

# CAPITOL STUDIES

JANUARY 10, 2024 • WEEK 1



## DANIEL: CHRIST'S CIVIL SERVANT IN BABYLON

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### *Verse of the Week*

#### Daniel 2:20-21

Daniel said, "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."

## Christ's Civil Servant in Babylon: Daniel



**W**E JUST FINISHED CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS. For weeks, or maybe months, great anticipation of good things built in hearts and minds. Little children were admonished to be good so Santa Claus would reward them with gifts. Families anticipated time together. People looked forward to vacation days. It's funny how we look at certain things with such positive anticipation, but other things we almost dread. Biblical prophecies tell us of many wonderful things yet to come, but they also tell us of some sad and frightening things.

As one of the major books of prophecy in the Hebrew Bible, Daniel lays the groundwork for events still to come. Because some of these future events have not yet been confirmed, the veracity and authenticity of Daniel has often been questioned by unbelievers and scoffers. However, in His Olivet discourse, Jesus validated Daniel's writings and his ministry by quoting Daniel 9:27, "Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet..." (Matthew 24:15).

Pastor Arin Hess, *Chaplain, Capitol Studies*



In Luke 24, the risen Jesus reminds Cleopas of the prophecies predicting the death and resurrection of the Christ. “And He said to them, O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?” (vv. 24-26). “Thus, it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things” (vv. 46-49).<sup>1</sup> When one looks with a believing eye at the fulfillment of hundreds of other biblical prophecies, there is no reason to doubt that any yet-to-be-fulfilled prophecies will also come to pass.

## INTRODUCTION

Who was Daniel, this major prophet from Israel? He was originally from Jerusalem, but when Judah fell to the Chaldeans, he was one of the captives taken back to Babylon and conscripted into service to Nebuchadnezzar. The Babylonians found great success in bringing back slaves from conquered people groups and training them in their ways and beliefs. These slaves could then be used in the king’s political dealings with the vassal states. Daniel and his three friends were probably teenagers when they were taken captive. Believed to be related to the royal lineage of David, they were enrolled in “Babylon University” and trained in all the ways of the Chaldeans. The book of Daniel has 356 verses in 12 chapters, covering 70-plus years of Daniel’s ministry. Daniel prophesies of future Israel as well as the Gentile world (all of mankind). It is filled with visions, dreams, and mysteries.

Warren Wiersbe says, “What Jesus said about the prophet John the Baptist, we could say about the prophet Daniel: ‘What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? But what did you go out to see? ... A prophet? Yes, I tell to you, and one who is more than a prophet’ (Matthew 11:7, 9).” Forced into circumstances that would have made it easy for him to become a reed in the wind, Daniel stood firm in the faith and dared to be different. Instead of bending and blending like a reed, he stood like a mighty oak, rooted in the Lord, defying the storms of change that raged about him. Today’s society is a good deal like the one Daniel lived in centuries ago. The world still wants God’s people to conform to its standards and follow its practices. Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold as Romans 12:2 depicts, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.” Daniel and his friends obeyed that admonition. We must obey it today. We need Christians who have the faith and courage to be resolute and unswerving in their devotion to God. As we study the book Daniel wrote for us, we will meet Daniel’s God, the Sovereign Lord, Who still rules in the kingdom of men (Dan. 4:32) and Who confidently proclaims things to come. In Daniel’s life and ministry, we will see how true believers should live in the light of biblical prophecy—how they relate to the Sovereign Lord and accomplish His good, acceptable, and perfect will. In a world in which people



find it easy to do what is right in their own eyes, the Lord is searching for men and women who will do what's right in His eyes and dare to be a Daniel.<sup>2</sup>

## I. THE THEME

There are two key phrases in the book of Daniel. The first is in 2:28, "There is a God in Heaven," and the second is in 4: 25, "The Most High is ruler...." When you link these two together, you have the theme of Daniel: the universal sovereignty of God. *God is still on the throne* is the message sounding forth. God's sovereignty is seen and declared in the government of the nations, *the kingdom of men*.

An ordinary historian would have stated that Nebuchadnezzar came, encircled the city of Jerusalem, captured it, and conquered the king, but that is not how Daniel states it. He says, "The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand." (1:2) Here is the sovereignty of God over the affairs of man! Daniel 2:37 reads, "You, O king, are the king of kings: to whom the God of Heaven has given the kingdom, the power, and strength and the glory."

