

Notes & Outlines

DANIEL

J. Vernon McGee

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BACKGROUND:

The Book of Daniel has been the battlefield between conservative and liberal scholars for years. The heat of battle is now past — with each side claiming a major victory. However, the very fact that the Book of Daniel remains intact in Scripture and that the early dating of this book (the 6th century B.C.) has been maintained successfully by conservative scholars against the massed onslaught of arrogant liberalism, is in itself a valid argument for the original and conservative position.

Porphyry, a heretic in the 3rd century A.D., declared that the Book of Daniel was a forgery, written during the time of Antiochus Epiphanes and the Maccabees (170 B.C.) — almost 400 years after Daniel had lived. The German critics seized upon this hypothesis and, along with Dr. S. R. Driver, developed it. These critics, as well as present-day unbelievers, assume the premise that the supernatural does not exist, hence there can be no foretelling since foreknowledge is supernatural.

However, the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament written prior to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, contains the Book of Daniel! Also, Josephus records an incident during the time of Alexander the Great which supports the early authorship. When Alexander's invasion reached the Near East, Jaddua, the high priest, went out to meet him and showed to him a copy of the Book of Daniel in which he was clearly mentioned. Alexander was so impressed by this that instead of destroying Jerusalem, he entered the city peaceably and worshipped at the temple.

It is not in the purview of these brief notes to enter into useless argument and fight again about that which has been already won. We accept the findings of conservative scholarship — that the man Daniel was not a deceiver and that his book was not a forgery. We feel that the statement of Edward B. Pusey is apropos here: "The rest which has been said is mostly mere insolent assumptions against Scripture, grounded on unbelief." Sir Isaac Newton declared, "To reject Daniel is to reject the Christian religion."

Our Lord called the Pharisees "hypocrites," but He called Daniel "the prophet." He has never reversed this arrangement, and the

endorsement of the Lord Jesus Christ is valid and sufficient for every believer whether or not he has examined the arguments of the critics. It satisfies the sincere saint without his having studied the answers of conservative scholarship (see Hebrews 11:33).

WRITER:

We know more of Daniel the man than we do of any other prophet. He gave us a personal account of his life from the time he was carried captive to Babylon in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, which was about 606 B.C. (Daniel 1:1), until the first year of King Cyrus, which was about 536 B.C. (Daniel 1:21 and also 9:2). Daniel's life and ministry bridged the entire 70 years of captivity. At the beginning of the book he is a boy in his teens, and at the end he is an old man of fourscore or more years.

Here is God's estimate of the man: "O Daniel, a man greatly beloved" (Daniel 10:11).

There are three words that characterize Daniel's life: purpose, prayer, and prophecy.

(1) Daniel was a man of *purpose* (Daniel 1:8; 6:10). He determined that he would not be defiled by the immorality of paganism or be involved in the degradation of idolatry. This is the practical teaching of prophecy.

The study of prophecy should not lead to fanaticism or sensationalism. Rather, it should lead to a life of holiness and fear of the Lord.

And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure. (1 John 3:3)

(2) Daniel was a man of *prayer* (Daniel 2:17-23; 6:10; 9:3-19; 10). His total life and his every decision in a pagan court were paved by prayer.

The study of prophecy should not be engaged in for the satisfaction of curiosity or to be grist for polemic argumentation. Instead, it should inspire us to spiritual living and an earnest study of the Word of God.

(3) Daniel was a man of *prophecy*. The bulk of his book relates to prophetic themes. Our Lord labeled him, "Daniel the prophet" (Matthew 24:15).

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. (2 Peter 1:20)

Daniel gave us the skeleton of prophecy on which all prophecy is placed. The image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream (chapter 2) and the beasts (chapter 7) are the backbone of prophecy; the seventy weeks (chapter 9) are the ribs which fit into their proper place.

The study of prophecy should not lead to idle speculation or wild theories. On the contrary, it produces a practical, profitable, plenary, and purposeful life.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.
(2 Timothy 3:16, 17)

DATE:

As previously indicated, we hold to the early date of the Book of Daniel — between the third year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, about 606 B.C. and the first year of Cyrus, about 536 B.C.

