

DANIEL

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Outline of the Book of Daniel

Author: The Book of Daniel identifies the Prophet Daniel as its author (Daniel 9:2; 10:2). Jesus mentions Daniel as the author as well (Matthew 24:15).

Date of Writing: The Book of Daniel was likely written between 540 and 530 B.C.

Purpose of Writing: In 605 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon had conquered

Judah and deported many of its inhabitants to Babylon – Daniel included. Daniel served in the royal court of Nebuchadnezzar and several rulers who followed Nebuchadnezzar. The Book of Daniel records the actions, prophecies, and visions of the Prophet Daniel.

Key Verses: Daniel 1:19-20, “The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's service. In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom.”

Daniel 2:31, “You looked, O king, and there before you stood a large statue - an enormous, dazzling statue, awesome in appearance.”

Daniel 3:17-18, “If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.”

Daniel 4:34-35, “His dominion is an eternal dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: ‘What have you done?’”

Daniel 9:25-27, “Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.' It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing [of the temple] he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.”

Brief Summary: Chapter 1 describes the conquest of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. Along with many others, Daniel and his three friends were deported to Babylon and because of their courage and the obvious blessings of God upon them, they were “promoted” in the king’s service (Daniel 1:17-20).

Chapters 2-7 record Nebuchadnezzar having a dream that only Daniel could correctly interpret. Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of a great statue represented the kingdoms that would arise in the future. Nebuchadnezzar made a great statue of himself and forced everyone to worship it. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused and were miraculously spared by God despite being thrown into a fiery furnace. Nebuchadnezzar is judged by God for

his pride, but later restored once he recognized and admitted God's sovereignty.

Daniel chapter 5 records Nebuchadnezzar's son Belshazzar misusing the items taken from the Temple in Jerusalem and receiving a message from God, written into the wall, in response. Only Daniel could interpret the writing, a message of coming judgment from God. Daniel is thrown into the lions' den for refusing to pray to the emperor, but was miraculously spared. God gave Daniel a vision of four beasts. The four beasts represented the kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome.

Chapters 8-12 contain a vision involving a ram, a goat, and several horns – also referring to future kingdoms and their rulers. **Daniel chapter 9** records Daniel's "seventy weeks" prophecy. God gave Daniel the precise timeline of when the Messiah would come and be cut off. The prophecy also mentions a future ruler who will make a seven-year covenant with Israel and break it after three and a half years, followed shortly thereafter by the great judgment and consummation of all things. Daniel is visited and strengthened by an angel after this great vision, and the angel explains the vision to Daniel in great detail.

Foreshadowings: We see in the stories of the fiery furnace and Daniel in the lions' den a foreshadowing of the salvation provided by Christ. The three men declare that God is a saving God who can provide a way of escape from the fire (Daniel 3:17). In the same way, by sending Jesus to die for our sins, God has provided an escape from the fires of hell (1 Peter 3:18). In Daniel's case, God provided an angel to shut the lions' mouths and saved Daniel from death. Jesus Christ is our provision from the dangers of the sin that threatens to consume us.

Daniel's vision of the end times depicts Israel's Messiah by whom many will be made pure and holy (Daniel 12:10). He is our righteousness (1 Peter 5:21) by whom our sins, though blood-red, will be washed away and we will be as white as snow (Isaiah 1:18).

Practical Application: Like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, we should always stand for what we know is right. God is greater than any punishment that could come upon us. Whether God chooses to deliver us or not, He is always worthy of our trust. God knows what is best, and He honors those who trust and obey Him.

God has a plan, and His plan is down to the intricate detail. God knows and is in control of the future. Everything that God has predicted has come true exactly as He predicted. Therefore, we should believe and trust that the things He has predicted for the future will one day occur exactly as God has declared.

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Question: "What are the seventy weeks of Daniel?"

Answer: The "seventy weeks" prophecy is one of the most significant and detailed Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. It is found in Daniel 9. The chapter begins with Daniel praying for Israel, acknowledging the nation's sins against God and asking for God's mercy. As Daniel prayed, the angel Gabriel appeared to him and gave him a vision of Israel's future.

The Divisions of the 70 Weeks

In verse 24, Gabriel says, "Seventy 'sevens' are decreed for your people and your holy city." Almost all commentators agree that the seventy "sevens" should be understood as seventy "weeks" of years, in other words, a period of 490 years. These verses provide a sort of "clock" that gives an idea of when the Messiah would come and some of the events that would accompany His appearance.

