

Daniel 7

A View Into The Sequence of World Events

I. Introduction

A. Why do we study the Old Testament?

1. It provided the Law to convict us of sin (Romans 5:20, 7:7)
2. It provides the Law as a tutor to lead us to Christ (Galatians 3:24)
3. It provides us with people's negative examples so we will not follow in them (1 Corinthians 10:6-11)
4. It provides us with people's positive examples so we will immitate them (Hebrews 12:1)
5. It gives us examples of people's endurance in suffering so we will be encouraged as we recognize God's mercy and compassion (James 5:10-11)
6. To remind us that God is sovereign over all (Psalm 103:19) and will bring about His kingdom through the direction of world events (Daniel 2:44, 7:27)
7. Because **ALL** Scripture is God breathed (2Tim 3:16) and we are to live on **EVERY** word that comes from God (Mt 4:4)

B. Why study the book of Daniel?

1. It shows us that although patient God does not ignore and judges sin
2. It shows us that in Daniel's view there was a coming messiah
3. Provides people's negative examples to avoid:
 - a. Nebuchadnezzar – pride (4:28-31)
 - b. Belshazzar – pride, arrogance (5:22-23)
 - c. Darius – loved the honor of men (6:6-9)
 - d. commissioners and straps – jealousy(6:3-4), flattery (6:6-9) and murder (6:13-15)
4. Provides people's positive examples to immitate:
 - a. Daniel
 - b. Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah (Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego)
 - c. Nebuchadnezzar (4:1-3, 34-35)
5. It gives us examples of people's endurance in suffering so we will be encouraged as we recognize God's mercy and compassion:

- a. Daniel (1, 2, 6)
 - b. Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah (Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego) (1, 2, 3)
 - c. The Jewish people
6. To remind us that God is sovereign over all and will bring about His kingdom through the direction of world events
 7. The book of Daniel is part of ALL scripture and therefore God's Word

II. Review

- A. Theme: Daniel 4:25b; 5:21b “...*the Most High God is ruler over the realm of mankind and that He sets over it whomever He wishes.*”
- B. The book is laid out ½ history (1-6) and ½ prophecy (7-12)
 1. Chapters 1-6 are primarily history (½ Chapter 2 prophecy) and are presented chronologically
 2. Chapters 7-12 are primarily prophecy (½ Chapter 9 history) and are presented chronologically
 3. Although history and prophecy sections are laid out chronologically they interleave with each other...Book chronological order 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 5, 6, 9, 10-12
- C. Chapter 1 – 605 BC
 1. Conviction
Daniel 1:8 “*But Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food or with the wine which he drank*”
 2. College
Daniel 1:17, 20 “*As for these four youths, God gave them knowledge and intelligence in every branch of literature and wisdom... As for every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king consulted them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and conjurers who were in all his realm.*”
- D. Chapter 2 – 602 BC
 1. Consideration
Daniel 2:14 “*...Daniel replied with discretion and discernment to Arioch,...*”
 2. Calling
Daniel 2:16, 18 “*...Daniel went in and requested of the king... so that they might request compassion from the God of heaven concerning this mystery...*”

E. Chapter 3 – sometime between chapters 2 and 4 (Circa 590 BC)

1. Commitment

Daniel 3:16-18 *“Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, ‘O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.’”*

2. Conflagration

Daniel 3:19, 21 *“Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with wrath, and his facial expression was altered... these men were tied up in their trousers, their coats, their caps and their other clothes, and were cast into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire.”*

F. Chapter 4 – sometime between chapters 3 and 5 (Circa 550 BC)

1. Conceit

Daniel 4:30 *“The king reflected and said, ‘Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?’”*

2. Compassion

Daniel 4:27 *“Therefore, O king, may my advice be pleasing to you: break away now from your sins by doing righteousness and from your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor, in case there may be a prolonging of your prosperity.”*

G. Chapter 5 – 539 BC

1. Conceit

Daniel 5:3-4 *“Then they brought the gold vessels that had been taken out of the temple, the house of God which was in Jerusalem; and the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines drank from them. They drank the wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone.”*

2. Confrontation

Daniel 5:22-23 *“Yet you, his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, even though you knew all this,²³ but you have exalted yourself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and*

your nobles, your wives and your concubines have been drinking wine from them; and you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone, which do not see, hear or understand. But the God in whose hand are your life-breath and all your ways, you have not glorified.”

