

## THE MAN DANIEL

### 1. Daniel's life.

- a. Really all that we know of Daniel's early life is found in Daniel 1:3-4.
  - i. This is a list of the qualities King Nebuchadnezzar was looking for in young men to be carried away first.
  - ii. He was from a noble family, possibly the royal family in some way.
  - iii. He was good looking and healthy.
  - iv. He was very intelligent in several different areas.
- b. From the words used here to describe the age of the young man for whom King Nebuchadnezzar was looking, it is believed that Daniel was a young teen, which would put his birth around 620 BC.
- c. We also read of what Daniel was going to be doing in Babylon in these verses.
  - i. He was going to do a lot of studying.
  - ii. He was required to learn the Babylonian language.
  - iii. He was required to learn how to serve in the court of the king.
- d. Apparently, Daniel was very good at learning.
  - i. Notice Daniel 1:19-20.
  - ii. Daniel, and his three friends, stood far above the rest of their peers.
- e. As we read through the book of Daniel, we see that Daniel served at least three kings.
  - i. Nebuchadnezzar was the most powerful ruler on earth.
  - ii. By the time of Belshazzar's rule, who was the fifth king to rule over Babylon, Daniel was not known, but had to be introduced to him (Daniel 5:13).
  - iii. That night, the kingdom was conquered by the Medo-Persian army and Darius the Mede was set over the city of Babylon.
    - (1) Daniel would rise to a high position under his reign.
    - (2) Daniel 6:1-3.
  - iv. We don't know if he served Cyrus or not, but it doesn't seem likely that he did.
- f. The final vision given to Daniel was in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of Cyrus (Daniel 10:1), which would have been around 536 BC.
- g. We don't know anything about a family of Daniel.
  - i. Some believe he was made a eunuch, since a eunuch was over his training when he first came to Babylon (Daniel 1:3).
  - ii. Some believe he had a family based on Ezekiel 14:20.
  - iii. We are not told either way.
- h. His lifetime spanned some of the most dramatic and important events in the history of Israel.
  - i. His birth would have been right after the reforms of Josiah, which some have attributed to the faithfulness of Daniel.
    - i. He would have seen the capture of his homeland and learned of its eventual destruction.
    - ii. He saw Babylon fall and would have been present for the decree of Cyrus to allow the Jews to return to Jerusalem.
- j. What is said in Hebrews 11:33 certainly fits Daniel.

### 2. Daniel's influence.

- a. Numerous of the writing prophets have mission statements in them.
  - i. Jeremiah 18:11.
  - ii. Ezekiel 20:27.
  - iii. These are just two examples.
- b. You don't find such a statement in the book of Daniel.
- c. In fact, while many of the writers of the prophetic books are described as prophets, that designation is never given to Daniel in the Old Testament.
  - i. Daniel mentions Jeremiah being a prophet (Daniel 9:2).
  - ii. He also refers to other prophets (Daniel 9:6).
  - iii. Daniel is called a prophet by our Lord (Matthew 24:15).
- d. The role of a prophet was two-fold.
  - i. The role of a prophet was often to bring a message of repentance to the people from God as we notice in Jeremiah and Ezekiel.
  - ii. It was also to foretell future events.
  - iii. This is mostly what Daniel did.
- e. However, a work of a prophet was also to influence people for God and Daniel did this in at least three ways.
- f. He influenced the court of kings.
  - i. We've mentioned how he served three kings.
  - ii. Daniel earned the trust of these powerful men.
  - iii. On one occasion, after interpreting a vision that Nebuchadnezzar had received from God, notice what Daniel told him (Daniel 4:27).
    - (1) Can you imagine saying this to a king, especially one as volatile of temper as Nebuchadnezzar was?
    - (2) Yet, Daniel did and it worked for a year (Daniel 4:28-29).
  - iv. Think of the influence Daniel had with Darius.
    - (1) Darius signed the law that entrapped Daniel.
    - (2) Notice how Darius reacted (Daniel 6:14).
    - (3) Then look at how he spent the night (Daniel 6:18).
  - v. At the end of the chapter we are told that Daniel prospered also into Cyrus' reign.
    - (1) The influence Daniel wielded with the kings likely helped his fellow countrymen.
    - (2) It may have influenced Cyrus to grant the Jews the opportunity to rebuild the temple.
  - vi. Really, only the providence of God could account for a man like Daniel being in the right place at the right time.
- g. He influenced people with his character.
  - i. We won't talk much about this because we are going to dive into his character in our next point.
  - ii. However, remember that he was thought of so highly that he was used as an example along with Noah and Job (Ezekiel 14:14, 20).
  - iii. Also, he was used as an example of wisdom by Ezekiel (Ezekiel 28:3).
  - iv. Daniel is still a wonderful role model for today.
- h. He influences people today through his writings.
  - i. Within the book of Daniel are some of the most amazing prophecies found in scripture.
  - ii. Chapters 7-12 are records of visions and images God gave to Daniel.
  - iii. The period between the testaments, roughly four centuries from