The prophecy goes on to divide the 490 years into three smaller units: one of 49 years, one of 434 years, and one 7 years. The final "week" of 7 years is further divided in half. Verse 25 says, "From the time the word goes out to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.'" Seven "sevens" is 49 years, and sixty-two "sevens" is another 434 years:

49 years + 434 years = 483 years

The Purpose of the 70 Weeks

The prophecy contains a statement concerning God's six-fold purpose in bringing these events to pass. Verse 24 says this purpose is 1) "to finish transgression," 2) "to put an end to sin," 3) "to atone for wickedness," 4) "to bring in everlasting righteousness," 5) "to seal up vision and prophecy," and 6) "to anoint the most holy."

Notice that these results concern the total eradication of sin and the establishing of righteousness. The prophecy of the 70 weeks summarizes what happens before Jesus sets up His millennial kingdom. Of special note is the third in the list of results: "to atone for wickedness." Jesus accomplished the atonement for sin by His death on the cross (Romans 3:25; Hebrews 2:17).

The Fulfillment of the 70 Weeks

Gabriel said the prophetic clock would start at the time that a decree was issued to rebuild Jerusalem. From the date of that decree to the time of the Messiah would be 483 years. We know from history that the command to "restore and rebuild Jerusalem" was given by King Artaxerxes of Persia c. 445 B.C. (see Nehemiah 2:1-8).

The first unit of 49 years (seven "sevens") covers the time that it took to rebuild Jerusalem, "with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble" (Daniel 9:25). This rebuilding is chronicled in the book of Nehemiah.

Using the Jewish custom of a 360-day year, 483 years after 445 B.C. places us at A.D. 30, which would coincide with Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:1-9). The prophecy in Daniel 9 specifies that after the completion of the 483 years, "the Anointed One will be cut off" (verse 26). This was fulfilled when Jesus was crucified.

Daniel 9:26 continues with a prediction that, after the Messiah is killed, "the people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary." This was fulfilled with the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The "ruler who will come" is a reference to the Antichrist, who, it seems, will have some connection with Rome, since it was the Romans who destroyed Jerusalem.

The Final Week of the 70 Weeks

Of the 70 "sevens," 69 have been fulfilled in history. This leaves one more "seven" yet to be fulfilled. **Most scholars believe that we are now living in a huge gap between the 69th week and the 70th week.** The prophetic clock has been paused, as it were. The final "seven" of Daniel is what we usually call the tribulation period.

Daniel's prophecy reveals some of the actions of the Antichrist, the "ruler who will come." Verse 27 says, "He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.'" However, "in the middle of the 'seven,' . . . he will set up an abomination that causes desolation" in the temple. Jesus warned of this event in Matthew 24:15. After the Antichrist breaks the covenant with Israel, a time of "great tribulation" begins (Matthew 24:21, NKJV).

Daniel also predicts that the Antichrist will face judgment. He only rules "until the end that is decreed is poured out on him" (Daniel 9:27). God will only allow evil to go so far, and the judgment the Antichrist will face has already been planned out.

Conclusion

The prophecy of the 70 weeks is complex and amazingly detailed, and much has been written about it. Of course, there are various interpretations, but what we have presented here is the dispensational, premillennial view. One thing is certain: God has a time table, and He is keeping things on schedule. He knows the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10), and we should always be looking for the triumphant return of our Lord (Revelation 22:7).

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The phrase "**abomination of desolation**" is found in three texts in the book of **Daniel**, all within the literary context of apocalyptic visions written down around **530 BC**.

Daniel 9:27 (ASV) "And he shall make a firm covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease; and upon the wing of abominations [shall come] one that maketh desolate; and even unto the full end, and that determined, shall [wrath] be poured out upon the desolate."

Daniel 11:31 (ASV) "And forces shall stand on his part, and they shall profane the sanctuary, even the fortress, and shall take away the continual [burnt-offering], and they shall set up the abomination that maketh desolate."

Daniel 12:11 (ASV) "And from the time that the continual [burnt-offering] shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand and two hundred and ninety days."

The rabbis as a whole consider that the expression refers to the desecration of the Temple by Antiochus IV. he set up an altar to Zeus in the Second Temple in Jerusalem, and sacrificed swine on it around the year 167 BC

The term is used by **Jesus Christ** in reference to the destruction of the temple – and the final tribulation(?)

Matthew 24:15-26 (ESV) "So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains."

Mark 13:14 (ESV) "But when you see the abomination of desolation standing where it ought not to be (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains."

Luke 21.20-21 (ESV) "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains..."

Preterist Christian commentators believe that Jesus quoted this prophecy in Mark 13:14 as referring to an event in his "1st century disciples" immediate future, the siege of Jerusalem in 70 AD by the Roman general Titus

Some other interpreters with a **futurist perspective** think that Jesus' prophecy deals with a literal, end-times Antichrist. In the end time future, when a 7 year peace treaty will be signed between Israel and a world ruler called "the man of lawlessness", or the "Antichrist" affirmed by the writings of the Apostle Paul in 2 Thessalonians.