The book of Daniel, among other things, is a prophetic philosophy of history, and its theme is God's kingdom. The kingdoms of this earth are passing away, and the kingdom of the Most High continues to prevail. Through all the procession, through the running centuries, through all that is taking place, the Most High God will rule. Throughout the book, the character of God is magnified:

- God is the Most High (3:26; 4:2, 17, 24, 25, 32, 34; 5:18, 21; 7:22, 25, 27).
- God is truly Lord (1:2; 9:16-19).
- God is Lord of kings (2:47) and Lord of Heaven (5:23).
- God is the King of heaven (4:37), the great God (2:45), and God of gods (2:47).
- God has power over kings to such an extent that He puts them into power and removes them from office whenever He wishes (2:21, 38; 4:17, 25, 32; 5:21, 26; 7:12, 25-26; 8:25).
- He is Daniel's God personally (6:26; cf. 6:5, 10, 11, 16, 20, 22, 23; 9:18-20) and the God of Daniel's three friends personally (3:17, 28).

Daniel is a book for today if only for the reason that it shows the sovereignty of God in dealing with despots; it shows the divine limits to despotism; it shows that under the sovereignty of God the biggest of men will be humbled to the dust and brought to nothing. Three of the four despots whom Daniel served came to the place that they made open confession of the supreme power and wisdom of God.

## II. THE AIM

The primary aim of Daniel is very much akin to that of Peter in his first epistle. Peter writes to strengthen the faith of exiles under persecution—Christians who were under oppression. Daniel, likewise, writes to





encourage people of God to see the sovereignty and purpose of God and to rest their faith in Him alone.

Also, like Peter, Daniel gives “the prophetic word made more sure” (2 Peter 1:19). The book of Daniel has a lot to say about the plan of the ages. It is written not only to bring encouragement and comfort but to give a prophetic lamp in the darkness, to show that God is working His plan even in the midst of captivity. Daniel was given specific revelation about the “times of the Gentiles” and their world rule as planned by God. Through this book, God speaks mainly to Gentile kings as He displays His power to them.

### III. THE FORM

The book divides itself into two equal parts. The first six chapters are personal history, and the second six chapters are prophetic ministry. In chapters one through six, Daniel reveals God’s secrets to kings, and in chapters seven through twelve, angels reveal God’s secrets to Daniel. Daniel is the Old Testament equivalent of the book of Revelation in the New Testament, as both reveal things to come.

The other fifteen books of Old Testament prophecy repeatedly use the phrase “Thus says the Lord,” but you will not find it in Daniel. God is not speaking to His own people in Daniel. God is speaking to Daniel. Daniel had no special message for the Jews in the way the other major and minor prophets had. Daniel’s message was for the world powers, for the Gentiles and not for the Jews.

### IV. THE NAME

The book is named after its human author, Daniel (which means “God is my Judge”). There are many good men in the Word of God, but none about whom we read so much without seeing weakness, sin, and faults. Ezekiel 14:14-20 depicts Daniel in the company of Noah and Job. God does not speak of a single flaw in Daniel’s life or character. We read of the triumph of his character. He was a member of a foreign race, a captive race, in a pagan world, and yet he rose to one of the highest positions in the state. Compromise, stalemate, and diplomacy are usually the ways of politicians. But there is none seen in Daniel’s life. On the contrary, Daniel was willing to lay down his life for truth, integrity, and righteousness. Through three kingdoms and four rulers, he stood for God and godly living. What an amazing accomplishment!<sup>3</sup>

### CONCLUSION

Senators, we look forward to meeting with you in the weeks ahead and blessing one another with powerful truths from the life of a fellow servant of Christ: Daniel. His recorded story is intended to benefit generations with this truth: “God governs in the affairs of men.” You have the opportunity to learn at the feet of this follower of our Messiah, Jesus Christ. These powerful themes give encouragement to praise the



God of Daniel, and like him, be a civil servant of integrity in God's kingdom work. May the Lord bless you to be a servant of such character!



Pastor Arin Hess

## FOOTNOTES

1. All Scripture quotations, unless noted, are taken from the *New American Standard Bible*, 1995 Update.
2. Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Resolute Determining to Go God's Direction*, David C. Cook, Kindle Edition, Preface.
3. Edward Watke Jr., *Study of the Book of Daniel*, Revival in the Home Ministries, Inc., Augusta, GA, 1992, pg. 2-4.

Cover photo: J. B. Pratt, "Daniel in the Lions Den," 1892 (photo: Public Domain, Wikimedia Commons).

*Personal Study Notes*

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## Theme Verse

Daniel said,

"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."

Daniel 2:20-21



## WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY

Meeting during the  
108<sup>th</sup> Legislature's  
Second Session

### SENATORS

7:00–8:00 A.M. Wednesdays

### STAFF

12:00 P.M. Wednesdays

*Location for study may vary.  
Please look for details in the  
weekly invitation email.*



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