

## Bible Survey - Apocalyptic 1.1 - Daniel

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Introduction to the Book of Daniel - Apocalyptic Literature has its own distinct Genre and methodology for interpretation. Please refer to Biblical Literacy/Interpreting Scripture/Hermeneutics - Part 2 pages 14-29 for information on Genre in general, and pages 27-29 for specifics on apocalyptic genre.

### 1. Daniel and the Prophets:

#### a. Prophetic literature has three marked groups:

- i. Pre-exilic - these prophets warned of coming destruction due to Israel's continued unrepentant faithlessness.
- ii. Exilic - these prophets looked to the restoration of Israel while the nation was in exile. Psalm 137 is a prominent example of an exilic song of hope and worship written during this exile period. Note the progression of the psalm:

1. Verses 1-4 are a lament... this is a plaintive statement of pain and suffering.
2. Verses 5-6 are a statement of their confidence in God.
3. Verses 7-9 are a prayer for divine intervention of restoration.

- iii. Post-exilic - these prophets spoke to the future of a restored Israel in the land when they returned to Jerusalem. This is a hope of a renewed Sinai Covenant.

#### b. The pre-exilic prophets had repeatedly warned the leadership of Israel and Samaria [comprising the divided kingdom following Solomon's reign] that their rejection of God's purpose for their nation would result in their destruction. The leadership had become so corrupt that they ignored God's warning and treated their people with impunity caring only for their own wealth and benefit. The leaders gave "lip service to God and His Law, but their hearts were far from Him." God had enough of their continued sin and decadence, and 1st Samaria and later Judah would fall to foreign invaders carrying out His judgment against them.

#### c. One major exception found in the Book of Daniel is that it does not condemn the sin of the nation. Instead it focuses on a hopeful future when God's judgment will be replaced by restoration... the message being of perseverance and hope.

#### d. Daniel was part of the initial exile when Judah fell to the Babylonian Empire in 605 BCE. The Babylonians took many of the bright young men and women captive to serve the King. They especially desired those young people who had royal backgrounds and had already been well educated in the Jewish courts. Daniel was probably around 12 years old when exiled and would spend some 72 years in exile in Babylon.

#### e. While exile in the Ancient Near East meant the end of life as Daniel knew it, he rose to prominence both with his captors and with his Hebrew brethren as God was obviously with him and Daniel's genuine desire was to serve God. Scripture shows:

- i. The Babylonians treated Daniel as the finest of his people, and accorded him great honor as a man and as a ruler. He would serve 4 of the world's premiere rulers - Babylonian Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar; and Medes-Persian Darius and Cyrus - and yet did so in a manner that was obedient to God.

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- ii. The Jews considered him as their leader, most likely owing both to his royal descent and the miraculous events that surrounded him during the exile sojourn.
  - iii. Daniel was seen as a new Joseph - as an outsider who rose to prominence in the greatest world power of his day where he was appointed ruler over the entire providence of Babylon. Except where Joseph served one Pharaoh, Daniel served 4 kings in two empires.
  - iv. Daniel was seen as a new Moses - he served as deliverer of his people while remaining in the courts of a foreign ruler. Where Moses revealed God's purpose in the Law, Daniel was entrusted with the fullest revelation of God's plan for humanity's redemptive history recorded in the Old Testament.
  - v. Daniel was seen as a new Job - he was a model of faith and virtue and held to his faith even though he didn't understand all of what was happening. Where Job was rewarded with greater success than he previously experienced, Daniel was given not only success, but also understanding of the future and how God's redemptive plan would play out in new and unexpected ways.
- f. The Essenes of the last century BCE and 1<sup>st</sup> century AD held a high regard for the Book of Daniel. With its emphasis on personal holiness, counter cultural life of faith & obedience, and God's miraculous intervention to forward the Kingdom of God... Daniel as well as Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel resonated loudly with the Essenes' other-worldly culture.
- i. Some scholars hold that John the Baptist may have been an Essene and that Jesus probably had contact with the group and may even have studied there.
  - ii. Notice how Scripture identifies certain people as highly blessed and set apart for God's purpose:
    - 1. Isaiah identified the Messiah as the "Suffering Servant" who would be "Highly Exalted" when lifted up (Is 52:13).
    - 2. Daniel records the greeting he received from the Archangel Gabriel as being "Highly esteemed" (Dan 9:23; 10:11; 10:19).
    - 3. Mary the mother of Jesus is greeted by Gabriel as being "Highly Favored" among women (Luke 1:28).
    - 4. The Apostle John would be called "The Disciple whom Jesus Loved" (John 13:23).
    - 5. Each of these descriptions marks these individuals as people providently chosen by God for a very specific ministry.
  - iii. It is not coincidental that both Daniel and the Apostle John are included in this favored group whose blessing is recorded in the Scriptures, and it is apparent that John's Book of Revelation contains many of the elements found in Daniel. To have a reasonable understanding of the Book of Revelation, an understanding of Daniel provides a necessary precursor.
- g. Though Daniel is often grouped with the "Prophets" in Christian study, the book is considered as part of the "Writings" in Jewish study, being distinct from the Prophets. Although Daniel has

many elements of prophecy that would justify its inclusion in the prophetic literature, it is more properly seen as the conclusion of Old Testament prophecy and the lynch-pin to the New Testament writings.

- h. Daniel is referred to by Ezekiel in conjunction with Noah and Job as a model of righteousness (Ez 14:14) and of wisdom (Ez 28:3). Daniel is also referred to by Jesus as a Prophet (Matt 24:15).

