

Book of Daniel Summary

Chapter 1: In approximately the year 605 BC Jerusalem is besieged by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. Judah is defeated and *vessels of the house of God* are carried back to the *land of Shinar* along with Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. As educated youths of noble heritage, *in whom was no blemish, but well-favored, and skillful in all wisdom, and endued with knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability to stand in the king's palace.*

They are placed under the care of the master of the eunuchs to be trained in the way of the Chaldeans, that is, to interpret oracles for the king. They are given new names by the master of the eunuchs, *unto Daniel he gave the name of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abed-nego.*

The king decrees that they should receive a portion of the food and wine from his table for three years and then they should be brought before him.

Daniel refuses to be defiled by the Kings food and wine and asks the master of the eunuchs if he may eat only vegetables and water. The master feels kindly towards Daniel but is worried the king will have his head if the young men do not thrive under his care.

Daniel convinces the master of eunuchs to allow them ten days to prove they will not suffer and indeed after ten days, they are fairer and fatter of flesh than the other boys who had eaten the kings' food. So Daniel and his friends are allowed to continue with their meager diet, remaining undefiled.

Now as for these four youths, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. When the three years had passed and the trainees were brought before Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were found to be ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his realm.

Chapter 2: Sometime later, King has dreams that he cannot remember upon waking that are troubling him and making him unable to sleep. He calls in the *magicians, and the enchanters, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, to tell the king his dreams.* But the interpreters cannot help him if he cannot remember the dream and protest that what he asks is known only to the gods. The king is furious and orders them all killed. Daniel convinces the king that if he will give him some time, he will give the interpretation.



*Destruction of Jerusalem under the Babylonian rule.
Illustration from the Nuremberg Chronicle, 1493*

The King agrees and Daniel shares the problem with his companions. They pray to God to reveal the secret so they will not be killed. Daniel is given a vision during the night the next morning is brought before the king to reveal the meaning.

Daniel tells him that none of his wise men, enchanters, magicians, nor soothsayers could solve this problem but *there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets*. He tells the king that his dream was of a giant statue, *its head was of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of brass, its legs of iron, its feet part of iron, and part of clay*.

He hits the clay and iron feet with a rock and the statue crumbles to dust which is carried away by the wind. The stone which struck the statue becomes a great mountain which fills the whole earth.

Daniel explains that Nebuchadnezzar is the head of gold and he will be followed by an inferior kingdom, then another which will rule over the entire earth. This will be followed by a fourth kingdom which will be as strong as iron but fractured and broken. During these times, God will *set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever*.

Daniel assures the King that the dream and its meaning are certain. The king is so impressed with Daniel's revelation that declares *your God is the God of gods, and the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets*. He promotes Daniel to be governor of all of Babylon and chief of all its wise men. Daniel takes care to see his companions are given prestigious positions in the city, but Daniel remains a close confidant of the king.

Chapter 3: King Nebuchadnezzar made a giant statue of gold and summoned all the officials and rulers of the provinces to come to the dedication of the statue. He commanded that everyone should fall down and worship the statue or be thrown into a fiery furnace. Most of the people did as he commanded but The Chaldeans complained to the King that the companions of Daniel refused to worship their gods or his statue.



*Songe Nabuchodonosor statue -
15th century - artist unknown*

Nebuchadnezzar ordered Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego brought before him and asks if he has them killed for refusing to worship the statue, will their god deliver them from the fiery furnace? The companions answer that if it is Gods will they will be delivered but they will not worship his gods or his image either way. The king is furious and orders the furnace to be stoked and the men tossed in.

Finally, his senses returned to him and he raised his eyes to heaven and praised the everlasting God. His power and kingdom is restored to him and declares, *“Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven; for all his works are truth, and his ways justice; and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.”*

Chapter 5: King Belshazzar, the son of Nebuchadnezzar throws a great party for a thousand of his lords. He commands that the vessels which were taken from the house of God in Jerusalem brought out and the king and his lords, his wives and his concubines, drank from them and they raised a toast to the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.

Suddenly a hand appeared and wrote a strange message on the wall of the king's palace. The king was terrified and called for his soothsayers and enchanters. The king offered wealth and a position third highest in the kingdom for any who could reveal the meaning. None could interpret the writing on the wall. The queen told the king of Daniel who had served Nebuchadnezzar, his father. He had been of high renown as the greatest interpreter of dreams and that the spirit dwelt within him.

