

The Book of Daniel

Study 1.

KJV

Bill Holdstock

There are very many “interpretations” of the book of Daniel. Many Bible scholars write many things based on findings way back hundreds of years, or from books and magazines. I respect their views but do not always agree with them. My writings are offered to readers as the Lord has lain on my heart as I have read the Bible. Novel interpretations have been rejected I have started to read other writings on Daniel but get confused with so many opinions which often conflict with each other. As with my other studies on Ezekiel and Job it is best to read the Word precept upon precept and line upon line, here a little there a little as instructed in Isaiah 28:10. God did not want us to be ignorant of His Word, so much of the Bible speaks for its self and is its own interpreter. Let’s see how we go with Daniel accepting that some will not agree with me but I am happy with that, let us pray for understanding from the Holy Spirit “rightly dividing the Word of Truth” (2 Tim. 2:15) that we all may benefit in these last days.

Daniel Chapter 1: Who is this Daniel?

Well it all started with a new king called Jehoiakim and at the age of 25 years old he was set on the throne of Judah by Pharaoh-nechoh king of Egypt and he reigned 11 years. Jehoiakim taxed the people of Judah heavily and gave the tax as tribute to Pharaoh causing great hardship to the Jews. This story can be found in 2 Kings 23. v 33

Jehoiakim continued to pay this tribute for 3 years and in the 4th year of his reign Nebuchadnezzar came against him and defeated him. Egypt was defeated in war by Nebuchadnezzar at Carchemish on the river Euphrates and Judah, Syria, and other countries in that area were made subject to Babylon. (Jeremiah 46; 1-2).

The 70 years of captivity of the Jews began here and Daniel a prince, an interpreter of dreams, a Prime Minister and a Prophet of God (2:46-49, 5: 29, 6: 1-3) was taken captive along with many others from Jerusalem. As we read these verses we see that it was all in God’s plan and He used the heathen for His purposes. In Isaiah chapter 39 verses 1-8 we read that Hezekiah showed representatives from Babylon all the vessels of Gold, silver, spices, and ointments belonging to the Temple. This was not a wise thing to do and he was reprimanded by God through Isaiah and was told he would loose them to Babylon. So, some year’s later and about the time of our story king Neb told his armies to bring back to Babylon many of the best of the Jews, the craftsmen and knowledgeable men and also the vessels of gold from the Temple he had heard about.

Verse 3.

And the king spake unto Ashpenax the master of his eunuchs and he should bring certain of the children of Israel and of the kings seed and of the princes.

Children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured and skilful in all wisdom and cunning in knowledge and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king’s palaces and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans.

I suppose a king has the right to dictate what he wants from those he has captured, the spoils of war as it were, but this man wanted the very best from Judah including the gold from God’s house. It is from Babylon we owe the exact measurements of the lunar and solar cycles, the tracing of the paths of the planets and a whole lot more. There is no doubt that much of this

information came first from those trained and skilled men of the Children of Israel as verse 3 indicates. Verse 4 says he wanted the Children of Israel to teach understanding from the vast libraries the king had in his palaces during the three year training before they became courtiers of the king. They were fed on a special diet from the king's table including the wine that the king drank.

It was among these captives of Judah that Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah were found by the king.

It was the custom for the victor to change the names of slaves as a sign of subjection, so Daniel's name was changed to Belteshazzar, Hananiah's was changed to Shadrach and Mishael's was changed to Abednego.

Verse 8

But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. 9. Now God had brought Daniel into the favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs. 10 And the prince of the eunuchs said to Daniel, I fear my lord the king who has appointed your meat and your drink, for why should he see your faces worse liking than children which are of your sort? Then shall you make me endanger my head to the king.

Then said Daniel to Melzar whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah and Mishael...

There is a very convenient saying we use a lot, "when in Rome do as the Romans do!" This saying purports the easy way out to avoid confrontation, go with the flow, don't rock the boat etc. But right at the beginning of his captivity Daniel and his three friends continued to live a Godly life and not eat the food of the heathen.

...Prove thy servants I beseech you ten days and let them give us pulse to eat and water to drink.

Pulse was a mixture of seeds, vegetables, wheat, barley, rye and peas. This does not mean that these Jews were vegetarians; it was the safe way to eat in a foreign land when they did not know how the meat was killed and if it was prepared legally according to God's law. Daniel and his friends continued to live in a strange land in the way they had lived at home unto God, and the power of God was with them.