### 2. Date, Authorship, and Message:

- a. Although there is some controversy as to the time and place of authorship, most scholars agree that the book bearing his name was written by the exiled Daniel sometime toward the latter part of his life between 539 and 530 BCE. The events chronicled occur during the 7<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> century Babylonian and Medo-Persian empires. The events chronicled indicate Daniel was most likely born around 615 BCE and died some 90 years later around 525 BCE.
- b. A competing explanation of authorship offers that a pseudonym wrote the book in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE, due to the close resemblance of the events leading to Antiochus Epiphanes IV and his desecration of the Jerusalem Temple in 168 BCE and the resulting Maccabean revolt. Though there are close similarities of many events leading up to the rebellion by the Maccabees, the ending of the prophecy does not match well at all, leading to the conclusion that Daniel's prophecy pertains to other end of time events in part or in whole.
- c. Support for Daniel's authorship include:
  - i. The fact that Jesus held that Daniel was a prophet, strongly supports the latter conclusion that it pertains to a future not yet revealed. Jesus further identified Himself with the Son of Man designation called for in Daniel's prophecy.
  - ii. To discredit Daniel is also to discredit John's book of Revelation, and Jesus own Messianic prophecy of the future. For the Christian community this is a "non-starter" and must be rejected as the notion solves a small problem and creates a much greater one.
  - iii. Employing the proper hermeneutic principle of "exegesis" in Daniel would have scholars "drawing out" the meaning of the text to inform and shape their theology. Employing the improper principle of "eisegesis" would have scholars "reading in" their theological positions and thereby deriving a false interpretation of the text. However, those who would seek to discredit Jesus' claim of Messianic authority often try to make their position stronger by invalidating Daniel and by extension John's Revelation.
  - iv. The shape of redemptive history as revealed in Scripture clearly points to Jesus as the Messiah with Daniel being the transition of the Old Covenant to the New Covenant culminating in John's book of Revelation.
- d. The book of Daniel refers to the full period of the exile under the Babylonians and the Medo-Persians. It was most likely written in Babylon during the Persian rule there. The book was intended to document what had happened and how God intervened during their exile, and as an encouragement to God's people who were searching for God's intervention to restore Israel.

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God is consistently portrayed as being greater than all the Pagan gods of the day, and demonstrates that God is in control and will be Glorified by the nations.

e. Actual historical events chronicled in Daniel include:

- i. Dan 1:1 follows soon after Babylon's victory over Egypt at the Battle of Carchemish in 605 BCE. Israel under king Jehoiakim had been aligned with Egypt as a vassal, and with Babylon's victory acquiesced to their leadership. At this time some tokens of loyalty would have been offered which likely included gold and silver, and it is reasonable that some articles from the Temple and some young aristocracy including Daniel and his friends would be included.
- ii. When Israel's vassal king Jehoiakim and his son Jehoiachin rebelled against Babylon in 597 BCE (2 Kings 24:1), Nebuchadnezzar returned and took the city, its leaders and professional class including Ezekiel, and installed Zedekiah as a puppet king.
- iii. In 587 following another brief rebellion, Nebuchadnezzar returned and destroyed the entire city of Jerusalem and its Temple, and took the remaining people hostage into captivity in Babylon. Around this time Jeremiah was part of a contingent that fled to Egypt. His prophecies would have been known to Daniel.
- iv. These progressively crushing events left God's people wondering what had gone wrong, what to do next, and if God had finally abandoned His people and broken His covenant.
- v. If Israel was ever to become restored as promised by Isaiah and Jeremiah, then it would have to come to a completely new understanding about how to live as a faulty and imperfect nation before a righteous and perfect God. To accomplish His purpose God instituted and new approach:
  1. This involved a relatively small group of the faithful called a "remnant" surrounded by a large and hostile Pagan environment which gave rise to the Synagogue worship as the Temple worship was no longer possible.
  2. Daniel was the chosen voice to demonstrate God's Presence amid the Pagan hostility, where Daniel's personal faith with obedience and wisdom proved God's faithfulness and set a new standard of righteous living.
  3. Home church communities became the new norm for the faithful remnant. One could argue that the Temple or its New Covenant equivalent of Cathedrals was no longer necessary, as the locus of faith became a small community of believers.
  4. God was doing something different in terms of redemptive history - where Moses demonstrated an outward power of God's presence, Daniel demonstrated an inward spirituality that was every bit as powerful and more majestic. As with Abraham, Joseph, Moses, David, and now Daniel - each was broken in terms of their self reliance and became the imperfect vessels to be used by a perfect God to advance redemptive history.

f. Main aspects of covenant faith portrayed in Daniel include:

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- i. Remain dependent in worship upon God and learn from the exile experience - remain faithful, righteous, and understand God's wisdom as superior to all others. Even when it makes little sense to us, have faith that God knows what He is doing.
- ii. Remain hopeful that God will move His people in His own time from captivity to restoration and from persecution to freedom. The present and future desolations do not mean God has abandoned His people or that He is not in control.
- iii. Remain obedient to God. God is in control, and honoring Him is the proper thing to do all the time... not necessarily to receive blessings now (which may or may not result) but continue instead with a focus on eternity (where God's people will certainly be blessed).
- iv. The result of loving God, being hopeful and obedient is measured in eternity, not necessarily in temporal experience.
- v. The main intent of all prophetic books is not necessarily to find historical fulfillment of the details revealed, but to encourage and inspire a proper response to God.