HIS MESSAGE:

Daniel was the prophet of “the times of the Gentiles” (see Luke 21:24). The major portion of his prophecies were directly concerned with the gentile nations. The notable exception is Daniel 9, which concerns the seventy weeks, but here the emphasis is upon the interval after the cutting off of the Messiah between the 69th week and the 70th week. It is during this period that the city and sanctuary are destroyed, and “the times of the Gentiles” are identified as the time when “Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24). Evidently, the “wise men from the east” knew the prophecy of Daniel. A portion of the Book of Daniel was written in Aramaic, the language of the Gentiles of that day. All this does not imply that the Book of Daniel was not written for the nation Israel; on the contrary, Israel was acquainted with the prophecies of Daniel in his day. Ezekiel, who was with the captives, made reference to the character of Daniel and to his office as a prophet (Ezekiel 14:14, 20; 28:3). By the way, this reference to

Daniel by Ezekiel, who was Daniel's contemporary, is conclusive evidence against the theory that this book belongs to the Maccabean period.

THEME:

And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. (Daniel 2:44)

Dr. G. Campbell Morgan gave this theme: "Persistent Government of God in the Government of the World." This is the book of the universal sovereignty of God. Prophecy is interwoven with history to show that God is overruling the idolatry, blasphemy, self-will, and intolerance of the Gentiles.

But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. (Daniel 12:4)

More specifically, Daniel 12:4 brings together "the times of the Gentiles" and "the time of the end" for the nation Israel in the Great Tribulation. This coming crisis eventuates in Christ setting up the Millennial Kingdom.

Daniel dealt with political issues apart from ecclesiastical matters. His book gives the final outcome of events and issues that are at work in the world today and answers the question, "Who will rule the world?" — not "How will the world be converted?"

Our Lord, in the Olivet Discourse, quoted only from the Book of Daniel. The Book of Revelation is largely an enigma without the Book of Daniel. Paul's revelation concerning "the man of sin" needs Daniel's account for amplification and clarification.

OUTLINE:

- I. The historic night with prophetic light, Chapters 1—6**
 - A. Decline of Judah; fall of Jerusalem; Daniel taken**

captive to Babylon; his decision to be true to God, Chapter 1

- B. Dream of Nebuchadnezzar about a multimetallic image; interpretation by Daniel concerning the four kingdoms of “the times of the Gentiles,” Chapter 2
 - C. Decree of Nebuchadnezzar to enforce universal idolatry; three Hebrews cast into the furnace for refusal to bow to image of gold, Chapter 3
 - D. Dream of Nebuchadnezzar about a great tree hewn down to a stump; fulfilled in subsequent period of madness of the king, Chapter 4
 - E. Downfall of Babylon foretold by Daniel as he read the handwriting on the wall at the feast of Belshazzar, Chapter 5
 - F. Decree of Darius, the Median, to enforce worship of himself; Daniel cast into den of lions for praying to the God of heaven, Chapter 6
- II. The prophetic light in the historic night, Chapters 7—12**
- A. Daniel’s vision of four beasts concerning four kingdoms of “the times of the Gentiles,” Chapter 7
 - B. Daniel’s vision of ram and he goat and another little horn, Chapter 8
 - C. Daniel’s vision of seventy weeks concerning the nation Israel, Chapter 9
 - D. Daniel’s vision relating to Israel in immediate future and latter days; historical little horn and little horn of the latter days, Chapters 10—12
 - 1. Preparation for vision by prayer of Daniel; appearance of a heavenly messenger, Chapter 10
 - 2. Prophecy concerning Persia and Grecia, historical “little horn”; eschatological “little horn,” Chapter 11
 - 3. Preview of Israel in latter days; Great Tribulation; resurrections; rewards; final word about the end times, Chapter 12

The Old Testament is written in the Hebrew language, with

but one exception—a portion of the Book of Daniel. From chapter 2, verse 4, through chapter 7, Daniel is in Aramaic, the Gentile and diplomatic language of Daniel’s day. This section deals exclusively with “the times of the Gentiles.” The remainder of the book correlates the nation Israel with this program. The Book of Daniel deals with Gentiles and Jews — the church is totally excluded. This book is first to the Gentiles but also to the Jews.