What a thing to say to your captives, give us pulse instead of the king's food which was of the best in the land and we will be just as healthy and strong in 10 days as all the others! Daniel's trust was in the Lord and after 10 days the king called for them and found them to be better in health and looks than all his other courtiers.

There is no doubt that even in a foreign land and in captivity God is there we just need to seek Him.

This mirrors how we as Christians should live in the midst of an increasingly secular and Godless society. We dwell in the world but we are not of this world. It was hard for Daniel to uphold God's laws in a heathen land, and it is difficult for us too in our own hedonistic culture. But we must be salt and light.

Over the generations God's people Israel have been scattered having no country of their own. But it was because they earnestly kept to the Torah wherever they were that they were recognised by all nations as Jews. The Torah in a sense united them as God's people wherever they dwelt.

In exile there was no temple. The temple was where they believed God himself could be found – so they felt separated from God's presence. In that situation the Torah, God's Word, became very 'holy' and precious to them. During the period of exile the Babylonian Talmud was written and details of the law were described in fine detail. It was in exile too that they stopped using God's covenant name (YHWH) and replaced it with Adonai. This was to avoid inadvertently using His covenant name in vain.

Chapter 2 starts the work and ministry of Daniel under the powerful hand of God.

Chapter 2: v 1.

And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar he dreamed dreams wherewith his spirit was troubled and his sleep broke from him. 2. Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers and the sorcerers and the Chaldeans for to show the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king.

The Chaldeans were a special class of people above the others and the king relied on them to come up with answers where his own sorcerers failed. These men were on hand day and night to offer the king advice in all things and they were brought before the king all lined up in front of the throne. Isn't it strange that men throughout history when in difficulties seek help from all and sundry and from every direction other than the Lord. Jesus said we were to seek him first and all things will be added unto us Luke; 12. 31. We must take note and remember to bring all our petitions to Him because He knows what we have need of and what is best for us after all we are His Children.

Psalms 1.

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly nor stands in the way of sinners nor sits in the seat of the scornful.

We as Christians must watch our walk, keep close to Him particularly as the coming of the Lord is near.

Verse 3.

And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream and my spirit was troubled to know the dream. 4 Then spake the Chaldeans in Syriack, (Aramaic) O king live for ever: tell your servants the dream and we will shew you the interpretation.

God had his hand on this episode all along. Just think if the king had remembered his dreams and was able to tell the Chaldeans what he had dreamt they could have told the king anything and made up some story to save their lives, at all times they could loose their heads if they could not give the king the words he wanted to hear or if he did not like what they said either way their heads would come off!

The Lord God made the king forget his dream to promote His purposes. There was far too much at stake in the next few chapters concerning the world's future to leave it to chance or the pride of a few Chaldeans.

Verse 4.

Then spake the Chaldeans to the king (in Aramaic), O king live forever: tell your servants the dream and we will show you the interpretation.

5. Then the king answered and said to the Chaldeans, the thing is gone from me: if you will not make known to me the dream with the interpretation thereof you shall be cut in pieces and your houses shall be made a dunghill.

I don't know about you but I sense a feeling of panic in the king's threats, his dreams troubled him so much but he didn't know why he had them or what they meant and now he could not even remember what the dreams was.

The next few verses tell us the dialogue between the king and his "wise and learned men" and all the time the Chaldeans wanted to know from the king what the dream was.

Verse 10

The Chaldeans answered before the king and said "There is not a man upon the earth that can show the king's matter: therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler that has asked such things of any magician or astrologer, or Chaldean. 11, and it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can show it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.

You see, that is the difference between those who know God and those who don't! Those who have not let Jesus into their hearts call on all sorts of gods to help them, using the plural just in case there is more than one god and to cover all eventualities. Paul found the same thing in Athens (Acts 17 V 22). He came to preach Jesus and as it was against the Law to introduce a different deity Paul simply used the name on the alter that they had inscribed "to the unknown god" just in case they had missed out a god who might be offended. Today the modern world is led by Satan to blaspheme the name of God by calling on Him as though He belongs to them saying "Oh my God" but by using His name like that proves He is not their God.

Ephesians 3: 16 – 19

*That He would grant you according to the riches of his Glory to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man. 17. **That Christ may dwell in your hearts** by Faith that you being rooted and grounded in love, 18. May be able to comprehend with all Saints... and to know the Love of Christ which passes knowledge.*

We give thanks to Jesus for the cross which enables man to experience the indwelling of Christ and the Holy Spirit in our hearts that we may be grounded in His love and be able to understand with other Saints the surety of Salvation and eternal life. So the Chaldeans in Daniel's day got it wrong. God our creator has always wanted to commune with His creation and He reveals to us His word, His plans for our lives and His purposes for His people in the end times and Daniel was to become an important part in those plans.