### 3. Historical Background to Daniel:

#### a. Babylon dwarfed all other cities of its era:

- i. It was 14 miles square with the Euphrates River running through the middle of it providing a constant water supply and a natural causeway for ferrying supplies. Drawbridges would be opened by day and closed by night for security.
- ii. It was surrounded by a 300' high and 25' thick brick wall that extended 35' into the grade. There was another wall 75' inside the 1<sup>st</sup> wall.
- iii. It had 250 towers that were 450' high.
- iv. Outside the outer wall was a wide and deep moat that prevented siege engines from approaching the great wall.
- v. 8 massive gates led to the inner city with streets paved with stone slabs 3' square.
- vi. The "Hanging Gardens" were fed by hydraulic pumps raising water from the river, and known as one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world.
- vii. There was a central "Ziggurat" tower in the central square and Pagan worship included 53 Pagan temples including the great temple of Marduk and 180 altars to Ishtar.
- viii. Nebuchadnezzar's palace was considered to be the most magnificent building ever erected.
- ix. When the Israelites 1<sup>st</sup> came to the city, the sheer size and scope would have made Jerusalem seem like a small town. Babylon was literally "jaw droppingly amazing."
- x. Daniel and his friend's respectful but obvious refusal to capitulate to follow the Pagan customs and worship is all the more amazing considering their age and their utter amazement in taking in all these sights.

#### b. Historical timeline:

- i. 609 BCE - Josiah dies at Megiddo. Judah is dominated by Pharaoh Necco of Egypt.

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- ii. 605 BCE - Babylonians defeat Egypt at Carchemish, Judah is dominated by Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar deports Daniel and many others (Dan 1:1) and is made King of Babylon after his return.
- iii. 604 BCE - In his 2<sup>nd</sup> year Nebuchadnezzar dreams and Daniel interprets his dreams (2:1).
- iv. 598-597 BCE - Nebuchadnezzar moves against rebelling Jerusalem and takes Jehoiachin and his nobles into exile in Babylon.
- v. 587-586 BCE - Jerusalem rebels against Nebuchadnezzar for the last time and the city is utterly destroyed as a result. The nation goes into exile with some moved into other occupied territory to insure the nation does not rise again. God had other plans which came to pass under the rule of the Mede-Persians.
- vi. 553-539 BCE - Belshazzar sees writing on the wall and Daniel interprets (5:1). Belshazzar has a dream that Daniel interprets (7:1).
- vii. 539 BCE - Fall of Babylon to Cyrus the Persian.
- viii. 537 BCE - Daniel receives his Revelation (not unlike the Apostle John's in 90 AD).

#### 4. Content and Theology of Daniel:

- a. Basic message of Daniel - God's people will experience suffering and threats of death, but this isn't the end of the story. God is ultimately in control even when it appears He is not, and there will be a final reckoning because eternity awaits for all of us... where God's people look to inherit a hopeful eternity, but the wicked to inherit punishment.
  - i. This is a major theological change - Old Testament/Old Covenant theology was based on blessings and curses in the land. Daniel foresaw blessings and curses in eternity... beyond the "end of time".
  - ii. This is a key aspect of apocalyptic thought... the transitory nature of life on earth in this present life, and an eternal life beyond it where blessings and curses take greater importance.
  - iii. This eternal mind set formed the nucleus of Jesus' Gospel message on the Kingdom of God, with the Apostle John's Revelation picking up where Daniel left off.
- b. Visions of others & their stories of Faith & Perseverance and God's Miraculous Provision - 1:1-6:28
  - i. These stories demonstrate how to live as an Ambassador of God within the context of a foreign and hostile culture.
  - ii. Daniel's example focused on life in the Spirit, rather than merely employing wisdom and knowledge.
  - iii. These biographical stories gave insight into God's future for Israel - there was a hopeful future tempered by present adversity.
  - iv. It is interesting that God gives other people the visions, which Daniel is then supernaturally equipped to interpret. This was an expression of prophetic ministry that followed after Joseph in Egypt.

- v. **Spiritual/Historical orientation of the stories recorded in Daniel:**
  - 1. **1:1 - Nebuchadnezzar's 1<sup>st</sup> deportation (605 BCE).** Daniel and company are exalted because they remain true to God and refuse being defiled.
  - 2. **2:1 - Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a statue (604 BCE).** Daniel and company are exalted because God provides revelation to their observant mind and heart.
  - 3. **3:1 - Nebuchadnezzar's golden idol (604-562 BCE).** They are exalted because they remain devoted to Yahweh even under threat of death, proving they fear God more than humanity.
  - 4. **4:1 - Nebuchadnezzar's humbling madness (604-562 BCE).** Daniel's interpretation not only comes true but results in a statement of faith in Yahweh by the king.
  - 5. **5:30 - Belshazzar's banquet (539 BCE).** Daniel's interpretation comes true again demonstrating you don't treat Yahweh with impunity.
  - 6. **6:28 - Cyrus' reign (539-30 BCE).** Daniel is exalted because he is devoted to Yahweh even under the threat of death.
- c. **Visions of Daniel - 7:1-12:13**
  - i. In the preceding stories Daniel is interpreting the visions and dreams of others, now he has visions of his own and God interprets for him.
  - ii. These visions demonstrated that there was more going on in terms of God's redemptive plan than what was obvious to the casual observer... bringing great hope to God's people. In this context Daniel is a type of Job, where Job is unaware of the interaction between God and Satan but remains true to God and is vindicated.
  - iii. In Daniel's visions animals are used representing kingdoms as vicious beasts that represent the kings of the nations of humanity.
    - 1. God reveals that the "Son of Man" is necessary to rule these beasts and give order to the world. Daniel foresaw that Messiah would be coming to rule the nations and establish a new Eden on earth. This of course lands in the New Testament Revelation where the Messiah institutes a "Millennial Kingdom" (Rev 20:1-6) on sin-cursed earth (Gen 3:17).
    - 2. There is harmony between the two accounts of Daniel & Revelation where only Messiah can render sin-cursed earth into a garden worthy of God during the millennial kingdom. Yet even the millennial kingdom pales in contrast to the new Heaven and earth God brings into being at the end of the millennium for the faithful (Rev 21:1ff).
  - iv. **Historical interpretation and harmony demonstrated in Daniel's visions:**
    - 1. **Babylonian kingdom:**
      - a. **2:27-38 - ruler of the entire world.**
      - b. **7:4 - the greatest of worldly empires would suffer humbling because of their arrogance before God.**

