

THE BOOK OF A GREATLY BELOVED MAN

1. The people of Daniel.

- a. We only meet four Jewish people in this book.
 - i. Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.
 - ii. I'm not going to say much about Daniel because we are going to zone in on him in our next sermon in this series.
 - iii. The other three young men were all like Daniel: young men, probably in their early teens when removed from Jerusalem.
 - iv. We read about the qualifications which they possessed in Daniel 1:4.
 - v. These men are all mentioned in Daniel 1:6.
 - vi. What we are not told in the list of qualifications is the faith these four young men possessed.
 - (1) Daniel showed his faith in verse 8 and apparently the three friends of Daniel went along with him in this.
 - (2) We read of the faith of the three friends in chapter 3.
 - (3) As I have read Daniel nearly 20 times since deciding to preach from this book, I am moved by their statement to the king every time I've read it (Daniel 3:16-18).
- b. We meet three kings, while four are mentioned.
 - i. Nebuchadnezzar was the king of Babylon when Daniel was taken into captivity and was the greatest king of Babylon.
 - (1) He was a man who was given to rage and rashness while also being a great leader.
 - (2) His rage is seen in Daniel 2 and 3.
 - (3) He was also a man of pride as Daniel 4 shows us.
 - ii. We meet Belshazzar, the last king of Babylon who was really a co-regent with his father Nabonidus.
 - (1) History tells us much more about this king than does Daniel 5.
 - (2) What chapter 5 tells us is that the man was more concerned with feasting than he was with safety, which is what history reveals as well.
 - (3) The night of the event of chapter 5 is the night that the city of Babylon was captured by the Medo-Persian army.
 - iii. The third king about whom we read is Darius the Mede.
 - (1) This man was given to pride as seen in his agreeing to let no prayers be offered except to him for thirty days.
 - (2) In history, he was placed as king over Babylon by Cyrus who was the conqueror of Babylon.
 - iv. The fourth king is Cyrus but we only read about him by name and there are no deeds of his in this book.
- c. We meet a great angel in this book as well.
 - i. Daniel is given a vision, recorded in chapter 8, and desired to understand the vision.
 - ii. A voice from heaven calls out and tells Gabriel to explain it to Daniel.
 - iii. Gabriel also comes to Daniel in chapter 9 and explains to him some things Daniel wanted to understand.
 - iv. We are also told of Michael, the archangel who is mentioned in Jude 9 and the book of Revelation.

- d. We get to see the Lord in this book (Daniel 7:13ff).
 - i. This is a prophecy of the church.
 - ii. The Lord is given a kingdom that shall never be destroyed (also Daniel 7:27).
- e. There are other people mentioned briefly in the book but these are main people that have any effect on the understanding of the book.

2. The place in history.

- a. Much history takes place during the book of Daniel.
- b. It was mentioned that Daniel, along with his three friends, was likely a young teen when taken into captivity.
 - i. Rex Turner, Sr., in his commentary on Daniel, listed several kings of Babylon and the length of their reigns, came up with Daniel being 73 years old when Cyrus conquered Babylon.
 - ii. Daniel's life lasted several more years, so it was very likely that he was near 90 when he died.
- c. Nebuchadnezzar was the longest tenured king in Babylon, being such for over 40 years.
 - i. No other king, of which there were 5 more, lasted longer than 6 years.
 - ii. Nabonidus lasted that long but 3 of those years he was co-regent with his son, Belshazzar.
- d. The time of the events in the book of Daniel last from 605 BC to somewhere around 535 BC.
- e. Much happened in that time.
 - i. Jeremiah prophesied in Jerusalem before Daniel went into captivity and until the destruction of Jerusalem nearly 20 years after Daniel's imprisonment.
 - ii. Ezekiel began to prophesy around 592 BC to the Israelites in captivity outside of Babylon not far from Daniel and did so til around 570 BC.
- f. In 536 BC, Cyrus made the proclamation that the Jews could return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple, just as God had said through the prophet Isaiah about 100 years before.
- g. What is interesting about Daniel is that not only does much occur during his life, Daniel reveals events that would take place during the time of Christ and also the establishment of the church.

