

Review of Daniel: Which Point Inspires You Today?

Daniel begins his ministry just before Jerusalem and the Temple fall to the Babylonians. That was the darkest season in Israel's history—the reversal of the Exodus. It is in that context that God speaks to His people through Daniel.

The Four Young Men

To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds. (1:17)

The First Dream of Tall Statute

Daniel replied, “No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. (2:27-28)

The Fiery Furnace

If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand. But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up. (3:17-18)

The Second Dream of a Tree Stump

Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just. And those who walk in pride he is able to humble. (4:37)

Hand Writing on the Wall

But you (Belshazzar) did not honor the God who holds in his hand your life and all your ways. Therefore he sent the hand that wrote the inscription. (5:23-24)

Daniel in the Lions' Den

“I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel. “For he is the living God and he endures forever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end. He rescues and he saves; he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions.” (6:26-27)

Dream of Four Beasts

‘But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be handed over to the holy people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.’ (7:26-27)

Vision of Ram and Goat

“The vision of the evenings and mornings that has been given you is true, but seal up the vision, for it concerns the distant future.” (8:26)

God declares and demonstrates His power, authority, purposes, plans, and wisdom over and above that of the different kings and counselors. Further, He demonstrates His commitment to His people and the promises He made to them—He will not abandon them.

Interpretive Timelines for Daniel

There are two timelines here to aid our interpretation, whether Daniel's prophecies are speaking of Jesus and the End of everything, or of a smaller anointed one and the end of current history as Daniel would have known it. We begin with the historical approach which offers a narrow application, focused on the first recipients of the Daniel's message. The second approach is the expanded approach, including some of the dates for the various variations represented on the hand-out last week.

In the first column are the dates as they are commonly referenced. In the second column are the events which may or may not fit the references in Daniel. In the third column are my interpretive notes. The historical approach sees three periods back to back. The expanded approach sees three distinct periods with two gaps in between. The expanded approach looks for a complete fulfillment of the prophecies recorded in Daniel—the historical approach looks for an application that might have spoken directly to Daniel's circumstances in his day.

The timelines must account for the promises found in verse 24 and the milestones listed in verses 25-27. Therefore we list the promises and milestones first.

The Six Promises in Verse 24

1. to finish the transgression;
2. to seal up sins;
3. to cover iniquity;
4. to bring in eternal righteousness;
5. to seal up vision and prophet; and
6. to anoint the holy of holies

The Milestones in Verses 25-27

- i. Word goes out to restore and rebuild Jerusalem
- ii. An anointed one, a ruler will come
- iii. The city will be rebuilt with a trench (and walls), in times of trouble
- iv. The anointed one will be put to death and have nothing
- v. A coming ruler—whose people will destroy the city and the temple
- vi. The end will come like a flood with wars and desolations
- vii. He will confirm a covenant for one seven
- viii. In the middle of the last seven, he will put an end to sacrifice and offering
- ix. He will set up an abomination of desolation at the temple
- x. The end will be poured out on him

Historical/Literal Approach

586 BC	Jerusalem falls	First 7 Sevens Begin
538	Babylon falls	First Sevens End
538	Cyrus appears	Second 62 Sevens Begin
170	Onias III is Murdered	Second Sevens End
170	Antiochus IV Epiphanes Persecution	Last Seven Begins
166	Maccabean Revolt Begins	Half Seven
164	Temple is Restored	
163 BC	Maccabeans Gain Independence	The End

Expanded Approach

587 BC	Prophecy to Jeremiah	First 7 sevens (49 yrs) begin
586	Jerusalem's destruction	
539/8	Babylon's fall	First 7 sevens since prophecy
538	Cyrus decree to allow return (Ezra 1:1-4)	Cyrus is first anointed one
519	Darius' decree (Ezra 5:3-7)	
458	Artaxerxes' Decree to Ezra (7:11-16)	
445	Artaxerxes' Decree to Nehemiah (2:1-8)	
440?	Nehemiah Returns to rebuild City Wall Completion of Jerusalem (409 or 396)	Beginning of second sevens
170	Onias III High Priest Murdered	
170-163	Antiochus IV Epiphanes' Persecution	
142	Maccabean Independence	
6 BC	Jesus is Born	End of 434 years (62 sevens)
33 AD	Jesus rode donkey, died and rose again	Second anointed one cut off
70	Temple is Destroyed with Jerusalem	City destroyed "until the end"
?		Beginning of last seven
??	Abomination of desolation	Half way point of last seven
??? AD	The Second Coming	The end of the last seven