### 2. Mede-Persian kingdom:

- a. 2:39 - inferior to Babylonian kingdom.
- b. 8:3 - the two horns are the Medes and Persians.
- c. 7:5; 8:3 - one is greater than the other.
- d. 7:5; 8:4 - their desired aggressions would be fulfilled.
- e. 8:5-7 - they would be destroyed by another great but inferior kingdom.

### 3. Greek kingdom:

- a. 2:39 - they would rule the known earth.
- b. 8:5, 22 - the great horn from the west is Alexander the Great.
- c. 8:5-7 - Alexander would conquer the Mede-Persian Empire and establish his own impressive kingdom.
- d. 7:6; 8:8, 22 - there would emerge 4 lesser heads (kings) who would rule a divided kingdom... this occurred when Alexander died unexpectedly.
- e. 8:9-12, 23-25 - a king would come and crush Israel (Antiochus Epiphanies 168-64 BCE), he would desecrate the Temple, but would be destroyed by God. Maccabean revolt would result in the re-consecration of the Temple (168 BCE).

### 4. Roman kingdom:

- a. 2:40; 7:7, 19, 23 - crushes the previous Greek kingdom.
- b. 7:23 - covers the whole world in scope and authority.
- c. 2:41-43 - it is incredibly strong, but also weak.
- d. 7:7, 24 - 10 kings (rulers) will arise and fall.
- e. 7:23-27 - the eleventh king will persecute Israel and disrupt worship, but God will ultimately destroy them and replace it with the Kingdom of God.

### 5. Literary Structure of Daniel:

- a. Language - the Book is written in two languages - chapters 1 and 8-12 are written in Hebrew; while chapters 2-7 are written in Aramaic. The implication is that any learned person could read the Aramaic portion as this was the primary language of the day, but only learned Jews could read the Hebrew portion. This says something about for whom Daniel's book was intended.
- b. Writing style - the book has two different styles of writing - chapters 1-6 are historical narrative describing events during the exile; while chapters 7-12 are apocalyptic prophecy describing the coming Kingdom of God... with chapter 9 including an important narrative transition. Again, it is not accidental that this narrative is sandwiched between these difficult portions of prophecy.
- c. Chiasm of Book: This complicated book is made even more so as it also has an apparent structure within a structure, with an overall chiastic nature that centers on 4:37. This is part of the beauty and intricacy of Hebrew writing and especially evident in Hebrew poetry.
- d. Note how this Chiastic structure plays out with the content:

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### CONTENT - STORIES:

- A. Exile: amid promotion and prosperity following faithfulness. Ch 1 = Hebrew  
Transformation: captivity & ruin → faith & wisdom → knowledge and prosperity.
- B. God's authority over man's authority. Ch 2 = Aramaic  
*P-1* Four kingdoms and the 'Rock'
- C. Deliverance from abuse of power. Ch 3 = Aramaic  
Fiery furnace.
- D. Downfall of pride. Ch 4 = Aramaic  
The king's madness.
- X. Honor to God alone - Nebuchadnezzar's doxology. 4:37
- D' Downfall of pride Ch 5 = Aramaic  
Belshazzar's feast - writing on the wall
- C' Deliverance from abuse of power. Ch 6 = Aramaic  
Daniel in the Lion's den

### CONTENT - VISIONS:

- B' Human power in history overcome by Divine Power Ch 7 = Aramaic  
*P-1* Four beasts and the Son of Man
- A' Revelation of God's plans disclosed in exile Ch 8 = Hebrew  
*P-2* Ram, goat & little horn Ch 8 = Hebrew  
*P-3* Daniel's prayer & 70 weeks Ch 9 = Hebrew  
*P'-3* Heavenly revelation of comfort Ch 10 = Hebrew  
*P'-2* Kings of the south & north Ch 11 = Hebrew  
*P'-1* Time of the end Ch 12 = Hebrew
- e. Chiasm of Aramaic portion:
- A. Four empires and God's coming Kingdom - ch 2  
B. Trial by Fire and God's deliverance - ch 3  
C. King is warned, chastised and delivered - ch 4  
C' King is warned, defiant and deposed - ch 5  
B' Trial in lion's den and God's deliverance - ch 6  
A' Four empires and God's everlasting Kingdom - ch 7
- f. Chiasm of Hebrew portion (though 1<sup>st</sup> part is Aramaic):
- A. Distress & God's redemption in world history Belshazzar (552) ch 7 (Aramaic)  
B. Power grabs and downfalls Belshazzar (550) ch 8 (Hebrew)  
Ram, goat & little horn  
C. Faith, supplication, revelation for Israel Darius (539) ch 9  
Daniel's prayer & the 70 sevens