Daniel is brought before the king and offered wealth and power if he can explain the meaning of the words. Daniel says he has no interest in the wealth or power but will read the message for the king. He reads: *“MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.”* This is the interpretation of the thing: *“MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and brought it to an end; TEKEL; thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.”*

The king rewarded Daniel as he had promised, but that night the king was killed and the kingdom was received by Darius the Mede.

Chapter 6: Darius gave Daniel a high ranking position in his kingdom and Daniel was promoted to rule over the whole realm. Some of the other kings men were jealous of Daniel and tried to find some fault with him but because of his faithfulness, no error could be found. But they knew of his devotion to his god and devised a plan to use it against him.

Some counselors convinced the king to sign a decree that for one month, no man could pray to any god or petition any man but to Darius, the king. Daniel refused to obey, and with his windows open wide, prayed three times a day, facing Jerusalem.



Belshazzar's Feast 1635, by Rembrandt

The conspirators complained to the king that Daniel was breaking the kings law and must be punished. The king wanted to protect Daniel, but the lords insisted the kings law could not be changed. So, reluctantly, the king ordered Daniel to be locked into a den of lions overnight. As they rolled a heavy

stone over the mouth of the den and it was sealed, the king remarked, *“Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee.”*

Heavy hearted, the king returned to his palace and passed the troubled night without sleeping. He rose early and hurried to the lions' den and called out to Daniel, *“O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?”* and Daniel answered, *“My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, and they have not hurt me.”*

Daniel is brought out of the lions den, unharmed and the king ordered that the men who had accused him, and their families be thrown into the den of lions. They are all killed. Darius writes a letter to all peoples of the earth saying, *“I make a decree, that in all the dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel; for he is the living God, and stedfast for ever, And his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed; and his dominion shall be even unto the end. He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.”*

Chapter 7: During king Belshazzar's first year, Daniel had a vision which he wrote down: Daniel sees the four winds of heaven blow upon the great sea. He sees four beasts rise up from the sea. The first was like a lion with eagles wings. The wings were plucked and it stood on two feet and became a man with a man's heart.

The second beast looked like a bear, raised up on one side. In his mouth were three rib bones. It is told, *“Arise, devour much flesh.”* The third beast looked like a leopard which had four wings and four heads and dominion was given to it. The fourth beast was terrible and powerful with iron teeth that devoured all and stamped the residue with his feet. It also had ten horns.



Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640) - Daniel in the Lions' Den c.1617

Daniel in the Lions Den - Peter Paul Rubens - 1617

Daniel studies the horns and sees a small horn which forces out three others by the roots. The small horn had eyes like a man and a mouth which spoke great things. Thrones were brought out and an ancient one sat. His clothes and hair were pure white and his throne was of flames with wheels of burning fire and *thousands of thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.*

The beast is slain, its body destroyed and burned. The rest of the beasts lost their power but lived for *a season and a time.*

Then, Daniel sees coming with the clouds of heaven, one like the son of man, as in the ancient days, *And there was given him*

dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

Daniel is troubled and asks the truth concerning all he has seen. He is told the four beasts are four kings which shall arise out of the earth. But they will lose their kingdoms to the Saints of the Most High who will possess the kingdom forever and ever.

Daniel asks about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others. Which had the iron teeth and nails of brass. He asked about the little horn with eyes and mouth which spoke great things and which three horns fell out before it.

Daniel is told that the fourth beast is a fourth kingdom on the earth which is different from the other kingdoms. It will devour the whole earth and tread it down and break it into pieces. The ten horns represent ten kings which will rise from this kingdom and another will rise after them, different from the rest and will establish three kings. He will speak against God and wear out the saints. He will seek to change the times and the laws. *And they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and half a time* (three and a half years). But in the end, his kingdom will be destroyed and he will be judged. *and the kingdom and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High: his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.*

Daniel is changed after this vision and though troubled, keeps the matter in his heart.

Chapter 8: Daniel has another vision in the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar. He sees himself in the palace of Shushan, in the province of Elam near the river of Ulai. Beside the river stood a ram with two horns, but another, higher horn rose. The ram pushes west, north and south and conquers all other beasts before him. He does as he will and his power and arrogance grows.

Suddenly, a he-goat comes from the west. He seems to cover the whole earth and his feet do not touch the ground. This goat had a horn between his eyes and approached the ram which stood near the river. He attacks the ram and breaks his two horns. He ram is powerless against the goat and he is trampled under his feet.

