

The God of Dreams and Destinies

Daniel Chapters 1 and 2

Introduction

Welcome to the Book of Daniel! As we study this book we'll meet Daniel's God, the Sovereign Lord who rules the Universe, and who confidently announces things to come. In Daniel's life and ministry we will see how true believers live in the light of biblical prophecy – how they relate to God and accomplish his good, acceptable and perfect will.

In a world in which people find it easy to do what is right in their own eyes, God is searching for men and woman who will do what is right in his eyes, and dare to be courageous – like Daniel, Man of Courage...

Daniel's training in Babylon (Daniel 1 v 1 to 21)

- In what ways do you think Nebuchadnezzar was a wise king?
- Why wouldn't Daniel and his friends eat the royal food?
- What motives lay behind their resolve to avoid defilement?
- How did they set about achieving their aim?
- What qualities did Daniel and his friends display in their approach to authority?
- How were they rewarded?

Notice how firmness of conviction in youth laid the foundation for later acts of courage...

Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Daniel 2 v 1 to 23)

- Do you think God speaks to us through dreams today?
- What kinds of magic, myths and mysticism compete with God's truth today, as the magicians competed with Daniel in Nebuchadnezzar's court?
- Daniel and his companions were brought suddenly into great danger through no fault of their own. How did Daniel urge his friend to pray?
- Why did Daniel praise God (v 20 to 23)?
- In what ways has prayer helped you in a difficult time? What stops us from remembering to praise and thank God?

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Daniel interprets the dream (Daniel 2 v 24 to 49)

- The four kingdoms symbolised by the statue were as follows
 - Head of gold – the Babylonian kingdom (636 BC to 539 BC)
 - Chest and arms of silver – the Medo-Persian kingdom (539 BC to 330 BC)
 - Belly and thighs of bronze – Alexander the Great and the Grecian kingdom (330 BC to 63 BC)
 - Legs of iron, feet of iron and clay – the Roman Empire (63 BC to 475 AD)

Note that it is not only the last kingdom but the whole statue that is broken to pieces by the stone that strikes it. What does the dream reveal about God's final purpose in world history? What do you think are the main differences between the worldly kingdoms comprising the statue and the Kingdom foreshadowed by the stone?

- When Daniel finished the interpretation, what was Nebuchadnezzar's response?
- How did the dream further God's purposes in relation to Daniel and his friends?

Prayer –

Lord, as we look at the life of Daniel, help us to learn from his example of courage, conviction and prayerfulness.

Help us always to pray in times of need and distress.

Help us not to forget to praise you and give thanks for your grace, gifts and blessings.

Amen.