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<b>X. Salvation following desolation</b>	<b>Darius</b>	<b>“ 9:26-27</b>
<b>Messiah cut off &amp; destruction of the desolator</b>		
<b>C' Faith, supplication, revelation for the world</b>	<b>Cyrus</b>	<b>(536) ch 10</b>
<b>Comfort &amp; understanding from heavenly visitor</b>		
<b>B' Power grabs and downfalls</b>	<b>Cyrus</b>	<b>(536) ch 11</b>
<b>A' Distress &amp; God's redemption at the end</b>	<b>Cyrus</b>	<b>(536) ch 12</b>
<b>Prophecy for the time of the end</b>		

g. **Literary tension - in addition to the structural elements listed above, there is a growing tension that builds in the narrative portions from chapter 7 which builds to the release in chapter 12 amid increasingly unsettling future events culminating in the most magnificent salvation prophecy that sees resurrection and joy in eternity for the righteous, and shame and contempt for the wicked.**

i. **Note the tension development:**

- 1. Daniel is “deeply troubled” - 7:28**
- 2. Daniel is “appalled” - 8:27**
- 3. Daniel is “overcome with anguish” - 10:16**

ii. **Note the resolution:**

- 1. Daniel receives a great prophecy - Dan 12:1-4** “Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands *guard* over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace *and* everlasting contempt. Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time; many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase.”
- 2. Where Abraham was promised a future where his offspring will be as numerous as the sand, Daniel was given a redemptive promise that has the faithful shining like the stars in eternity. A far grander promise of hope.**
- 3. Compare this to John's Apocalypse - Revelation 22:10-16** And he <sup>\*</sup>said to me, Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong; and the one who is filthy, still be filthy; and let the one who is righteous, still practice righteousness; and the one who is holy, still keep himself holy. Behold, I am coming suddenly, and My reward *is* with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the

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end. Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs and the sorcerer's and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying. I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star."

6. **INTERPRETATION** - Daniel's apocalyptic visions are compelling, thrilling, and disturbing. The prophet Joel wrote: "And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions" (Joel 2:28, CR: Acts 2:17). When God gives a vision, understandably the 1<sup>st</sup> inclination is shock and wonder followed by prayerful consideration "why have You shown me this? What does it mean, and what would You have me do with it?" The result of such Spirit encounters is always greater reliance and dependence upon God, greater intimacy and reverent worship, and resulting in transformational supernatural living. Dreams and visions may be counterfeited by the enemy of our souls who works contrary to God's will and purpose, and this of course requires discernment (1 Cor 14:29-33). Genuine Spirit-life is always transformational, bringing about the development of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:16-25); while the counterfeit is always personally destructive developing pride and greed.
- a. There are 3 different visions written that are parallel reflections of the same message - the great statue, the 4 beasts, and the ram & goat are different views of the same message. These visions represent these kingdoms:
    - i. Babylonians = head of gold [2:32, 37, 38], lion [7:4,17].
    - ii. Mede-Persians = Chest & arms of silver [2:32,39], Bear [7:5, 17], Ram [8:3, 20].
    - iii. Greeks = belly & thighs of bronze [2:32, 39], Leopard [7:6, 17], Goat [8:5, 21-22].
    - iv. Romans = legs of iron [2:33, 40-43], Beast of iron-teeth & 10 horns [7:8, 23-25].
    - v. Kingdom of God = Rock & Mountain [2:34-35, 44-45], Saints of the Most High/Ancient of Days/Son of Man [7:9ff], Prince of Princes [8:25].
  - b. Daniel 7: Four beasts - the little horn - the Ancient of Days - the Son of Man - and the Holy Ones
    - i. **Chapter 7 is considered the hinge point of the book.** It is the transition of the narrative portion of 1-6 to the apocalyptic portion of 8-12. Chapter 7 is also the final chapter written in Aramaic that was readable by any learned man of the day, where Hebrew chapters 1 and 8-12 could only be read by Jewish scholars... indicating it was reserved for Jews.
    - ii. The 4 kingdoms depicted in the great statue are now displayed as 4 beasts - meaning humanity and its leaders continue to be brutish and driven by animal instincts.
    - iii. The "One like a Son of Man" of chapter 2 is now called the "Ancient of Days" - a clear mark of divinity and obviously superior to the animal brutes. This develops from the concept introduced in Genesis that the beasts of the earth need to be ruled by the son-of-man.

