

The book of the prophet Daniel.

It's genre is called "apocalyptic" because it is written with fantastical word pictures (beasts, and symbolic characters) which are then explained.

"Apocalypse" means "revelation" – a mystery revealed.

Background issues about DANIEL

Two main opinions by commentators

(1) It's a late composition written around 200 – 150 BCE, attempting to look as if written earlier. This view believes the predictions are so accurate, they must have been written after the events.

(2) Composed at the time it claims to be by Daniel with an editor: 550 – 500 BCE

It's in Hebrew at beginning and end, and suddenly, in the middle of a chapter, goes into Aramaic.

Two major evangelical views to interpret the prophecies – especially the “70 weeks” prophecy of chapter 9.

(1) The “**Futurist**” view: That Christ comes as predicted in Daniel after 69 ‘weeks’ and then there is a pause in the prophecy until Christ comes again and takes all the Christians off the world (the ‘Rapture’). Then the final ‘week’ or half ‘week’ of tribulation for unbelievers takes place.

(2) The “**Historicist**” view, that says that most or all the Daniel prophecies have now happened, and that by studying history *after* the events we see the amazing accuracy in the prophecies.

Chapter 1

The faithful trust in God of three young teenagers

Chapter 2

Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

Daniel & friends extraordinary prayer meeting.

The interpretation is given:-

Four kingdoms/empires until an everlasting kingdom is set up.

KEY POINTS

- (1) Bible prophecy is interpreted by the Bible itself.
- (2) A future kingdom will be set in motion that will last for ever.
(Future to Daniel, but in the past for us today.)

Chapter 3

The fiery furnace.

Daniel 3:17–18 (NRSV)

¹⁷ If our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire and out of your hand, O king, let him deliver us. ¹⁸ But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods and we will not worship the golden statue that you have set up.”

KEY POINT: Faith in God, even in circumstances of persecution.

Chapter 4

Nebuchadnezzar has another dream.

7 “TIMES”

double the TIME, TIMES & HALF A TIME = 3 ½ TIMES

Chapter 5

Belshazzar's Feast



KEY POINT (repeated several times since chapter 2)

God is ultimately in charge of the main events of history.

Daniel 5:21 (NRSV)

²¹ . . . until he learned that the Most High God has sovereignty over the kingdom of mortals, and sets over it whomever he will.

Chapter 6

Daniel thrown to the Lions.

Daniel's integrity was actually the trigger for this persecution. No fault or compromise was found in Daniel's leadership and political conduct.

Chapter 7

Beasts powers restricted.

The “Son of Man”

This is a most important chapter for our understanding of Jesus in the gospel accounts.

KEY MESSAGE

- God's kingdom (reign/rule) is coming and it will never end.
- Recognise that the interpretation of the vision is given in the Scriptures

Chapter 8

The Ram and the He-goat!

The king of Persia and the king of Greece
(Alexander the Great) and his successors.

Chapter 9

Daniel's amazing and humble prayer for forgiveness which leads to Gabriel revealing the 70 weeks (490 years) prophecy.

A complex and difficult passage to understand – and it depends on which view you take to make sense of it.

70 weeks or 70 'sevens' = 490 years.

69 sevens = 483 years

69 sevens + 3 ½ = 386 ½ years until the Messiah is 'cut off'.

Chapter 10 – 11

A prophecy about 2 empires: The Persian and then the Greek Empire.

Alexander the Great, the Seleucids, the Ptolemies, Cleopatra (Egypt) and more, including the cruel persecutor of the Jews, Antiochus Epiphanes.

Understanding these two chapters only becomes clear if you study the history of the period from other sources than the Bible.

Chapter 12

All the persecution that is foretold earlier is countered by the great news of this chapter.

There will be RESURRECTION for those faithful to God.

God knows what's going on. Keep faithful to him!

A note about the numbers in Daniel

7 TIMES = 2520 years.

3 ½ TIMES = 1260 years.

Swiss astronomer Loys De Chéseaux (died 1751) discovered that 1260 years is a very accurate link where the sun, the moon and the earth get back to almost the same spot in space. A connection that was thought impossible to find or prove.

1,335 'days' = years fits an exact astronomical link in *lunar* years with the 1,260 *solar* years.

A note about the numbers in Daniel (part 2)

The accuracy of the 70 sevens prophecy. (Using astronomical calculations).

We know that Artaxerxes made his edict to Nehemiah at Nisan / Passover 444 BCE. The strongly believed date for the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth is 29 CE.

Unfortunately 444 BCE to 29 CE is 472 solar years and we were hoping for 486½ years if Daniel's prophecy was correct.

But in fact in lunar years (which are shorter than solar years) 444 to 29 is exactly Nisan to Nisan 486½ lunar years.