Malachi to John the Immerser, is extremely well described in these chapters.

iv. Jesus Himself spoke of things that hadn't happened yet that had been spoken by the prophet Daniel (Matthew 24:15).

v. What Daniel wrote about is still true today: God is and will continue to be powerful and providential in the care of His people.

### **3. Daniel's character.**

a. Character is defined as: "the aggregate of features and traits that form the individual nature of some person or thing."

i. It is said that character is who you are while reputation is what others think of you.

ii. Someone has well said that the only thing you can take with you when you leave this world is your character.

b. One writer had this to say about Daniel's character: "On the list of positive role models for our character, notwithstanding our Lord, one would be hard pressed to list anyone ahead of Daniel."

c. The Hebrews writer tells us that we are to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises (Hebrews 6:12).

d. Daniel is definitely worthy of imitation.

e. We see Daniel's character in how he withstood favorable times.

i. When we first meet Daniel, he has purposed in his heart not to defile himself with unclean foods, even at the order of a king.

ii. How he came to this state of mind is a wonder.

iii. Oftentimes, when one has access to anything he might want or need, it is more of a detriment to that person than a help.

iv. Daniel had long periods of service to officials in high positions and was viewed as a wise man.

v. Notice the words of Nebuchadnezzar to Daniel (Daniel 4:8, 18).

vi. By virtue of his position as head of the wise men of Babylon, the Babylonians viewed him as one of the gods they served.

vii. Think how this could affect a person's thinking about himself.

viii. About Daniel, Cook wrote, "Throughout his official life Daniel was the type of incorruptible honor."

f. We see Daniel's character in how he dealt with change.

i. Many times, change in situation can bring about a change in allegiance spiritually.

ii. Many people who were once faithful and endured some change in job or level of income or place became unfaithful.

iii. Daniel was removed from his home and remained faithful.

iv. Daniel dealt with changes on the throne and even the change of nations, and he remained faithful.

v. No matter what may go on in our lives, our faithfulness to God should never change despite constant change around us.

vi. There was a great strength in character when it comes to Daniel and it is something we all should strive to possess.

g. We see Daniel's character in how he withstood unfair treatment.

i. We all want to be treated fairly, despite often saying life isn't fair.

ii. Think of what happened to Daniel recorded in chapter 6.

- iii. His peers could find no fault in him and could only come up with a way to demean him in the eyes of Darius through his worship to God.
- iv. Though he was literally thrown to the lions, you never read a word of resentment from Daniel.
- v. 1 Peter 2:20 rings true with him and should for us as well.
- h. We see Daniel's character in how he withstood facing death.
  - i. Daniel knew the decree had been written not to pray to anyone but the kind (Daniel 6:10).
  - ii. Daniel was going to do what was right.
  - iii. We see this courage in his friends in chapter 3.
  - iv. Before it was written, Daniel did what Revelation 2:10 tells us to do.
  - v. In chapter 2, Daniel did not fret and cry when Nebuchadnezzar was going to have all the wise men killed.
  - vi. He simply asked for time and prayed.
  - vii. The faith of Daniel in God is an example for all of us.

From an outline by Stan Crowley in the Schertz Lectureship book entitled "Studies in the Book of Daniel"