- iv. A short war is listed between the final beast and the “Most High” and His “Holy Ones.” At the end of the conflict all is to be handed over to God’s “Righteous Ones” being the Kingdom of God.
  - v. Daniel responds to the vision with distress, alarm, and contemplative silence (7:15, 28). The balance of the book works out the details and issues raised. It is interesting that as the Apostle John reports his Revelation, the contemplative silence now occurs in heaven. This is again another example of how the scope and scale of redemptive history develops.
- c. Daniel 8: Ram, Goat, and a little horn
- i. This is the beginning of the apocalyptic vision recorded in 8:1-14, and it resolves with an interpretation of what is “seen” (8:15-27).
  - ii. The Ram with 2 horns is the Mede-Persian empire which conquered the Babylonians. The Mede-Persian empire is also represented by the vision of the Lion in 7:4ff. The ram is a nobler creature than a goat - reflecting the Mede-Persian approach to rule which was inclusive and supported those who were conquered, even allowing them to worship in their own manner. It was Persian king Artaxerxes 1 who allowed Nehemiah [the king’s cup bearer] to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the walls and Temple. Normally such a ruler would show only contempt for the defeated people and their obviously inferior gods, not so Artaxerxes.
  - iii. The goat is almost always depicted as an ignoble creature, and here represents the Greek empire that would conquer the Mede-Persians. The goat’s prominent horn breaks off - a reference to the death of Alexander the Great [also depicted as the Bear in 7:5ff], who is replaced by his 4 generals who divide the kingdom... thus the 4 horns [also depicted as the Leopard with 4 heads in 7:6]. The kingdom of the Greeks is divided into 4 with:
    - 1. Antipater and Cassander ruling Macedon and Greece.
    - 2. Lysimachus ruling Thrace and Asia Minor.
    - 3. Seleucus 1 ruling Syria.
    - 4. Ptolemy 1 ruling Palestine and Egypt.
  - iv. Antiochus Epiphanes IV whose name means “God Manifest” was of the Seleucid line of rule, who would ultimately persecute the Jews and desecrate the Temple in Jerusalem (168 BCE) resulting with the Maccabean revolt. Daniel’s reference to him is found in chapter 8 where he crushes Israel (8:9-12ff), desecrates the Temple (8:13), is ultimately destroyed by God (8:25), and the Temple is re-consecrated (8:14). These events occurring centuries after Daniel’s death. Daniel chapter 11 gives more detail on these events.
  - v. What is noteworthy here and is typical of apocalyptic literature is the pattern God employs of (1)revelation, (2)perseverance through trouble and suffering, and (3)restoration. This pattern gives the faithful confidence and hope... though things may look difficult or even impossible, however we may believe and wait upon God, knowing that He is faithful and true.

- d. Daniel 9: Daniel's prayer & the numerology of the "70-7's"
- i. The use of "7" and the obvious assumption of it meaning "week" as a 7 day period has great acceptance by many conservative "literalist" theologians, but unfortunately doesn't necessarily reflect the proper hermeneutic of the author's intended meaning. Daniel comes to the realization that the "time of desolation" Israel would spend in captivity is 70 years as prophesized by Jeremiah, which is coming to a close (Dan 9:2). While there is an obvious interplay in the numerology it is wise not to get hung up on how this time frame works out, whether it be days, weeks, years, etc. The point is that the time of desolation is fixed and God will bring about His promised redemption and restoration in His timing. Too often our theology encroaches into our hermeneutic and we fall into eisegesis (reading meaning in) rather than exegesis (drawing the meaning out)... the latter is of course the means to derive the author's intended meaning.
  - ii. The Mosaic covenant called for punishment of "7 times more" (Lev 26:27-28).
  - iii. Jesus in responding to Peter's question of how many times should I forgive my brother... up to 7 times? And Jesus responds with "seventy times seven" (Matt 18:21-22). There are a number of ways theologians have sought to resolve the meaning of this passage:
    1. It led to the desecration of the Temple in 168 BCE.
    2. It is a Messianic prophecy already fulfilled or yet going to be fulfilled.
    3. 70 = a literal 490 year period that ended with the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE persecution of the Church.
    4. 70 = a figurative 490 year period with an initial 483 years of Israel in distress, a prolonged "gap" during the Church age, followed by the 7 year Tribulation before the end.
    5. Others try to harmonize these disparate positions into some combination of the above, or multiple fulfillments.
  - iv. All of these are interesting, but unfortunately inconclusive. The best way to understand this passage is to see it as the outplay of Daniel's prayer of repentance and supplication (9:1-19).
    1. The exact identification of the sevens is open to interpretation.
    2. The emphasis should be on the certainty of God's progressive redemption according to His will and time, rather than imposing a time formula.
    3. Remember Jesus' admonition that no one knows the actual end time except the Father (Matt 24:36; Mark 13:32).
  - v. The importance for Daniel is his response to Jeremiah's prophecy... this is the chapter's focal point.
  - vi. Daniel models the proper response to interpreting prophecy as a call to repentance, worship, supplication, and responsibility.

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vii. Different Theological approaches to Daniel’s Seventy-sevens may be seen as:

7 Sevens	_____ 62 Sevens _____	1 Seven
1. Restoration of Jerusalem	Coming of the “Anointed One”	Covenant fulfillment, Desolation & end
2.   Cyrus 49 Nehemiah	_____ 434 _____	Christ 7   70 AD
Restoration of Temple		Destruction Of Temple
3.   Cyrus 49 Nehemiah	_____ 434 _____ Christ   [Gap-Church age]	7 year Tribulation
Restoration of Temple		New Creation

e. Daniel 10: Comfort & understanding from Heavenly Visitor

- i. This chapter occurs several years after Daniel’s prayer for Israel’s restoration was answered in chapter 9. Daniel is in mourning, but the text doesn’t explain why. Chapter 10 is the introduction to the new vision and the lengthy revelation in chapters 11 and 12.
- ii. Spiritual warfare from the “Prince of the kingdom of Persia” prevented the angel [Gabriel] from coming to Daniel sooner (10:13). This evil spirit resisted because Gabriel speaks of its doom.
- iii. Daniel was in mourning, but is strengthened by Gabriel’s words of comfort (10:18-19). This prepares Daniel for the extended revelations of chapters 11-12.

f. Daniel 11: Kings of the South and North

- i. There is a link between the prophecies in Daniel 11 and the events that unfolded in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE. There are also some prophecies that have not come to pass as yet. This has led some to complain that the text has been compromised by a later redactor who included some known events to justify the veracity of the unfulfilled prophecies. However, Daniel 11 fits well with the Exile-era prophecies of Ezra and Nehemiah and should be taken as authoritative.
- ii. It is important to remember that Daniel’s prophecies are not primarily political, but rather they deal with the continual problem of human pride in world leaders that are always followed by their downfall and that God’s Sovereign purpose always prevails in spite of the political and spiritual battles that swirl around God’s people.
- iii. The Scriptural pattern that Daniel follows demonstrates short term prophecies that have come true, with longer term prophecies that we can reasonably deduce from the former fulfillment will also come true. This pattern is pretty typical for preparing the reader for a new major revelation... which occurs in chapter 12.