The goat grows strong and the great horn is broken. In it's place grew four horns toward the four winds of heaven. Out of one of the four grows another small horn which grows *exceedingly great toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the glorious land.*

It grew so large it cast down some stars and host of heaven to the ground and trampled them. It continued to grow until it overwhelmed the prince of the host and knocked over the burnt offerings and cast down the sanctuary. Even truth is cast down to the ground. The holy ones wonder how long this can go on, *And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.*

Gabriel speaks to Daniel to help him understand what he has seen. He tells him these are visions the end times. He says that the ram with two horns are the kings of Media and Persia. The he-goat is the king of Greece. The great horn between his eyes is the first king. The broken horn which four grew back represents *four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not with his power.*

Toward the end of the kingdoms days *a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up.*

This king will be a destroyer of the mighty and the holy. His arrogance will kill many and he will attempt to stand against the Prince of Princes but will finally be broken.



Sunset on Babylon by Raphael-Lacoste

Daniel knows these visions are of some future time. He faints and is sick for a several days, but recovers and returns to doing the kings business. *"I wondered at the vision, but none understood it."*

Chapter 9: In the first year of Darius's reign over the Chaldeans, Daniel is familiar with the prophecy of Jeremiah and knows the Hebrews' seventy year period of exile is coming to an end. He is fasting and praying for the forgiveness for the sins of Israel and a return to Jerusalem. While he prays, Gabriel returns to him to bring wisdom and understanding.

He tells him that seventy weeks of exile will be required to atone for the transgressions of Israel and *to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.*

He reveals that the length of time from the commandment to build and restore Jerusalem until the arrival of the anointed one, the Prince, would be seven weeks and the city would be rebuilt in sixty-two weeks, even in troublesome times. After sixty two weeks *the anointed one be cut off, and shall have nothing.* The people will destroy the city and the sanctuary. Wars will rage until the end comes with a flood.

He will make a firm promise to many which will last one week. During that week, there will be no sacrifices or obligations and *on the wing of abominations shall come one that maketh desolate; and even unto the full end, and that determined, shall wrath be poured out upon the desolate.*

Chapter 10: In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia Daniel has another vision during a time of mourning and fasting. On the twenty fourth day he is beside the river Hiddekel and saw *a man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with pure gold of Uphaz: his body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as flaming torches, and his arms and his feet like unto burnished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.*

Then men with Daniel did not see the vision, but they were afraid so they ran away, leaving Daniel alone. He is told he will fight the prince of Persia and after he leaves, the prince of Greece will come. The archangel Michael will help them prevail.

Chapter 11: Daniel is told there will be three more kings of Persia. The fourth will be far richer than the others and grow strong and stir up trouble against Greece. A later king will rule with great dominion. His kingdom will be broken but not his family and they will return to power. The daughter of the king of the south will marry the king of the north. She and her family will perish, but from her, a son will be born who will rise up and prevail against the king of the north and carry away their gods and vessels to Egypt.



Susanna and the Elders
1610-Artemisia Gentileschi

Generations of kings of the north and south wage war. Kingdoms earned through battle, flattery and corruption rise and fall. *And as for both these kings, their hearts shall be to do mischief, and they shall speak lies at one table: but it shall not prosper.* The king of the north defeats the south and forsakes the holy covenant. He profanes the sanctuary, removes the offerings and sets up a false god. Despite his wickedness, the people know their God is strong and will perform miracles.

There is a long period of trial and cleansing until the appointed time. The kings of the north and south gather their great armies for battle. The north will arrive like a whirlwind and conquer many countries, including Egypt, Libya, Ethiopia and the glorious land. But he will not prevail against Edom, Moab or Ammon.

This mighty northern king hears rumors from the east and north that trouble him so he sets out with his armies. His plan fails however, *And he shall plant the tents of his palace between the sea and the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.*

Chapter 12: During that time there will be great trouble, such as never seen before, but His people, who are written in the book, will be delivered. Many of the dead will rise. Some to everlasting life, others to everlasting shame and contempt.

Daniel is told to “*shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end.*” He sees two men on either sides of the river. One man, clothed in linen, asks the other how long shall it be before the end of these wonders? The other raises his hands to heaven and swears *it shall be for a time, times, and a half*, and after they have finished breaking up the power of the holy people.



Daniel and King Cyrus in Bel's Temple
Stephan Kessler approximately 1650

Daniel asks "*What shall be the issue of these things?*" He is told to go his way *for the words are shut up and sealed till the time of the end.* The godly will continue to purify themselves and the wicked will be wicked. He is told that from the time the burnt-offerings are removed and the false god installed in the sanctuary, "*there shall be a thousand and two hundred and ninety days...But go thou thy way till the end be; for thou shalt rest, and shalt stand in thy lot, at the end of the days.*"

Chapter 13: *In Babylon there lived a man named Joakim, who married a very beautiful and God-fearing woman, Susanna, the daughter of Hilkiah; her parents were righteous*

and had trained their daughter according to the law of Moses.

