

The Master of Time & History



DANIEL

FLOURISHING IN A HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT

Intro: Why Daniel?

- ✦ Chaotic world around us
- ✦ Increasing pressure to abandon faith
- ✦ The ever present questions...
 - ✦ Is God really in control?
 - ✦ Can we stay true to God in difficult circumstances we may not understand?
 - ✦ Can faith flourish in a hostile environment?
 - ✦ Should I lean towards protectionism?

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Intro: Why Daniel?



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Context: What's the book about?

Themes of Daniel

✦ Split into 2 distinct parts

- ✦ Ch 1-6 narrative – examples of how to live in a world that isn't our home and is antagonistic towards God (fulfillment of the instructions from Jeremiah 29...
“Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf..”)
- ✦ Ch 7-12 – Prophecy meant to reinforce trust and reassure God's people that God is in control even in difficult circumstances

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Context: Where does the book of Daniel fit?

Major Themes in the Bible:

1. God announces ahead of time his plans for the future through his prophets
2. The events and stories in the Bible are not simply individual tales of historical villains and heroes, but rather smaller segments of God's greater story as He moves history towards its intended purpose
3. The entire OT points towards the climax of this one great story – that God broke into human history by becoming one of us

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Context: When does this story take place?

The Rise & Fall of Empires and Nations

- ✦ The fall of Assyria and the rise of Babylon
- ✦ Babylon emerges as the dominant world power and besieges Jerusalem in 605 BC
- ✦ Babylon's strategy for conquest was to remove the conquered nation's future – their best and brightest young people
- ✦ The goal was to assimilate captors and turn them into Babylonians
- ✦ Babylonian captivity was the fulfillment of prophecy (Leviticus 26, Isaiah 39)

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Lev 26:33... ³³ And I will scatter you among the nations, and I will unsheathe the sword after you, and your land shall be a desolation, and your cities shall be a waste.

Isaiah 39:5-7... ⁵ Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, “Hear the word of the LORD of hosts: ⁶ Behold, the days are coming, when all that is in your house, and that which your fathers have stored up till this day, shall be carried to Babylon. Nothing shall be left, says the LORD. ⁷ And some of your own sons, who will come from you, whom you will father, shall be taken away, and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.”

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God is in Control of Time & History

1. God takes credit for Babylonian victory (v.2)

- ✦ “In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. ² **And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand...**”
- ✦ Common belief – the strongest god won the war between nations (Jerusalem defeated, temple plundered, people taken into exile)
- ✦ Intro intends to give the reader the correct perspective as the story unfolds – God is taking credit

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God is in Control of Time & History

1. God takes credit for Babylonian victory (v.2)

2. God takes credit for Babylonian favour (v.9)

✦ “⁹ And **God gave Daniel favor** and compassion in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs...”

✦ Affection and favour from chief eunuch

✦ Daniel determined not to be assimilated but rather to stay true to God

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God is in Control of Time & History

1. God takes credit for Babylonian victory (v.2)
2. God takes credit for Babylonian favour (v.9)
3. God takes credit for the 4 boys' success (v.17)
 - ✦ ¹⁷ As for these four youths, **God gave them learning and skill** in all literature and wisdom, and Daniel had **understanding in all visions and dreams**.
 - ✦ The 4 boys finish top of their class

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How does this story relate to us?

1. God is still in control of time and history
 - ✦ Time & history are still moving toward the purpose and plan God has determined

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How does this story relate to us?

1. God is still in control of time and history
2. Assimilation is the goal of our culture
 - ✧ Education
 - ✧ Belief systems
 - ✧ Movies, Music, TV, Media
 - ✧ Sexuality, money and power
 - ✧ Busyness
 - ✧ Right and wrong
 - ✧ Tolerance... Unless you disagree!
 - ✧ Pressure to doubt that God and his word are true

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How does this story relate to us?

1. God is still in control of time and history
2. Assimilation is the goal of our culture
3. You can flourish in a hostile environment
 - ✦ Like Daniel, you can stand firm in your faith and choose to trust the God who is the master over time and history
 - ✦ Like Daniel, you can be sure that God is with you and will not abandon you even in difficult times

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Ephesians 1:7-10

⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸ which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight ⁹ making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

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Jesus desires you to trust him and his purposes for your life. God is ultimately in control of our world and we can trust him even as in Daniel's time that everything is going according to his plan. It is almost guaranteed that you will not fully see or understand what is going on, but your trust in God and engagement in doing life with the Body of Christ will see you through any and all situations and trials – including the ever increasing hostile environment we find ourselves in.

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