H. Chapter 6 – c. 539, maybe as late as 536

1. Change

Daniel 5:30-31 *“That same night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was slain. So Darius the Mede received the kingdom at about the age of sixty-two.”*

2. Character

Daniel 6:4-5 *“Then the commissioners and satraps began trying to find a ground of accusation against Daniel in regard to government affairs; but they could find no ground of accusation or evidence of corruption, inasmuch as he was faithful, and no negligence or corruption was to be found in him. Then these men said, ‘We will not find any ground of accusation against this Daniel unless we find it against him with regard to the law of his God.’”*

3. Consistency

Daniel 1:21 *“And Daniel continued until the first year of Cyrus the king.”*

Daniel 6:28 *“So this Daniel enjoyed success in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.”*

III. **A Detour On Interpretation**

A. Interpretation

1. Understanding the intended meaning of the author

“That’s why I like to refer to the step of Interpretation as the recreation process. We’re attempting to stand in the author’s shoes and recreate his experience – to think as he thought, to feel as he felt, and to decide as he decided. We’re asking, ‘What did this mean to him?’ before we ever ask, ‘What does it mean to us?’”

Hendricks: *Living by the Book*, pg 201

B. So what is Literal interpretation?

1. Interpretation: Understanding the meaning intended by the author.

2. Literal interpretation: Understanding the meaning intended by the author by using the ordinary principles one uses to understand anything written.

3. Plain literal...The meaning is the explicit assertion of the words

John 11:14 *“So Jesus then said to them plainly, ‘Lazarus is dead,’”*

- C. So what about figures, symbols or figures of speech?

How do you interpret them literally?

1. Figurative literal...The meaning is the specific meaning intended by the author when using a figure or symbol

John 11:11-13 *“This He said, and after that He said to them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I go, so that I may awaken him out of sleep.” The disciples then said to Him, “Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover.” Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that He was speaking of literal sleep.”*

2. So what are the guidelines for determining Plain or Figurative literal?

- a. Look for the plain literal meaning first – Daniel 7:1

- b. If the plain literal reading leaves a contradiction, moral or physical “impossibility”, or is explained as a figure – look for a figurative literal sense
Example: A plank or log in the eye – Matthew 7:3-5

CAUTION – Please remember that we as humans are limited. Miracles can be seemingly impossible (Gen 1; 2 Kings 6:1-7; Dn 3:25-27; Jn 6:16-24). That’s why they are miracles!

- c. If a figure or symbol is used or intended look for an explanation or clue to it’s meaning in the surrounding verses – Daniel 2:36-45