Two newly appointed judges frequented the home of Joakim and they greatly desired his beautiful wife, Susanna. They didn't mention their lust for her, but one day when they both were spying on her, they discovered each other and decided to work together to get her alone.

One day Susanna decided to bathe in the garden, unknown to her, the two elders were hiding there. She sent her servants to fetch soap and oil and after they shut the garden doors, the two men revealed themselves. They demanded that Susanna lie with them or they would accuse her of meeting a man in the garden after she sent her servants away. She screams and the household rushes out to see what is wrong.

The two elders accused Susanna of adultery and the next day she was brought before them and the other judges. The two elders say that after she sent the servants away and shut the gates, they saw her lover was hidden there. They said the man was too strong and escaped. They said Susanna refused to reveal who the man was and she was sentenced to death.

She calls to God for justice and as they were leading her to be executed, Daniel cries out, *"I am innocent of this woman's blood...Are you such fools, you Israelites, to condemn a daughter of Israel without investigation and without clear evidence?"*

The people returned to court and the two judges were questioned separately. Daniel asks the first what tree he saw the lovers under, and he answered "under a mastic tree". The second was questioned and said he had seen them together under an oak tree. So their lie was exposed and they were put to death. *And from that day onward Daniel was greatly esteemed by the people.*

Chapter 14: Following the death of King Astyages, Cyrus the Persian became king. He held Daniel in great esteem and was a companion of the king.

The Babylonians worshiped an idol called Bel and every day they provided it with piles of fine flour, sheep and wine. The king greatly revered Bel and worshiped it every day. One day he asked Daniel why he did not worship Bel and Daniel replied, *"Because I do not revere idols made with hands, but only the living God who made heaven and earth and has dominion over all flesh."*

The king insisted that Bel too was a living god and he pointed out how much he eats and drinks every day. Daniel laughs at this and tells the king that it is only clay and bronze and has never eaten or drunk anything. The king is furious and calls in his priests. He demands to know who is eating and drinking the offerings to Bel. The king decrees that the unless they can show that Bel is consuming the provisions they will die. If they prove Daniel is wrong, then he will be put to death for blaspheming Bel. Daniel agrees.

The priests left the king to put out the offerings and seal the door, impressed with the king's ring. The priests were not worried because they had made a secret entrance under the table which they used to enter and eat the food at night.

After the priests left, the king set out the food and wine and Daniel ordered his servants to bring some ashes which they scattered on the floor throughout the temple. Then they sealed the door and left. *The priests entered that night as usual, with their wives and children, and they ate and drank everything.*



Daniel in the Lions Den: Briton Rivière (1890)

When the king and Daniel returned the next morning the seals were unbroken and the food had been consumed. At first the king believes Bel has taken the offerings, until Daniel shows him the footprints of the priests, their wives and children in the ashes.

The king was furious and brought in his priests. They admitted they had been eating the food and showed him the secret door under the table. The king put them all to death and handed the idol Bel over to Daniel who destroyed it and its temple.

There was a great dragon which the Babylonians revered. The king asks Daniel to worship it as it is obviously a living god. Daniel asks permission to kill the dragon without sword or club. The king gives permission and Daniel made some cakes out of pitch, fat and hair. He fed them to the dragon, which causes him to burst.

The Babylonians were very angry and said the king had become a Jew. *“He has destroyed Bel, killed the dragon, and put the priests to death”*. They demanded the king hand Daniel over to them and the king was afraid, so he did as they asked.

Daniel was thrown into a lions den with seven lions. He remained there for six days. The lions were given nothing to eat so they would devour Daniel.

Far away in Judea, the prophet Habakkuk was making some food for the reapers in the fields. Suddenly, an angel appeared to him and instructed him to take the food he had prepared to Daniel in the lions den in Babylon. *But Habakkuk answered, “Sir, I have never seen Babylon, and I do not know the den!” The angel of the Lord seized him by the crown of his head and carried him by the hair; with the speed of the wind, he set him down in Babylon above the den. Habakkuk delivers the meal to Daniel and the angel returns him to his home.*

On the seventh day the king comes to the lions den to mourn Daniel but finds him alive and well. The king cried aloud, *“You are great, O Lord, the God of Daniel, and there is no other besides you!”* Those who had tried to destroy Daniel were thrown into the lions den and quickly devoured by the hungry lions.