3. The powers at play in Daniel.

- a. There are political powers at play in this book.
- b. We mentioned the two kingdoms of the earth that ruled during the time of Daniel's life.
 - i. It was Babylon that captured and destroyed Israel and conquered much land.
 - ii. Then, the Medo-Persian Empire, led by Cyrus, came along and conquered Babylon.
- c. However, Nebuchadnezzar has a dream about other nations in chapter 2.
- d. Not only that, Daniel is given a vision of four beasts that turn out to be four nations, the same four nations seen by Nebuchadnezzar.
- e. But there are spiritual powers at play as well.
 - i. Notice Daniel 10:13-14, 10:20-21.

- ii. Who is the Prince of Persia and the Prince of Greece?
- iii. I believe these to be angels of Satan sent to battle against God's angels.
- iv. Listen to this from Homer Hailey: "It seems here God draws open the curtain and gives a view of the great conflict between the spiritual forces of good and the forces of evil from Eden til the victory of Christ (Revelation 12:7-12)."
- v. This is similar to what Elisha's servant saw (2 Kings 6:15-17).
- vi. It is a reminder of what Paul wrote to the Ephesians (Ephesians 6:12).
- f. While the political powers have changed, there are still spiritual battles taking place all the time and we need to understand that.

4. The problems with Daniel.

- a. Daniel is one of the most attacked books of the Old Testament.
- b. The reason for this is two-fold.
 - i. Daniel tells of the miraculous works of God which many deny.
 - ii. Daniel foretells events that would take place 500+ years after his death.
- c. Modernists can stand either of these things so they attack Daniel.
- d. They deny the authorship of Daniel, saying it was written in the 2nd century BC.
 - i. Many of the events Daniel foretells are the coming to power of world powers, Greece and Rome.
 - ii. He gets very specific about what would take place in what we know as the intertestamental period.
 - iii. Because of this, many modern critics have said it was written by a Jew in the 2nd century during the time of the Maccabean revolt of which we will discuss later when we get to that vision.
 - iv. The fact is Ezekiel attested to Daniel, mentioning him 3 times (Ezekiel 14:14; 28:3).
 - v. Our Lord also attested to Daniel being a prophet (Matthew 24:15).
- e. They also claim a problem because part of this book was written in Hebrew and part in Aramaic.
 - i. It is easily explained.
 - ii. Daniel was well educated and he wrote historically he wrote in Hebrew.
 - iii. When he wrote about the events with political figures and his conversations with them he wrote in Aramaic.
- f. Daniel is the human author of this work and he wrote in the 500's before our Lord.

5. The purpose of Daniel.

- a. Some wonder why this book was written.
- b. Think about what had happened.
 - i. Jerusalem and the temple had been destroyed.
 - ii. Everything involving the worship of God had been either taken to Babylon or destroyed.
 - iii. In the eyes of the world, the God of the Jews had been discredited.
 - (1) We know differently.
 - (2) God was using nations to accomplish His will of punishing His people.

(3) God through Jeremiah referred to Nebuchadnezzar as His servant (Jeremiah 25:9).

(4) God through Isaiah referred to Cyrus as God's anointed (Isaiah 45:1).

c. The first purpose of Daniel is to let the Jews know that God had not forgotten them and that they would be restored to Jerusalem.

d. The second purpose of Daniel, one which needs to be understood today, is that Daniel was showing that God is sovereign.

i. It is God that reigns over all.

ii. It is God that rules in the affairs of men.

e. This last phrase is really the theme of the whole book.

i. No matter what is going on, God rules in the affairs of men.

ii. This idea, if not outright stated, is implied in every chapter of the book.

f. There are two sections of Daniel:

i. 1-6 is historical.

ii. 7-12 is prophetic using apocalyptic language.

g. In both of them, God is shown to rule in the affairs of men.