Verse 12

For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. 13. And a decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain.

Watch out for the word "then" in the Bible it is often read over quickly and not much notice is taken, but you can be sure what follows the word "then" is either very important or there could be a big change in the proceedings.

Verse 14

THEN Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain of the king's guard, which was gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon. 13. He answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, "Why is the decree so hasty from the king? THEN Arioch made known the thing to Daniel. THEN Daniel went in and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would show the king the interpretation.

It would appear that the decree to kill the wise men had already been put into action, but with counsel and wisdom undoubtedly from God Daniel asked why the hurry. As soon as Arioch told Daniel what it was about, Daniel went in to see the king. It is good to remember that Satan will often put into our minds that we must hurry, time is short, make that decision now, but Jesus is our Shepherd and goes before us leading the way, follow Him, ask Him. If we are under pressure to make a decision it may not be God who is talking.

As we have found in other parts of the Bible one had to make an appointment through many channels to get an interview with the king. One had to approach the king slowly and stand and wait for the king to bid you approach, then king would hold out his sceptre for you touch and only speak when you are invited to, you can read some of this procedure in Esther. We read that Daniel went in and asked the king for more time. The king had already given his wise men, magicians, astrologers and sorcerers time enough to come up with the answers but to no avail and here was Daniel apparently not waiting for protocol going into the king's throne room and asking for yet more time. This was evidently given because Daniel went to his friends gave them an update and they went straight to prayer.

Verse 19

THEN was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.

Daniel had the same dream or vision that the king had so he praised God and thanked Him..

Verse 20

Daniel answered and said Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever, for wisdom and might are His. 21 And He changes the times and the seasons: He removes kings and sets up kings. He gives wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them who know understanding. 22. He reveals the deep and secret things: He knows what is in the darkness and the light dwells with Him.

It would appear that God not only gave Daniel the same dream that the king had He also reminded Daniel of His power, authority, His wisdom and knowledge to build up Daniels faith and trust in His God for the tremendous, responsibility that lay ahead. This is a very good model of how prophet direction works. God will speak to us and confirm what He has said through the words of someone who has no possible idea of what God has told you, there is a wonderful feeling of joy when that happens, you know it is God.

The king asked Daniel if he could interpret his dream and Daniel took advantage of the situation and asked the king if his Astrologers, the magicians the soothsayers and wise men could shew unto the king his dream. Then he said:

Verse 28

But there is a God in Heaven Who reveals secrets. And makes known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days.

Daniel gave God His rightful place in his answer and gave God the glory for the interpretation of the dreams. The primary object of the king's dream was to show the king what would happen to his kingdom after his death, and to show the world which empires would fall from the time of Nebuchadnezzar's dream to the end of the age.

Here are some reasons the king had the dream.

- To save the lives of Daniel and his three friends.
- To demonstrate that God answers prayer.
- To show God rules over all the 'wise' men of the world
- To prove that God is infinite in knowledge and wisdom
- To make it clear that God is the author of prophecies and not man
- To make known the plan of God from Daniel's day through to eternity.

In 2 Kings Chapter 24: v 10 onwards there is an account of king Nebuchadnezzar being used by God to punish Judah for her disobedience and rebellion and to fulfil prophecy. He used The Assyrians to punish the 10 tribes in 2Kings 17. He used Pharaoh to make His power known and here we see God uses a graven image to show His purposes from the time of Daniel to His coming with His Saints at the end of the age.

Daniel made sure the words he was to speak to the king was from God any other 'word' even given with good intent would have distorted the whole of the end time programme that God wanted the king and the world to know, including us today. As we said earlier that's why God confused the king in not remembering his dream and the king's threat of death to all of his wise men, astrologers, magicians or the learned Chaldeans, if they came up with some fairy tale. This could be a very good insurance policy for today! There was an edict in the Old Testament that should a prophecy be found to be false the Prophet was stoned. Living by the sea I must confess some of us were tempted to get a pile of stones from the beach and place them at the end of the platform just to remind them...you know what I mean!.

So what was the dream and what did it mean?

Daniel Chapter 2: Verse 31 *Thou O king saw and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee and the form thereof was terrible.*



This images head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and thighs of brass, his legs were of iron and his feet of part iron and part clay. You saw until that a Stone was cut out without hands which smote the image upon its feet that were of iron and clay and break them in pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold broken to pieces together and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors and the wind carried them away that no place was found for them: and the Stone that smote the image became a great mountain and filled the whole Earth.