### **g. Daniel 12: Prophecy for the “Time of the End” - the Apocalypse:**

- i. Daniel 12:1-3 presents God’s revelation to which the entire book and in fact the entire Old Testament has been building toward, it provides the precursor for the Gospel Hope Jesus brings and for John’s Revelation of the end of times. Note the text: “Now at that time Michael, the great prince [Archangel] who stands *guard* over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, some to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace *and* everlasting contempt. Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.”**
- ii. Abraham was promised that his offspring would become a great nation, and this was fulfilled through Moses and the Davidic monarchy. However, Abraham’s and Moses’ vision never emerged beyond blessings in the present world, while both King David and Daniel see to a future restoration of the Edenic order of perfection with humanity and God together in intimate proximity.**
- iii. Psalm 27:4 speaks to the former condition of the Old Covenant - “One thing I have asked from the LORD, that I shall seek: That *I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life,* To behold the beauty of the LORD And to meditate in His temple.**
- iv. Psalm 23:6 speaks to the latter condition in the New Covenant - “Surely goodness and loving kindness will follow me all the days of my life, And *I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.*”**
- v. This is a major theological development - what begins in the land progresses into eternity. Where the promise to Abraham and Moses of a great nation in the kingdom of man, is transformed to become a multitude of the faithful shining eternally as stars in the heavens in the Kingdom of God.**
- vi. Daniel’s book closes with 4 points:**
  - 1. The great revelation God provided Daniel will be sealed for “the time of the end” (12:4, 6, 9, 13)**
  - 2. The truth and authenticity of the prophecy is confirmed (12:7).**
  - 3. The warnings to the people of God are reiterated (12:10-12).**
  - 4. Daniel receives a great promise - though he would be a life-long exile from the “promised land of Israel,” he will stand before God at the “end of days” (12:13).**

### **7. The Value and Meaning of Prophecy - has always been to realign and redirect God’s people into greater intimacy and dependency on God:**

- a. The value of prophecy lies in how we respond to it:**

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- i. Prophecy is a call to repentance - left to our own devices, we tend to wander and need to be called to repent which is acknowledging our errors AND deliberately intending to do things differently. "Examen and confession" is a huge aspect of Spirit life.
  - ii. Prophecy is a call to worship - knowing the greatness of God you cannot help but worship Him. Prayer is the vehicle through which we worship, fellowship, and engage God.
  - iii. Prophecy is a call to supplication - it is deliberately engaging in God's will to further His Kingdom. Prayerfully engaging the Spirit to realign our mind and heart, as well as the minds and hearts of God's people.
  - iv. Prophecy is a call to responsibility - all of God's people in New Testament times are filled with the Spirit Who is the author of all Spiritual gifts. As God's people we have a responsibility to stand with Him in faith believing that He can and does use us to further His purposes.
  - v. Prophecy in these aspects entail obedience to His call on our lives... it is heeding and honoring Him because we love Him, this is what Daniel and the Apostle John demonstrated. Instead, the self-absorbed and self-centered Jewish leaders presumed they could possess God as an object for their own use and purpose. God's desire for His leaders is they be a willing and cooperative vehicle for His use.
- b. Prophecy's intended effect on its hearers -
- i. The hearer is invited to align themselves on God's side... in spite of any pressures, desires or persecutions.
  - ii. The hearer is expected to display vigilance and expectation.
  - iii. Prophecy always acts to realign the faithful with God's heart and purpose. No matter the current problem or desolation, God is always focused upon and inviting us into eternity... this is the hope of all God's people. The everlasting righteousness is our focus, even if precise times and events remain enigmatic.
8. Theological Themes - it is important to understand that all Scripture authors have an imperative to say something theologically about God. Their message is both obvious and subtle, and both structural and personal in content. Joyce Baldwin makes the following observations about Daniel:
- a. YAHWEH is the only God and He rules over creation.
    - i. God is Sovereign and has allowed [permissive will] or has determined [proscriptive will] the events leading to the overthrow or advancement of earthly kingdoms (1:2).
    - ii. YAHWEH is known as "God of gods" and "Lord of kings" and is the revealer of all mysteries as confessed by Pagan rulers (2:47).
    - iii. Though God's will is not completely understood by humanity, God's nature as expressed in Scripture demonstrates that He is faithful and true and will restore his people in accordance with His mercy and love in the appointed time He chooses (9:17-19).
    - iv. God discloses His will through His prophets so that people may understand and believe Him (4:3, 34-35; 6:26-27).

