

"God's Love Story Sermon Outlines"

by Doug Hamilton

Section 22: "He has a Timeless Love" The Book of Daniel

- Daniel is the last of the four Major Prophets of the Old Testament. It is also one of the more difficult books of the Bible to understand because of the visions and dreams contained within. In fact Daniel himself said of one of these visions in 8:27 "...but I was astounded at the vision, and there was none to explain it."
- Although Daniel is included in the Major Prophets, he is never identified as a prophet within the writings. He is a prophet in this sense, 1) God gives him visions, 2) he interprets dreams and 3) he predicts the future.
- One of the more intriguing features of the book is something that English readers would not notice. The writing is actually bilingual. Chapters 1:1-2:4a and 8-12 are written in Hebrew. Chapters 2:4b-7:28 is written in Aramaic. There are three primary explanations for this.
 1. It could be that it was originally written in Aramaic and then expanded to Hebrew.
 2. It could be because the original Hebrew writings were lost and replaced with Aramaic.
 3. The most likely explanation is that it simply reflects the bilingual character of the culture in which it was composed. The captive spoke Hebrew and the captor spoke Aramaic.

Daniel the Person

- We basically know little of Daniel's life outside of the book itself. His name means "God is my judge." As a resident in in Babylon he was given the name Belteshazzar, which means "*let god protect his life*" in the Babylonian language.
- He was likely of royal lineage, born in the motherland of Judah in the late seventh century BC. As a young Hebrew he was carried away to Babylon in 605 BC. He was well-educated and without defect (1:4), being chosen to serve in Nebuchadnezzar's court and to undergo three years of intense training (1:5). With him were three friends of similar character named Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah (1:6). They were given the new names *Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego*.
- Daniel was a person of great integrity as demonstrated early on. If one was going to be in Nebuchadnezzar's court, they not only would be educated, but also fattened up. 1:8 "*But Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food or with the wine which he drank...*" He could not eat their unclean foods nor participate in the drunken parties. In the end Daniel and his three friends were spared from this debauchery through the ten day vegetable-only fast designed to prove that God was with them because they were with Him. By the end of the first chapter of Daniel the king "... *found them ten times better than all the magicians and conjurers who were in all his realm*" (1:20).

Statue Dream:

- Babylon's King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream that terrified him greatly (2:1). He called all of his magicians, conjurers, sorcerers and others to find the meaning of the dream. When they asked him to tell them the dream so they could interpret it, to which he said "If you are truly men connected to the spirits, then you tell me the dream or be torn limb

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from limb (2:5). The king was so upset with them that he issued a decree to kill all those charlatan “wise” men if not one could step forward to reveal the dream. That person would be Daniel, for God revealed the dream and the interpretation to him.

- He appeared before Nebuchadnezzar, revealing the dream and the interpretation thereof. The dream was of a great statue of “*extraordinary splendor*” (2:31). Beginning from the top down this is what was seen.
 1. The head of the statue was made of fine gold.
 2. The breast and folded arms were made of silver.
 3. The belly and thighs were made of bronze.
 4. The legs were made of iron.
 5. The feet were made of part iron and part clay.
- While he continued to look, a stone cut out of the mountain struck the statue on its feet, causing it to collapse. It became as chaff of the summer from the threshing floors, being carried away by the wind (2:35). The stone became a great mountain that filled the whole earth.



Interpretation of the Dream

- A. The Head of Gold is the **Babylonian Empire**, filled with power, strength and glory (2:36-38). Gold, the most valuable of the metals listed, was symbolic of this opulent kingdom. No kingdom went to the extent of extravagance of Babylonians.
- B. The Silver Breast and Arms is the **Medo-Persia Empire** that would eventually follow the Babylonians (2:39). They were very violent against other nations, skinning them alive, impaling and torturing the captives. They caused great fear wherever they went.
- C. The Belly and Thighs made of Brass would be the **Greek Empire** which replaced the Medo-Persians (2:39). Nobody in the history of the earth saw anything like Alexander’s masterful planning in war. In a very short time he ruled from India to Africa.
- D. The Legs of Iron was the great **Roman Empire** which would replace the Greeks as the superpower of the day. The Romans took the best of all the previous three Empires and made the greatest world power on the earth up to that time. They had the opulence and indulgence of Babylon, the viciousness of the Medo-Persians and the governmental structure of Greece.
- E. The Feet of Iron/Clay was the efforts of the Roman Empire colonizing the world (Part Iron/Part Clay). It would be during this time of Roman Imperialism that a new kingdom would be set up. Not a kingdom made by men, but by God. This kingdom would shatter all others. The “stone cut out of the mountain made without hands, that crushed the iron, bronze, clay, silver and gold”, that will be the Messiah Jesus Christ.
 - This was the message of Jesus to Pilate in John 18:36 *Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm.”*