COMMENT:

Chapter 1 — Daniel was given a heathen name, but he refused to adopt heathen customs. He lived during the entire period of the seventy years of Babylonian captivity (compare vv. 1, 2 with v. 21). He bridged the gap of the entire period. He was God’s prophet in a pagan court. Part of the Book of Daniel is written in Aramaic (2:4 to 7:28). The Book of Daniel probably should be divided at three God-given breaks:

1. Personal history of Daniel, Chapters 1:1 — 2:3
2. Prophetic history of Daniel relating to gentile nations, Chapters 2:4 — 7:28
3. Prophecies relating to the nation Israel, Chapters 8:1 — 12:13

Chapters 2 and 7 — These two chapters cover the same chronological period, “the times of the Gentiles,” and the identical subjects — the four nations which are the only world powers during this period. These are identified as Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome.

Image (Chapter 2)	Beasts (Chapter 7)	Nations Designated
Head of gold	Lion	Babylon
Arms of silver	Bear	Media-Persia
Sides of brass	Panther (Leopard)	Greece (Graeco-Macedonian)
Legs of iron and feet of iron and clay	Composite beast	Rome

More attention is given to the last metal and the last beast than all the others put together. It is still of chief concern in our day.

The first three metals and beasts are historical. They have been poured into the mold of the deep freeze of history. The Roman Empire is to continue until the time it is destroyed by the stone cut out without hands (2:34).

There is no fifth beast. Nothing follows Rome. Rome is in existence in the present day. It did not die or disappear. Rome, like Humpty Dumpty, had a great fall. All the king's horses and king's men could not put it back together again. All it needs is a leader capable of bringing together all of its divergent parts. There is coming a little horn, the man of sin, Satan's masterpiece, who will accomplish this Herculean task.

Chapter 3 — The excessive pride of Nebuchadnezzar is discovered here, which was one of the symptoms of his insanity. The three Hebrew children refused to worship the image in keeping with the 1st and 2nd commandments:

Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them; for I, the LORD thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. (Exodus 20:3-6)

This image is evidently a picture of the abomination of desolation which will appear in the midst of the Great Tribulation Period.

When ye, therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whosoever readeth, let him understand).
(Matthew 24:15)

Note the emphasis on worldly music accompanying the worship (Daniel 3:15), which appeals to the natural man. The deliverance of the children of Israel from the fiery furnace is a picture of God's

deliverance of Israel in the Great Tribulation Period.

Chapter 4 — The insanity of Nebuchadnezzar was evidently what modern psychology labels hysteria. This runs in cycles. This chapter reveals the character of gentile rulership of this world (v. 17).

Chapter 5 — The banquet of Belshazzar is a foregleam of the manner in which the times of the Gentiles will end. They go out in a blaze of human glory. Daniel's interpretation of the handwriting on the wall is God's estimation of the entire period of the Gentiles and their final judgment (Matthew 25:31-46).

Chapter 6 — Daniel cast in the den of lions and his subsequent deliverance and exaltation is another premier of God's preservation of the remnant during the Great Tribulation when they shall be hated by all nations (Matthew 24:9) and persecuted by the devil who will seek to destroy them (Revelation 12:13-17). But they will be miraculously preserved by God (Revelation 7:4-8).

Chapter 7 — Daniel's vision of four beasts concerning four kingdoms of the "times of the Gentiles" (see Chapter 2).

Chapter 8 — This prophecy of the ram with two unmatched horns and the he-goat with one horn places a microscope down on the conflict between the 2nd and 3rd world empires in the struggle of East and West, Orient and Occident, Asia and Europe. This struggle had tremendous repercussions in the nation Israel, and there is given here a "little horn" which was fulfilled in Antiochus Epiphanes (170 B.C.), the great persecutor of the Jews, called "the Nero of Jewish history." He slaughtered Israelites like animals and offered a sow on the altar in the temple and poured the broth on the holy places. He is known as "the great profaner."

Chapter 9 — The 70-year captivity predicted by Jeremiah (Jeremiah 25:11-12) was coming to an end (from 606 B.C. to the Decree of Cyrus in 536 B.C. — Ezra 1:1-4). Daniel was moved to prayer. Consider carefully his prayer, as it is one of the greatest in the Old Testament. It was revealed to Daniel that the kingdom of heaven would not be set up at the end of the 70 years but that 70 weeks more were to pass in respect to the nation Israel (v. 24). The

70 weeks are weeks of years.

