

Sermon series: Dare to be Daniel!

Introductory background to Daniel

Daniel... is one of the more fascinating books of the Bible. (a) The first six chapters contain accounts of faith that inspire both young and old (b) The last six chapters are filled with apocalyptic visions that challenge even the most advanced Bible students and scholars.

I. DANIEL AND HIS TIMES

A. THE MAN...

1. The name "Daniel" means "God is my judge"
2. He was a person of deep and abiding faith
 - a. As a youth, he purposed not to defile himself -
Dan 1:8
 - b. When old, he persisted in serving God despite threats against his life - **Dan 6:10**
3. God blessed Daniel because of his faith.
 - a. He rose to great heights in the kingdoms of Babylon and Persia - **Dan 2:48; 6:1-3**
 - b. He served as a statesman, a counsellor to kings, and a prophet of God.
4. Daniel was a contemporary with
 - a. **Jeremiah** who prophesied in Jerusalem before and during the Babylonian exile (626-528 B.C.)
 - b. **Ezekiel** who prophesied in Babylon among the exiles (592-570B.C.)
 - c. **Daniel** prophesied in the capital of Babylon (605-586 B.C.)
5. Nothing is known of his personal life outside of the book
 - a. He descended from one of Judah's prominent families, if not from royal blood - **Dan 1:3**
 - b. At an early age (12-18) he was taken from his family to be trained in the courts of Babylon - **Dan 1:3-4**
 - c. Whether he ever married is uncertain.

B. THE TIME IN WHICH HE LIVED...

1. Some key dates to remember

a. 612 B.C. - Fall of Nineveh, capital of Assyria

- 1) Assyria had ruled the world since the days of Tiglath-Pileser (845 B.C.)
- 2) Nabopolassar came to the throne in Babylon and rebelled against the Assyrians in 625 B.C.
- 3) Nebuchadnezzar, son of Nabopolassar, was the general who led the Babylonian army against Nineveh, defeating it in 612 B.C.

b. 605 B.C. - Battle of Carchemish, establishing Babylonian domination

- 1) Pharaoh-Necho of Egypt came to fight the Babylonians at Carchemish
- 2) Nebuchadnezzar defeated the Egyptians, chasing them south through Judah
- 3) At Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar heard of his father's death; he returned to assume the throne in Babylon
- 4) The first group of Jewish captives were taken, along with Daniel and his friends - **Dan 1:1-4**

c. 597 B.C. - A second remnant taken to Babylon

- 1) Jehoiachin (Jeconiah, Coniah) followed the reign of his father, Jehoiakim
- 2) He lasted just three months, when Nebuchadnezzar took him and 10,000 Jews to Babylon - **2 Kin 24:8-16**
- 3) This second group of captives included Ezekiel – **Eze 1:1-3**

d. 586 B.C. - Fall of Jerusalem and the temple destroyed

- 1) Zedekiah was installed as king in Jerusalem, but was weak and vacillating
- 2) Eleven years later, Jerusalem was totally devastated by Babylonian forces - **2 Kin 25:1-10**
- 3) A third group was taken into Babylonian captivity, but Jeremiah was among those who stayed behind - **2 Kin 25: 11-12,22; Jer 39:11-14; 40:1-6**

e. 536 B.C. - The first remnant returns to Jerusalem

- 1) Babylon falls in 539 B.C.
- 2) Cyrus, king of Persia, sends the first remnant back under the leadership of Zerubbabel - **Ezra 1:1-5; 2:1-2**
- 3) The foundation of the temple was soon started, but the temple was not completed until 516 B.C. - **Ezra 3:8-13; 6:14-16**

f. 457 B.C. - A second remnant returns to Jerusalem

- 1) Ezra the priest returns with this group - **Ezra 7:1-8:36**
- 2) He leads a much-needed revival - **Ezra 9:1-10:44**

g. 444 B.C. - A third remnant returns to Jerusalem

- 1) This group is led by Nehemiah - **Neh 1:1-2:20**
- 2) Under his leadership, the walls of Jerusalem are rebuilt – **Neh 3:1-7:73**
- 3) Together with Ezra, they restore much of the religion – **Neh 8:1-13:31**

2. Daniel lived through much of these times (605-534 B.C.)

- a. He was among the first group of captives taken to Babylon – **Dan 1:1-4**
- b. He continued there over the entire 70 years of captivity – **Dan 1:21; 10:1; cf. Dan 9:1-2; Jer 25:11; 29:10**

Daniel was certainly a remarkable man. His greatness was recognized by his contemporary, Ezekiel (**Ezek 14:14,20; 28:3**).

II. THE BOOK OF DANIEL

A. THE THEME...

"God Rules in Human Kingdoms"

- cf. **Dan 2:21; 4:17,25,32, 34-35; 5:21**

B. A BRIEF OUTLINE...

1. God's Providence In History - 1:1-6:28

- a. Daniel and his determination to be pure - **1:1-21**
- b. Nebuchadnezzar's dream and Daniel's promotion - **2:1-49**
- c. Faith in the face of fire by Daniel's friends - **3:1-30**
- d. Nebuchadnezzar's second dream and temporary insanity – **4:1-37**
- e. The writing on the wall and fall of Belshazzar - **5:1-31**
- f. Darius and his den of lions - **6:1-28**

2. God's Purpose In History - 7:1-12:13

- a. Daniel's dream of the four beasts - **7:1-28**
- b. Daniel's dream of the ram and the goat - **8:1-27**
- c. Daniel's prayer, and the vision of the seventy weeks - **9:1-27**
- d. Daniel's vision of the time of the end - **10:1-12:13**