3. Remember these rules

If the plain literal sense makes good sense seek no other sense

Interpret the Bible with the Bible

4. We will apply this approach as we look at the prophecies presented in the rest of the book of Daniel

IV. Daniel Chapter 7

- A. We are in the first year of Belshazzar – 553 BC

- B. Daniel has a dream and then writes it down for us

1. Wind is often used as a figurative reference to the judgment of God (Daniel 2:35, 44)

2. The sea is often a figurative reference to the peoples or nations of the earth (Dn 7:17; Is 57:20)
 3. God's judgment is working on the peoples of the earth and causing what looks like to us turmoil
 4. He sees four beasts coming out of the sea
 5. Daniel gets an interpretation from an angel that helps us understand what these 4 beasts represent (16)
 6. They represent 4 kings (NIV - kingdoms) that come out of the earth (7:17, 23)
 7. We can correlate these kings (kingdoms) with the differing metals that we saw in chapter 2 that come one after another beginning with Nebuchadnezzar
Daniel 2:38b *"You are the head of gold"*
 8. These beasts don't come out all together but follow one another (7:6, 7)
 9. Remember that to Daniel this was mostly prophecy with little historical precedent...to us this is mostly history now and less prophecy
- C. The 4 beasts (4-8, 15-27)
1. **Lion** with wings of an eagle (vs 4)
 - a. Wings are plucked off, raised up and given the mind/heart of a man
 - b. Represents the kingdom of Babylon
 - c. Nebuchadnezzar represented as a lion and eagle other places in scripture (Jer 46:2, 26 / Jer 49:17, 22)
 - d. We see the transition of Nebuchadnezzar from beast to man in Daniel 4
 2. Lopsided **Bear** with ribs in it's teeth (vs 5)
 - a. The second world kingdom that we see in history is the kingdom of the Medes and the Persians
 - b. Raised up on one side may represent the fact that this is made of up two peoples, Medes and Persians, but the Persians were the more prominent of the two
 - c. Told to "get up and eat your fill of flesh"
 - d. Therefore the ribs may represent the 3 main areas that the Medes and Persians conquered (Lydia, Babylon, Egypt) to become the world power
 3. 4 winged, 4 headed **Leopard** (vs 6)

- a. Represents the third kingdom in world history that we see is the Greek Empire
 - b. Alexander the Great conquered the known world in space of 10 years...speedy
 - c. The kingdom was split between and ruled by Alexander's 4 leading generals (Antipater, Lysimachus, Seleucus, Ptolemy) after his death
4. **Beast** with Iron Teeth, Bronze Claws, 10 then 8 horns (vs 7-8, 19-26)
- a. The 4th world kingdom that we see in history is the Roman empire
 - b. The beast is terrifying and strong and crushes, devours and tramples
 - c. It is different from the rest
 - d. Remember that in the statue there is a transition from pure iron to iron mixed with clay with 10 toes
 - e. The 10 horns represent 10 kings (vs 24)
 - f. At some point another "little" horn displaces 3 of the 10 horns by pulling them out by the roots
 - g. This 11th king destroys 3 of the kings and becomes the most prominent of the remaining kings
 - h. That horn has the eyes of man (intelligence from a human perspective) and a mouth with which it speaks great boasts and wages war against the saints
he speaks against the most high
he will change the set times and laws
he will oppress the saints for time, times and half a time (Great Tribulation)
 - i. This is the coming Anti-Christ
 - j. What we see with the 10 horns and little horn as a future incarnation of the Roman Empire...to us this is still prophecy
 - k. We understand this to be future in that we have not seen an incarnation of another worldwide kingdom since the Roman Empire
 - l. The previous Roman Empire did not consist of 10 kings ruling together or the disruption of the little horn
- D. The Scene in Heaven (vs 9-13)
1. The Ancient of Days is seated on a throne among other thrones
 2. Is throne is ablaze and has wheels
 3. There is fire issuing from the throne representing God's judgement

4. He is attended by thousands upon thousands attend him
5. A large audience (myriads upon myriads, 10,000 x 10,000) is before him
6. The book of the record of deeds is opened
7. “One like a son of man” is brought before the ancient of days
8. This is Christ who is given authority and will be worshiped by all (Mk 14:61-62)

E. The “End”

1. After the beast has conquered and the little horn spoken his boasts and persecuted the saints for the allotted time
2. It will be judged/slain and thrown into the fire
3. The Son of Man will establish His kingdom and rule with the saints
4. Again we see this to be in the future as when the previous Roman Empire removed it was not replaced with Christ’s earthly kingdom (Daniel 2 and 7:26, 27)

V. In Summary

- A. Although we have the added benefit of seeing these prophecies fulfilled in history this can all be hard to comprehend and understand.
- B. You are in good company...Daniel had direct revelation with interpretation and yet struggled to understand these things (Dn 7:28, 8:27)
- C. So what is the take away for us?

If you find yourself wondering, in the face of current world events, if God is paying attention you can be assured that He is.

We can find encouragement through the accounts of Daniel by seeing prophecy fulfilled in history, knowing with certainty that God is sovereign, in control and working His plan to fulfill His promises and bring about His kingdom both on earth and in eternity