1 week = 7 years

70 weeks = 490 years

70 weeks divided into 3 periods:

7 weeks — 62 weeks — 1 week

(See chart on opposite page)

Things accomplished in 70 weeks (v. 24):

1. “To finish the transgression” of Israel.
2. “To make an end of sins,” Ezekiel 37:23, Zechariah 12:10—13:1.
3. “To make reconciliation for iniquity.”
4. “To bring in everlasting righteousness,” Jeremiah 33:14-16, 31:31-34, Isaiah 1:26.
5. “Seal up the vision and prophecy.” Vindicate the truth of this vision.
6. “To anoint the Most Holy” in the millennial temple, Ezekiel 40 — 48, Acts 15:16.

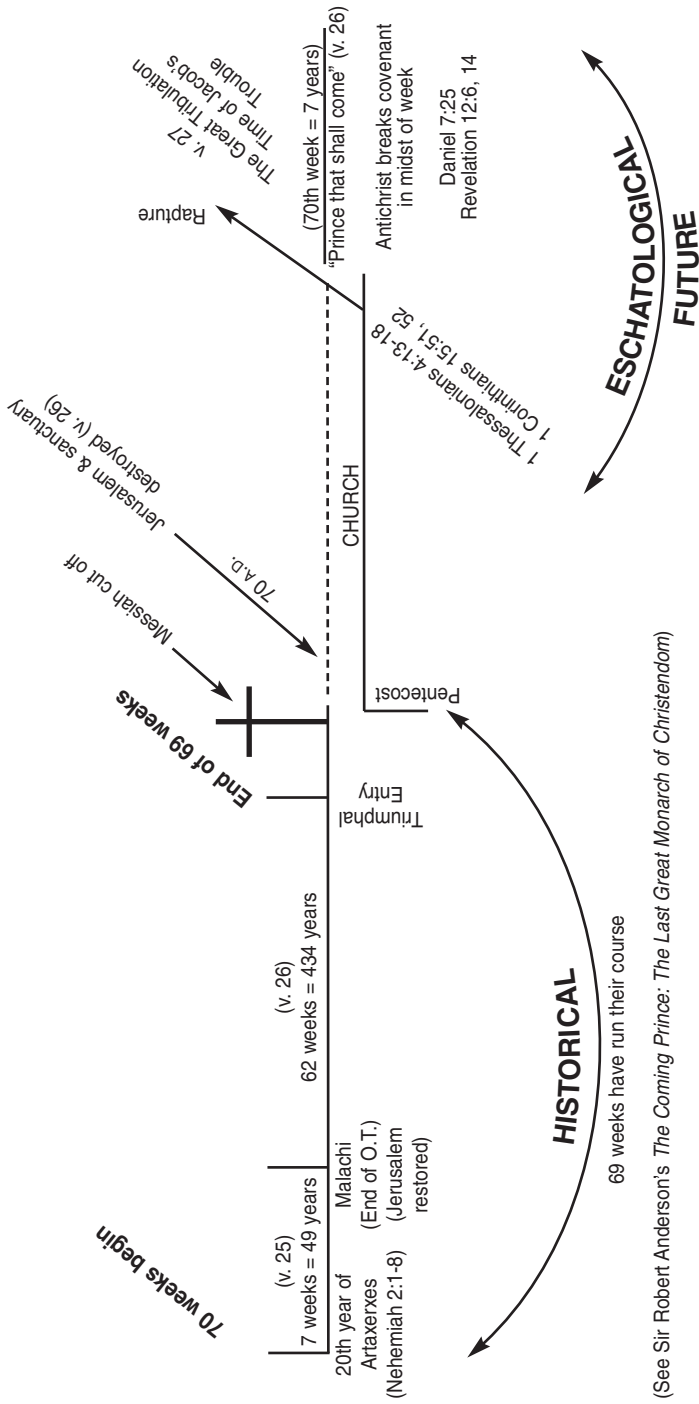
Chapters 10 — 12 — These three chapters constitute one vision. Some Bible scholars count this last vision as the most important in the Book of Daniel. This section is remarkable from several viewpoints.

