book records the effects of his life and prophecies on Babylonian and Persian royalty (1-7), and his prophecies concerning Israel's place in world events down through the ages (8-12). Daniel recorded most of 1-7 (specifically, 2:4-7:28) in Aramaic, the trade language of the Babylonian Empire. The prophecies of 8-12, however, are in the Hebrew of their target audience. Daniel's amazing prophecies, with their specifically stated applications, have been called the key to understanding all of biblical prophecy. Daniel's early ministry overlapped that of the older Ezekiel, who was taken captive to Babylon in 597 B.C. and lived about 50 miles south of Babylon. Though there is no record of the two men ever having met, Ezekiel had apparently heard of this famous young Hebrew (see Ezekiel 14:14, 20; 28:3). Daniel's final prophecies (10-12) came after the first group of Jewish exiles returned to Judah in 538 B.C. There is no record of Daniel himself having ever returned. Many Jews remained in Persia well beyond the time of Daniel. The Jewish queen Esther may have been inspired by Daniel's life and prophecies as she rescued the Jews of Persia from extermination in about 473 B.C. Still later in 457 and 445 B.C., two more groups of exiles would return to Judea, under Ezra and Nehemiah.

**Purpose:**

- (1) To proclaim God's sovereign control over human affairs (5:21), a lesson pagans needed to learn and Jews needed to remember as they faced life with no human king;
- (2) To provide examples of believers who stood up for their God even in the face of death – examples greatly needed by the Jewish captives in pagan Babylon.

**Outline:**

**I. God's Man in Babylon (1-7)**

- A. Daniel's preparation (1)
- B. Nebuchadnezzar's dream (2)
- C. The fiery furnace (3)
- D. Nebuchadnezzar's humiliation (4)
- E. The handwriting on the wall (5)
- F. The lion's den (6)
- G. Four kingdoms and the Son of Man (7)

**II. God's Prophet for Israel (8-12)**

- A. The ram, the goat, and the little horn (8)
- B. Daniel's prayer and the 70 weeks (9)
- C. Israel's tribulation and triumph (10-12)

**Key Verses**

"Then he said to me, "Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words. The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia..." (Daniel 10:12-13 ESV).

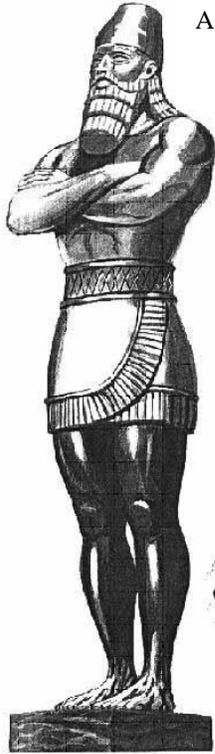
**Meaning of Name**

Daniel, the sixth century Israelite prophet exiled to Babylon, has given his name to this book as its composer. In Hebrew, his name means "God is my Judge" or "God Judges" or "God's Judge."

**Key Term: "Kingdoms"**

This book contrasts all earthly kingdoms, both in Daniel's day and those of the future, with God's glorious everlasting kingdom. Of all the Old Testament books, this one has a more sharply defined kingdom perspective than any other.

### Nebuchadnezzar's Dream Statute (Chapter 2)



- A. Head (Fine Gold) = Babylonia Empire (Nebuchadnezzar)
- B. Chest and Arms (Silver) = Medo-Persian Empire
- C. Belly and Thighs (Bronze) = Empire of Greece (Alexander and Successors)
- D. Legs (Iron) = Roman Empire
- F. Stone = Jesus (Son of Man)

E. Feet (Mixed with Iron & Clay) = Revised Roman Empire (A Mixture of People/kingdoms)

### Vision of Goat and Ram (Chapter 8)

- A. Male Goat with 1 Big Horn = Alexander the Great and his four generals Conquering the Medo-Persian Empire



B. Ram with 2 Horns = Medo-Persian Empire (Defeated)

### Vision Recorded in Daniel Chapter 7



**Babylon**

(Like a lion with eagle's wings)



**Medo-Persia**

(Like a bear on its side)



**Greece**

(Like a leopard with 4 heads & 4 wings)



**Rome**

(Indescribable beast with 10 horns & a little horn)

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