



# THE BOOK OF **DANIEL**

***GOD RULES IN THE KINGDOMS OF MEN (DANIEL 4:17,25,32)***

## Class Goals:

**KINGDOMS:** To better understand God's ultimate authority over the rise and fall of earthly nations.

**PRAYER:** To improve our prayer life by learning great prayer habits from Daniel.

**CHARACTER:** To develop and exercise the faith and moral characteristics of Daniel and his friends.

## Class Lessons:

|           |  |           |
|-----------|--|-----------|
| Lesson 1  | Daniel's Captivity & Conviction                    | Ch. 1     |
| Lesson 2  | Daniel Interprets Nebuchadnezzar's Dream           | Ch. 2     |
| Lesson 3  | Daniel's Friends Face The Fiery Furnace            | Ch. 3     |
| Lesson 4  | Nebuchadnezzar Is Shown God's Rule                 | Ch. 4     |
| Lesson 5  | Daniel Interprets at Belshazzar's Feast            | Ch. 5     |
| Lesson 6  | Daniel Faces The Lions' Den                        | Ch. 6     |
| Lesson 7  | Daniel's Vision of Coming Kingdoms                 | Ch. 7     |
| Lesson 8  | Daniel's Vision of Media-Persia & Greece           | Ch. 8     |
| Lesson 9  | Daniel's Prayer for the People's Return            | Ch. 9     |
| Lesson 10 | Daniel's Vision of Israel's Difficult Future       | Ch. 10-11 |
| Lesson 11 | Daniel's Vision of the End of Days                 | Ch. 12    |
| Lesson 12 | Special Study: Daniel & Errors of Premillennialism |           |
| Lesson 13 | Special Study: Daniel & The Language of Revelation |           |



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*GOD RULES IN THE KINGDOMS OF MEN (DANIEL 4:17,25,32)*

## LESSON 1

### CHAPTER 1 DETAILS

- In 605 BC, Nebuchadnezzar won the Battle of Carchemish establishing the dominance of the Babylonians. After this battle, he passed through Jerusalem and took a group of captives back to Babylon, including Daniel and his friends.
- Daniel doesn't rely solely on his position, intelligence, or hard work. He depends on God.

### STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What does Nebuchadnezzar do with the items taken from the temple of God? What does this tell us about his attitude toward the God of Israel?
2. What were they to be taught and what "privileges" were they given as part of their period of training? How long was the training to last?
3. List the Hebrew and Babylonian names of the four men selected from among the Jews to serve in the palace? What was the significance of the name changes and what may have been the reason(s) their names were changed?
4. What resolution is made by Daniel in verse 8 and how does he approach the potential controversy this could cause? What was the initial reaction of the chief of the court officials? Why?
5. What test did Daniel propose to resolve the situation in a way that could be satisfactory to all involved? What can we learn about his character/judgment from this situation?
6. What was the result of the ten day "experiment" and how did the Jewish exiles compare physically with the other in the king's training program? Why do you think that Daniel was given the special gifts?

### APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. List a few lessons we can learn from the way that Daniel handled the issue with the food from the king's table. What were the critical steps in dealing with this situation and how might we make application to our lives today?
2. What situations today can tempt us to compromise our convictions for the sake of avoiding conflict or personal convenience?



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## LESSON 2

*GOD RULES IN THE KINGDOMS OF MEN (DANIEL 4:17,25,32)*

### CHAPTER 2 DETAILS

- This is the first of three chapters dealing with the coming of four great world empires. (Ch. 2,7,8)
- Daniel and his friends pray to God both for compassion and understanding. (2:18)
- When all the magicians, conjurers, and sorcerers fail, Daniel places the glory and honor on God by saying, "...There is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries." (2:28)

### STUDY QUESTIONS

1. When did Nebuchadnezzar have his first recorded dream and how did this dream affect him?
2. What did Nebuchadnezzar say would be done to the one(s) who could not reveal the dream and its interpretation? To the one(s) who could do both?
3. What is the first thing Daniel and his friends do to help with this seemingly hopeless situation? What was the result of their combined efforts and what can we learn from their example?
4. What was Daniel's reaction to God's answer to his/his friend's request? What qualities does Daniel ascribe to God in this statement of praise?
5. Review the four-part statue of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. What do the four different parts represent and how far in the future are these kingdoms?
6. What is Nebuchadnezzar's reaction to the revelation of the dream and its interpretation by Daniel? What is his assessment of "Daniel's God" at this point in the book?
7. How many years are between the prophecy of Daniel and the fulfillment of Daniel 2:44? Why is this significant?

### APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. What proper, Christ-like attitudes can we learn from Daniel's examples in this chapter? Try to list several we can add to our daily lives.
2. What lessons on prayer should we take away from this chapter? What should we observe about the power of God in this chapter?



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## LESSON 3

### CHAPTER 3 DETAILS

- Ch. 2 ends with Daniel and his friends being promoted, and Ch. 3 shows us that with these new positions also comes new challenges to their faith.
- Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego stand out from their peers because, “they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up.” (3:12)
- When his fiery punishment fails, Nebuchadnezzar concludes “there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way.” (3:29)

### STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What does Nebuchadnezzar create in the first few verses of the chapter? What size was it?
2. What was the penalty for not worshipping the golden image?
3. What was Nebuchadnezzar’s reaction to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego? What errors does this emotional outburst lead to?
4. Does it appear the king placed more trust in the accusers or the accused?
5. How did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego answer the king? What can we learn from this statement of faith and trust in God?
6. List some ways we could be tempted to “justify” or “excuse” complying with the king’s decree.
7. How did Nebuchadnezzar describe the fourth “man” he saw in the fiery furnace?

### APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. What does this chapter teach us about the temptation to compromise with the influences of the world?
2. What does this chapter teach us about handling our anger?
3. What admirable moral qualities do Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego demonstrate in this chapter?
4. What factors helped them to be so Godly in the face of such a deadly threat?



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## LESSON 4

*GOD RULES IN THE KINGDOMS OF MEN (DANIEL 4:17,25,32)*

### CHAPTER 4 DETAILS

- The main message of this chapter is repeated in 4:17, 4:25, and 4:32. God is the true ruler over all.
- Nebuchadnezzar describes the city as “Babylon the great.”(4:30). In the book of Revelation, the name Babylon will be used to describe another large but sinful nation: Rome.

### STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What do Nebuchadnezzar’s declarations in verse 1-3 suggest is his current concept of the Most High God?
2. Who does Nebuchadnezzar call for initially to help him with the interpretation of his dream? Are these men able to help him to understand the dream?
3. What happens to the tree, and who orders that it should happen?
4. In Daniel’s interpretation of the dream, how is the tree (Babylon represented by its king) described?
5. What does Daniel tell Nebuchadnezzar to do because of the meaning of the dream? Does he follow this advice? What do you learn from this?
6. What does Nebuchadnezzar’s declaration in verse 28-30 tell us about his view of himself?
7. God clearly demonstrates that He rules in the kingdoms of men in this and several other Scriptures. How should we view modern day political situations in light of this knowledge?

### APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Nebuchadnezzar shows us the dangers of a prideful heart. Where does pride show up today in the life of a teenager?
2. What are some things we can do to avoid sins of pride today?
3. What character virtue can we learn from Daniel in his address to the king in 4:19? Give some examples of how you can exercise this virtue today?



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## LESSON 5

### CHAPTER 5 DETAILS

- Belshazzar's exact government position is debated. He is described as the "king" 17 times, and Nebuchadnezzar as his "father" 6 times. It seems both are used as terms of respect, not in their most technical sense. Belshazzar is likely co-regent with his biological father, Nabonidus.
- The fact that Belshazzar is not the highest ranking ruler is clear in 4:7, as he offers the place of "third" in the kingdom as a reward for interpreting the writing on the wall.