Chapter 10 — The seriousness and sincerity of Daniel is obvious here. For three weeks he observed a time of fasting. Fasting is not a rule for believers today, but it has its merits and rewards for those willing to pay the price.

The delay in the answer to Daniel’s prayer was caused by a satanic hindrance. The angel sent to answer his prayer was blocked by one of Satan’s emissaries of higher rank and greater power labeled “the prince of the kingdom of Persia” (v. 13). The angel had to go for reinforcements. Michael, the archangel, came to remove the blockade. This reveals the spiritual warfare in which we all are engaged (see Ephesians 6:10-18; 2 Corinthians 10:3-6). There are different ranks of both good and bad angels.

Daniel needed to be strengthened by his contact with the supernatural.

THE 70 WEEKS OF DANIEL 9



69 weeks have run their course

(See Sir Robert Anderson's *The Coming Prince: The Last Great Monarch of Christendom*)

Chapter 11 — This chapter is a prophetic preview of the period between the Testaments. This gives an accurate account of the warfare between two divisions of the Grecian Empire — Syria and Egypt. The “vile person” (little horn) of v. 21 is Antiochus Epiphanes of the Syrian kingdom, the eschatological section (future) begins at v. 36 — this little horn appears in the latter days and is the little horn of Daniel 7 (the Antichrist), see Gaebelein’s *The Prophet Daniel*.

Chapter 12

v. 1 — This is a prophecy concerning the Great Tribulation to which the Lord referred in Matthew 24:21, 22:

For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.

v. 2 — The resurrections referred to here are of the people of the Old Testament. Those “to everlasting life” evidently are the Old Testament saints who are raised at the end of the Great Tribulation in order to participate in the Millennium. The lost are raised at the Great White Throne. The Old Testament saints are not raised with the church, as they were not baptized with the Holy Spirit and are not in the body of believers (1 Corinthians 12:13).

v. 4 — These are signs that are in our day.

vv. 5-9 — The period designated “the time of the end” is not the end of time but refers to the Great Tribulation. Many of the features of this book will not be unfolded until then.

v. 11 — Evidently this is what our Lord had reference to in Matthew 24:15, and the number of days here and in v. 13 project time beyond the actual Tribulation Period when adjustments will have to be made which will usher in the millennial day — then “shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings” (Malachi 4:2).

RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

- Anderson, Sir Robert. *The Coming Prince: The Last Great Monarch of Christendom*. London, England: Hodder and Stoughton, 1881.
- Campbell, Donald K. *Daniel: Decoder of Dreams*. Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1977.
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- Gaebelein, Arno C. *The Prophet Daniel*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1911.
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(Especially good for young Christians.)
- Kelly, William. *Lectures on the Book of Daniel*. Addison, Illinois: Bible Truth Publishers, 1881.
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(Fine, inexpensive survey.)
- McClain, Alva J. *Daniel's Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks*. Winona Lake, Indiana: Brethren Missionary Herald Co., 1940.
- McGee, J. Vernon. *Edited Messages on Daniel*. Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1991.
- Strauss, Lehman. *The Prophecies of Daniel*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1969. (Very practical.)
- Walvoord, John F. *Daniel, The Key to Prophetic Revelation*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1971.
(Excellent, comprehensive interpretation.)
- Wood, Leon J. *Daniel: A Study Guide Commentary*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975.
(Excellent for individual and group study.)

SAMPLE SUMMARY FOR EACH CHAPTER

1. Theme of chapter —
2. Most important verse —
3. Most prominent word —
4. Teaching about Christ —
5. Command to obey —
6. Promise to claim —
7. New truth learned —

These notes, prepared by J. Vernon McGee, are for the purpose of giving assistance to the listeners of the THRU THE BIBLE RADIO program. They are to be used with the Bible and will be more meaningful as you look up all the Scripture references. Due to the necessary brevity of both notes and broadcasts, a list of recommended books is included for those wanting a more detailed study. These books may be obtained from a Christian library or bookstore or ordered from the publishers.

NOTES



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