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- v. God's disclosure demonstrates His love for all of humanity (2:44-45; 7:27). Though the locus is often the remnant of His people, God has a much greater redemptive scope in mind.
  - vi. Daniel's prayers to YAHWEH demonstrates God's covenant with Israel (Ex 3:14; 6:3) and His people (9:4ff).
- b. On Fallen (sin-cursed) earth God's people will suffer. Leaders may be more or less responsive to God's will, and people may do well or suffer as a consequence of their decisions. However, each individual has a role to play and will stand before God at the appointed time.
- i. Political movements often caused suffering (1:2).
  - ii. Loyalty to God often aroused persecution (3:8-23; 6:3-12).
  - iii. Though arrogant world leaders are often called into accountability by God, the result of their decisions present hardship and oppression and the faithful must be prepared for their deliverance to be delayed (12:12).
  - iv. However, suffering and oppression is not meaningless (12:10), and death is not the end (12:1). There will be an accounting before God in resurrection and judgment (12:2-3). Those of faith need not fear these ultimate results, though the wicked should be very afraid.
- c. There is more to history than what the human eyes can see. [The Book of Job and the story of Elisha (2 Kings 6:15-17) are other OT examples.]
- i. The forces of evil in the nations have their counterpart in heaven (10:13). These forces may delay but cannot thwart God's plans. Spiritual warfare goes on in heaven as well as upon earth (Eph 6:12).
  - ii. God is Sovereign and is in control, and suffering and death are not an indictment against God nor are they random occurrences.
  - iii. We have a role to play in the drama of world events, but God ultimately brings the action into accountability and conclusion.
- d. The goal of history is the advancement of God's Kingdom... this is what the end of days are all about - the end of pain and suffering and the commencement of a blissful eternity with God.
- i. Though the fall of Jerusalem and destruction of the Temple dashed Zionist hopes and expectations, God yet uses these events to demonstrate His Sovereignty (Lam 1:20).
  - ii. The stories of world leaders pursuing their own policies are placed against the backdrop of God's control and Sovereignty expressed through His servants (Dan 1-6).
  - iii. God's purpose was achieved when rulers acted responsibly (4:34-35); but also when they did not (5:22-24).
  - iv. The visions of brutish, destructive, and savage animals running amok in history is placed in context of a Sovereign God who works through history to establish His Kingdom forever (7:27).

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- v. While Daniel would not live to see these events play out in history, he had the confidence that he would see it in eternity... as do the faithful of every generation until Messiah returns.

### 9. Canonical Context (Joyce Baldwin):

- a. Daniel is more appropriately apocalyptic literature rather than merely prophetic. Though it includes prophetic content, the focus is how it plays out in the Kingdom of God and the end of days.
  - i. Daniel is really the climax of the Old Testament prophecy and the introduction to the New Testament Gospel of Hope.
  - ii. In the beginning, human rebellion (Adam & Eve) and Spiritual rebellion (Satan & demons) precipitated the Fall with the attendant corruption and cursing of earth (Gen 3). While Satan was directly cursed, humanity was indirectly affected with the cursing of earth.
    - 1. This set into play God's redemptive plan which would culminate with judgment against evil, destruction of Satan and the corrupted world order, and the recreation of heaven and earth at the end of days where redeemed humanity could live in eternity with God.
    - 2. Gen 4-10 chronicles humanity's fall into depravation and a hostile environment with the worship of Pagan gods.
    - 3. Gen 11 marks something new with the Abrahamic Covenant and its successors at Sinai, Davidic, and the New Covenant in Jesus.
  - iii. Paralleling Adam & Eve's expulsion from the Garden, Daniel begins with an expulsion from the land and entry into a foreign world hostile to God. Human rebellion has come full circle.
  - iv. Daniel affirms that humanity's hope is intrinsically centered in God alone. The strength and power of the world order continues with degradation until the last beast sets itself up directly against God (Dan 7:7-11; 25).
  - v. Continued suffering even for God's people will occur until the Son of Man intervenes (9:24-26) and the Kingdom of God arrives (12:10).
- b. These themes course through the Old Testament, and land squarely in the Gospels.
  - i. Jesus proclaimed His mission as the "Son of Man" (Dan 7:13; Matt 24:15) was to advance the Kingdom of God.
  - ii. There are 65 references to the Kingdom of God in the New Testament. With 2 Thess 1:5 stating clearly that suffering and advancing the Kingdom of God are linked, though not necessarily for everyone.
  - iii. Jesus prophesized that Herod's Temple would also be desecrated and destroyed, followed by Jesus' vindication and exultation confirming His universal and eternal authority (Matt 24:30).

- iv. The exalted Jesus in Heaven is identified with God, and identified as one “like a son of man” (Rev 1:14; 14:14; Dan 7:9-10; 7:13, 22). In the exultation of Jesus proclaimed in Revelation, history reaches its goal and the book of Daniel reaches its fulfillment.
- c. The message of judgment from the pre-exilic prophets was fulfilled by the fall of Jerusalem, which was brought about by the sins of the nation (Dan 9:7-14). Their message of forgiveness and restoration was also fulfilled by the rebuilding of Jerusalem (Dan 9:15-19; Ezra 1:1-4; 6:17-18). Throughout Daniel the theme is developed demonstrating that those who trust God will be delivered.
- d. Jerusalem remains as a pivot point for OT and NT prophecy, but it is clear the focus moves away from blessing in the land where Jerusalem represents God’s abode, and toward eternity which is God’s true abode. As grace is far superior to the law, so heaven is far superior to Eden and the land. As the Son of Man is far superior to the beasts that would repress humanity, life in eternity is far superior to life in the world.
- e. The struggle humanity is engaged in is a cosmic one that we cannot win. Only God and His anointed heavenly Man is the hope to which humanity must look (Dan 7:14, 27).