

DANIEL

The book of Daniel, part of the section of the Bible we call the prophetic books, is named after its author and the primary character. Written roughly around 530 BC, it details the events of Daniel's life as an Israelite living in captivity in Babylon. But let's back up a bit.

Israel had split into two kingdoms: Israel to the north and Judah to the south. Israel had already been invaded and now it was Judah's turn. Three deportations took place from Judah to Babylon—605, 597, and 586 BC. It was in the first deportation a young Israelite man by the name of Daniel was uprooted from his home and taken to Babylon. Because of his privileged upbringing, he was placed in the palace for training.

The book highlights Daniel's faithfulness to God in a faithless nation and God's care for Daniel along the way.

The Structure

The book of Daniel can be divided into two sections:

- [History \(ch. 1-6\)](#) – These chapters details Daniel's deportation to Babylon and his experience there. We see stories such as interpretations of Nebuchadnezzar's dream; Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; the writing on the wall; Daniel in the lion's den. This section of the book is written in Chaldean, the language of the Babylonians.
- [Prophecy \(ch. 7-12\)](#) – This section, written in Hebrew, shares prophecies to come; much of which is apocalyptic. You will find material in Revelation sourced from Daniel.

Historical Events

[Daniel Interprets Nebuchadnezzar's Dream, Chapter 2](#)

King Nebuchadnezzar has a dream and summons his wise men, yet none can interpret it. So, he orders all the wise men to be killed. When Daniel, considered a wise man, hears of the news he calls for his companions to pray. Daniel is then given an interpretation in his own

DANIEL (CONT.)

dream and alerts the king's officials that he has the interpretation. Daniel then provides it to Nebuchadnezzar and spares their lives.

I love what happens next: the king declares, *"Truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery."*

Nebuchadnezzar praises God! In addition, Daniel is elevated to ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon. And Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—who prayed with Daniel—were appointed to oversee the affairs of Babylon.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the Fire, Chapter 3

This is a well-known tale and one you may have heard of. King Nebuchadnezzar sets up a golden image for the people to worship. When a call is made for everyone to bow to the image, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego don't.

The king calls them forward and threatens them with their lives. And here is how the three men respond—it's amazing!

"O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

They trusted God in the face of death! As you can imagine, they are then thrown into a fire yet don't burn up. Instead, a Christophany (appearance of Jesus) takes place. When Nebuchadnezzar sees the additional figure in the fire and that all four are walking around, he calls them out.

DANIEL (CONT.)

Here's what came next: Nebuchadnezzar declared, "Any people, nation, or language that speaks anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins, for there is no other god who is able to rescue in this way." Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon." Wow, the faithfulness of God!

Daniel in the Lion's Den, Chapter 6

Most of us know the story. Other officials are jealous of Daniel so they convince the king (now Darius) to establish an edict that no one can petition to a man or god besides the king for 30 days. They did this because they knew Daniel was a man who prayed.

The edict goes into play and Daniel prays. He is then captured and thrown into the lion's den. Interesting note, the king was not excited about this as he liked Daniel. But he had to follow through on his own edict. And the whole night Daniel is in the den the king is up and fasting. At the first daybreak, Darius runs to the den to find Daniel alive and well! Then proceeds to issue a decree that all people must fear the God of Daniel.

Prophetic Revelation

The second section of the book accounts noted prophecies. It contains visions of future events significant to the Jews and provides a timeline of when Israel's Messiah would appear and the events that would follow.

What We Can Learn

There are few people in the Bible we get an unblemished record of, and Daniel is one of these few. We see his complete devotion to God, even in the face of temptation and death. Yet because of his faithfulness, people are pointed to God.

DANIEL (CONT.)

May we be encouraged to do the same. To stand firm in truth and grace in a culture that goes against God in every way. May we be so bold as to make a stand for Christ for others to see. But not through our own wisdom or work; rather, through the power of God. If you will put your full faith and trust in God you will not be disappointed. And who knows who around you will turn to God along the way.

Memory Verse

“If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.” Daniel 6:17-18