This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. Thou O king art a king of kings for the God of Heaven has given you a kingdom, power, and strength and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven has He given into your hand and has made you ruler over them all. Thou art this head of Gold.

Under the power of the Holy Spirit Daniel was given the same dream as the king, and he was given the interpretation of the dream, so he was able to do what the king's magicians, astrologers and the Chaldeans were unable to.

Verse 39

And after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to you and another third kingdom of brass which shall bear rule over all the earth. 40. And a fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron braketh in pieces and subdues all things and as iron that breaketh all these shall it break in pieces and bruise. 41. And whereas you saw the feet and toes part of the potters clay and part of iron the kingdom shall be divided, but there shall be in it the strength of the iron, forasmuch as you saw iron mixed with miry clay.

The great image was made up of five different materials and they represented five empires namely: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and revised Rome which will be made up of 10 kingdoms in the last days.

The head of Gold.

The head of gold was the first kingdom – Nebuchadnezzar’s own kingdom of Babylon. God used king Nebuchadnezzar to bring about His plans in punishing Israel for their rebellion against Him. Babylon was the first of the 5 kingdoms of this image in the vision and these 5 kingdoms succeeded each other as the time came for them to fulfil God’s plans. They were all in existence before God used them for His purpose which was to turn Israel back to God. When these kingdoms had fulfilled their mission they were absorbed in the next kingdom. Babylon conquered Israel in the first year of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign in about 616 BC. King Nebuchadnezzar reigned for 43 years.

The breast and arms of silver.

This part of the image represents the kingdom of Medo-Persian. This kingdom succeeded the Babylonian kingdom at the end of the 70 year captivity of the Jews. It was the 2nd kingdom to oppress Israel in the times of the Gentiles. The two arms of the image are the two nations of the Medes and the Persians and even together they were inferior to the kingdom of Babylon as Silver is inferior to Gold. There were some differences that made this kingdom superior to Babylon for instance in Babylon the king had absolute power and the law could not be change once made Daniel 5:19. But in Medo-Persia the law was superior to the king Daniel 6: 1,14.

The belly and thighs of brass.

This part of the image represented the Grecian Empire under Alexandria the Great which also dominated Israel. This Empire became the greatest Empire of it’s time and starting at Greece conquered all the territories of the other two kingdoms and even a part of India. The Grecian Empire started to crumble after the death of Alexandria and his vast Empire was split into four sections.

The legs of iron.

This part of the image represents the old Roman Empire and again was used to dominate Israel. This kingdom was to be stronger than all the other kingdoms as iron is stronger than gold, silver or brass. These kingdoms were ‘in the times of the Gentiles’ meaning a rod of chastening upon Israel which began when in Egypt and will continue until the second coming of the Lord when He will deliver His people from the Gentiles and exalt them as head of all nations in the millennium. Luke 21. 24. Romans 11. 25. The two legs of iron represent the Western and the Eastern divisions of the old Roman Empire yet to arise before the coming of their Messiah.

The feet and toes of iron and clay

This part of the image represents the revised Roman Empire from the iron of the legs of the great image and part of this Empire was strong and part was to be weak symbolized by the two materials namely iron and clay, the clay is the rule by the masses and the iron the rule by kings. These two forms of Government will not mix even as the iron and clay will not mix. The final outcome will be that kings will once more become dominant ruling in the 10 kingdoms represented by the 10 toes which some call the Revised Roman Empire that will exist in the last days before the coming of Christ. The coming of Christ represented by the Stone will fall on the toes or ten kingdoms and the whole of the image will fall. This will be the end of this age and Christ’s new Kingdom will emerge.

The 10 toes represent the final dividing of the Revised Roman Empire and being clay and iron indicating a strong king and a weak king. The clay portion in the Chaldee is *tebar* which means fragile and easily broken, and this king will seek to mingle with the population and try to

please the masses to keep in power. The iron portion however will become dominant and absolute monarchs will finally emerge from this mixture of iron and clay and eventually give their power to the beast.

Daniel continued to explain to the king in verse 44;

And in the days of these kings shall the God of Heaven set up a Kingdom which shall never be destroyed: and shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as you saw that the Stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it break in pieces the iron and the clay, the silver and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter.

Daniel made sure he gave God the Glory and Honour for the interpretations of the king's dream but the king honoured Daniel and made him and Daniel's friends head over Babylon.

Our next study starts at Chapter 7