### STUDY QUESTIONS

1. How is the feast of Belshazzar described in the first verse of the chapter? What order does he give while he was under the influence of the wine?
2. What miraculous event interrupts the feast, and what was Belshazzar's reaction?
3. Who recommends Daniel to help Belshazzar and how does she describe Daniel's skills?
4. What event does Daniel re-count for Belshazzar before he interprets the writing on the wall? What was the purpose in telling Belshazzar all these things from Babylonian history?
5. List the three words written on the wall and briefly describe the meanings of the words individually and taken as a whole.
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Read Isaiah 45:1-5 and compare the prophecy with the way the fall of Babylon was actually recorded in secular history. How can you explain the accuracy of the word of Isaiah so many years prior to these events?

### APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. What practical warnings against drinking alcohol can you draw from this chapter?
2. Belshazzar did not learn the lessons from history and repeated some of the mistakes. List examples from Scripture and events of history that are repeated generation after generation.
3. When will all of us be "weighed in the balances?" What can we do to be found faithful?



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## LESSON 6

### CHAPTER 6 DETAILS

- In 539 BC, the Babylonian empire fell. Daniel is now at least 65 years older than when he first came to Babylon in chapter one.
- Darius the Mede is difficult to identify from secular history, but is described in detail in this chapter. We know he was 62 years old (5:31), he was addressed as the "King" (6:6), governed among the Medes and Persians (6:12), and ruled near the reign of Cyrus (6:28).

### STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Who took over the reins of power after the Babylonian empire was brought to an end by God? What governmental structure was put in place and what position was given to Daniel?
2. What plot do Daniel's rivals devise to potentially cause Daniel to fall from the king's favor? Why did they attack this area of Daniel's life?
3. How does Daniel react when he learned of the new law in the empire? Who was monitoring his compliance with this law?
4. What was the king's reaction to the news about Daniel? What did the king try to do?
5. How does the king describe God before and after sending him into the lion's den?
6. When Daniel's accusers are punished, who else suffers? What can we learn about sin's effects from this situation?

### APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Daniel was forced to make a choice to obey God or to obey the government. List some ways we may face this test of faith now or in the future.
2. What do you admire about Daniel's character and prayer life in this chapter? How can you grow in these qualities?



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## LESSON 7

### CHAPTER 7 DETAILS

- Chapter 7 takes place in or near 553 BC, before the events of chapter 5 and 6.
- The 4 earthly kingdoms all meet the same end (7:12), but the kingdom of God endures forever (7:14).

### STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Animals of great strength and speed are used in chapter 7. Even today, animals are used as mascots for schools and sports teams. What traits or qualities are associated with the lion, eagle wings, bear, and leopard in 7:3-6?
2. Where did all of the beasts come up from in the vision? (7:3) What does the sea represent? (7:17)
3. According to 7:17 and 7:23 what does each beast represent?
4. Briefly describe each of the beasts mentioned and what sets the fourth beast apart as different.
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
5. Who comes to the Ancient of Days and what is given to Him?
6. The kingdom given to the Son of Man includes all “the peoples, nations, and men of every language.” Who is this describing?
7. What is Daniel’s reaction to the revelations given in this chapter? What does he do with the information? Why do you think he reacted this way?

### APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. List a few things we can learn from this chapter about God’s involvement in the kingdoms of earth and the events of history.
2. What is the last horn allowed to do to God’s people? For how long? Why?





### CHAPTER 8 DETAILS

- Chapter 8 takes place about 2 years after chapter 7 in 551 BC.
- This chapter is written in the Hebrew language because it describes not just future events, but specifically the impact of these events on the Hebrew people.

### STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Describe the animal that appears first in the dream. How is its power portrayed?
2. What animal appears on the scene next in Daniel's vision? What did the second animal do to the first one?
3. What comes up out of one of the four horns on the goat? What does this small horn do to the Glorious Land/Beautiful land, host of heaven, and stars of heaven?
4. Who was sent to Daniel to help him understand the vision he had just seen? What was Daniel's reaction to this visitor?
5. What phrases describe the time(s) his vision was revealing in vs. 17-19?
6. What nations do the ram and goat represent in vs. 20-21?
7. What is the end result of the wicked ruler described in vs. 22-25?

### APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Earthly kingdoms rise and fall in power. Daniel is neither detached from these events nor obsessed with them. What should God's servants focus on in times of political change?
2. What sinful attitudes are seen in the rulers of these nations? How can we avoid these attitudes in our hearts? How should we respond to leaders who act similarly around the world today?



### CHAPTER 9 DETAILS

- Chapter 6 and Chapter 9 both take place in the reign of Darius the Mede which began in 539 BC when the Babylonian empire fell.
- We learn another fact about Darius in 9:1. His father is Ahasuerus and he is of Median descent.
- The 70 weeks described in vs 24-27 describe the difficulties the Jews will face in the future and the Messiah who will come.

### STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What occasion prompts Daniel to seek God in prayer in vs. 1-2?
2. What traits and qualities of God does Daniel speak about in this prayer? (vs. 4, 7, 9, 15)
3. What did Daniel ask for in this prayer?
4. Who comes to visit Daniel to address his concerns? What does his urgency in vs. 22-23 teach us about God's care for Daniel?
5. What phrase is used to begin verse 24 to describe the Jewish people?
6. What event marks the beginning of the first 69 weeks? (vs. 25)
7. What will happen to the Messiah and city? (vs. 26)
8. Read and consider what we've already learned about the end of the fourth kingdom in Daniel 2:42-44 and Daniel 7:26. According to Daniel 9:27, who will a "complete destruction" be "poured out on?"

### APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. What great prayer practices do you observe in Daniel that we should imitate?
2. Like Daniel, we should set our mind to consider topics that really matter in life. What is Daniel interested in meditating on and understanding?



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## LESSON 10

*GOD RULES IN THE KINGDOMS OF MEN (DANIEL 4:17,25,32)*

### CHAPTER 10-11 DETAILS

- We may imagine it would be exciting and enjoyable to know the future, but the visions Daniel received were overwhelming and difficult to see. (10:7-9)
- Chapter 11 details the battles between the kings of the South and the kings of the North. This is a detailed prophecy of the Syrian Wars fought between the Ptolemy's (in Egypt) and the Seleucid's (in Syria) from 274 BC to 168 BC.
- During these wars, the Israelites would be geographically "caught in the middle" and suffer greatly.

### STUDY QUESTIONS

1. How is Daniel addressed in 10:11? What is necessary for us to have this type of relationship with God?
2. Daniel is told about the spiritual warfare taking place in 10:12-14. What are Christians taught about the spiritual battles that exist and influence our lives?
3. What Greek ruler was "a mighty king" (11:3) whose empire was broken into four parts "and parceled out towards the four points of the compass?" (11:4) Is this consistent with Daniel 7:6? So, how accurate is the prophecy of Daniel 11 based on what we know from history?
4. In 11:17, what does the king of the North do to form an alliance with the king of the South? How does it work out for him. Research Antiochus III, his daughter Cleopatra I Syra, and Ptolemy V to see how well this prophecy corresponds to history.
5. In 11:30, when the "ships of Kittim" come what will "the despicable one" do? (11:31-33) Research Antiochus IV Epiphanes encounter with the Roman ambassador Gaius Popillius Laenas in 168 BC to learn about this famous conversation.

### APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. After all the great efforts of kings, rulers, and military officers, who is truly in control? Why is this important for us to remember?
2. How does the accuracy of Daniel's prophecies make you think about the reliability of the Bible?



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## LESSON 11

### CHAPTER 12 DETAILS

- This chapter mentions events surrounding “the end” (12:4,6,8,9,13). Two options fit the context the best: (a) The end of the Jewish system or (b) the end of Rome and establishment of God’s kingdom.
- The time periods described are difficult to specifically identify, but the primary message is very clear: Earthly empires are all temporary; only God’s kingdom endures forever.

### STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Who is charged to stand guard over God’s people?
2. What resurrection is being discussed in verse 2 and 3? Give reasons for your conclusions. (See John 5:28-29 for help.)
3. How long was Daniel told to conceal these words and seal up the book?
4. What will happen to God’s people according to the end of 12:7?
5. What question does Daniel ask in 12:8-10 and what answer is he given? What is the difference between the outcome of the wicked and the righteous?
6. What final instructions and hope is given to Daniel 12:13?
7. Consider 12:13. Even when there are more things we are curious about, what makes this the most satisfying answer Daniel, or any Christian, could receive?

### APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. List 3 lessons you’ve learned or gained greater appreciation for regarding each of our goals:

**KINGDOMS**

**PRAYER**

**CHARACTER**



### SPECIAL STUDY: DANIEL & THE ERRORS OF PREMILLENNIALISM

- Premillennialism takes a very different interpretation of the 70 weeks in Daniel 9.
- This doctrine views the first 69 weeks as the time from the rebuilding of Jerusalem to Jesus' triumphal entry, but then has a gap of over 2,000 years between 9:26 and 9:27!

### STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Premillennialism proposes that Jesus will appear again in the clouds to rapture Christians but then will appear again for judgment. But, how does Acts 1:10-11 and Hebrews 9:28 describe the return of Jesus?
2. Premillennialism proposes that Jesus came to establish an earthly kingdom, but what did Jesus say about his kingdom to Pilate? (John 18:36)
3. What time markers did Jesus use to explain when His kingdom would be established? (Matthew 16:28)
4. Premillennialism envisions a return to temple worship in the future that will then be interrupted (Daniel 9:27), but when was temple worship actually brought to a close? (Luke 21:20)
5. Premillennialism proposes that the feet and toes of the statue in Daniel 2:4-45 is a 5<sup>th</sup> kingdom made up of people from all over the world. In the context, what problems do you recognize with this view?
6. Premillennialism applies a literal interpretation to the "thousand years" mentioned in Revelation 20:1-15. What other terms in Revelation 20 suggests that a figurative interpretation is more appropriate?

### APPLICATION QUESTIONS

7. According to Daniel 12:8, was he given information that goes beyond the fourth kingdom, Rome?
8. Premillennialism proposes a world-wide tribulation, but what phrases in Matthew 24:15-22 suggest that this time of difficulty is both local and escapable? What mindset does Jesus spend the rest of Matthew 25 and 25 instructing Christians to develop?



#### **SPECIAL STUDY: DANIEL & THE LANGUAGE OF REVELATION**

- In 605 BC, Nebuchadnezzar won the Battle of Carchemish establishing the dominance of the Babylonians. After this battle, he passed through Jerusalem and took a group of captives back to Babylon, including Daniel and his friends.
- Daniel doesn't rely solely on his position, intelligence, or hard work. He depends on God.

#### **STUDY QUESTIONS**

1. Both Daniel & Revelation deal with events during the 4<sup>th</sup> Kingdom: Rome
  - a. Where did the beast arise from in Daniel 7:2-3 and in Revelation 13:1?
  - b. What attitude is characteristic of the rulers of this kingdom in Daniel 7:8,20 and Revelation 13:5-6
2. Both Daniel and Revelation speak about coming persecutions. How are these difficult days described in Revelation 3:10-13?
3. What similar language is used by Daniel and John in...
  - a. Daniel 7:13-14 and Revelation 1:7,13
  - b. Daniel 7:13-14 and Revelation 5:1-14
4. How is the work of Michael described by Daniel and John?
  - a. Daniel 10:13, 21; 12:1 and Revelation 12:7
5. Both Daniel and John are instructed regarding the sealing of the prophecy...
  - a. What is Daniel told to do? What reason is given? (Daniel 8:26, 12:4, 12:9)
  - b. What is John told to do? What reason is given? (Revelation 22:10, Revelation 1:1, 3)

#### **APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

1. Why is it important to be familiar with the language of the Old Testament prophets when studying the book of Revelation?
2. According to the book of Daniel and the book of Revelation, what kind of circumstances should Christians expect to face during their lives? What did Jesus say about this? (Matthew 5:10-12, Mark 10:28-31)