

Daniel

Breakdown

- The book of Daniel was named for the writer of the book. Daniel's name means "God is my judge", but during the Babylonian captivity, his name was changed to Belteshazzar.
- In his book, Daniel records the events of his life and the visions that he saw from the time of his captivity in 605 B.C. until the third year of Persian King Cyrus in 536 B.C.
- The book was likely written between 540 and 530 B.C., and it covers the reign of four different kings of Babylon and Persia (who later took over Babylon, see chapter 5).

Main Points

- The book of Daniel begins with about 10,000 Jews being exiled to Babylon. Daniel and his friends were taken to the palace to serve King Nebuchadnezzar. They lived among the Babylonians and were constantly pressured to turn away from God, but they continued to trust and obey Him despite the opposition against them. With God's wisdom and guidance, they even found favor with the different kings who ruled over Babylon.
- Most people would have viewed the different regime changes over the years as political in nature, but we know the outcomes were all planned and directed by God. Since God has all authority, He is the one who sets up and removes kings. Daniel points toward a future time when worldly kingdoms will be permanently replaced by the kingdom of God.

Did you know?

- King Nebuchadnezzar had a troubling dream and wanted his wise men to interpret it for him, but he didn't tell them what happened in the dream. They couldn't interpret it, so the king declared they should all be put to death. What did Daniel do to stop the executions?
- Daniel interpreted a second dream for King Nebuchadnezzar which revealed that the king would go crazy and live in the fields as a wild animal for 7 years. What was the reason for this, and how was the king finally restored to his throne?
- King Belshazzar literally saw the "handwriting on the wall". What did the writing say and what did it mean for him and Babylon?
- Daniel was about 80 years old at that time of King Darius' rule over Babylon. The king was tricked into throwing Daniel into the lion's den, but God saved him. How was the king tricked, and how did Daniel survive?
- There are three archangels who are talked about in the Bible. One is Lucifer who was cast out of heaven, and the other two who stayed with God are first mentioned in the book of Daniel. Who are they?

Further Thought

- Daniel and his friends allowed God to influence every area of their lives – including what they ate (see chapter 1). What does that mean for us today?
- Even though Daniel and his friends lived in the middle of the pagan nation of Babylon, they never turned away from God and His plan for them. What can we learn from that?
- By trusting God's wisdom and guidance, Daniel was able to use his position in the king's service to influence everyone around him, including the kings. How can we do the same?