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- This is why He is called in *1 Timothy 6:15* "...the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords", for He setup a kingdom!
- It was a kingdom that John the Baptist predicted to come (MT 3:2).
- It was a kingdom that Jesus said was coming to the people of the earth (Mt 4:17, 10:7; Mk 14:25; Lk 4:43).
- Jesus reminded His apostles right before the ascension that the kingdom would be coming and to wait for it in Jerusalem (Acts 1:8).
- On the day of Pentecost, Jesus set up His kingdom and it was called the "CHURCH" (ekklesia: the called out).
- From there on out references to the kingdom of God was in past tense (Acts 8:12, 14:22, 19:8, 28:23; Rom 14:17; 1 Cor 4:20, 6:9; etc.)

Just as Daniel interpreted the dream, it was 100% correct. Nebuchadnezzar was impressed and promoted Daniel to be head over all the wise men of Babylon.

Behold the Pattern

Throughout the book, Daniel interprets another dreams and has a series of visions that teach us in more details of the path to God's Love Story. All these visions and dreams were pointing to something BIG to come in the future! Take for example chapter 7. In verse 1 it says "*Daniel saw a dream and visions in his mind*". He saw four great beasts coming up out of the sea. They are described as the following:

1. The first beast looked like a lion, having the wings of an eagle (7:4). Once again, this is the Babylonian Empire and their actual symbol was the winged lion. They were prideful and God would bring them down.
2. The second beast resembled a bear (7:5). This bear is the Medo-Persians. It leans because the Persians were really the more powerful of the two. It has three ribs in its mouth, symbolizing the three-front attack of their world power, through Lydia, Egypt and Babylon.
3. The third beast was a four-headed winged leopard (7:6). This was the Greek Empire which dissolved into four subkingdoms following the death of Alexander the Great.
4. The fourth beast was dreadful, terrifying and extremely strong (7:7-8).
 - a. It had long iron teeth and could trample anything left of the other kingdoms. This is the Roman Empire.
 - b. As mentioned before, Rome was like nothing the world had ever seen. It seemingly had all of the strengths of previous empires.
 - c. This beast had ten horns, but really there was an eleventh. A "*little horn*" sprung up and pulled three of the other horns out by the roots. That little horn possessed the eyes of a man and boasted greatly.

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History tells us the first eleven Caesars who held throne were 1. Augustus, 2. Tiberius, 3. Caligula, 4. Claudius, 5. Nero, 6. Galba, 7. Otho, 8. Vitellius, 9. Vespasian, 10. Titus and 11. Domitian. Three of the Emperors: Galba, Otho and Vitellius, were in a period of civil war that was referred to as "The Year of the Four Emperors" because of the quick turnover. The three mentioned served a combined 18 months and never really had true control, so much so that the people of Rome did not consider them real emperors.

By December 20, 69 AD Vitellius was dead as a result of the civil wars and the next day Vespasian was proclaimed Emperor by the Senate. The only problem was that he would not arrive back in Rome until September 70 AD. Sworn as praetor with consular power and given the temporary name of Caesar was Vespasian's eighteen year old son Domitian. This young, inexperienced and prideful man had visions of permanently taking the throne. The problem was he could not get the army behind him. He was the "*little horn*" of Daniel 7, going in the place of Galba, Otho and Vitellius. When his father Vespasian finally entered Rome, Domitian was rendered obsolete with no power, no title and no glory. He would be back in the future with real power to go with his pride, which he would later use to put to death and torture countless Christians.

With that in mind we move 630 years Daniel's prophecy to the Roman Empire the first-century. Domitian is on the throne and Christianity is about to be declared illegal. The Christians will think Nero has come back from the dead when the persecution is back. They will be in need of a good dose of encouragement from God's Love Story to keep them going. John the apostle has a vision of a beast coming out of the sea.

The Beast of Revelation 13

- Revelation 13:1 says that the beast had seven heads and ten crowns. The ten diadems were the puppet kings of the ten provinces of Rome (1. Africa, 2. France, 3. Britain, 4. Germany, 5. Dacia with Mysia and Thracia, 6. Cappadocia, 7. Armenia, 8. Syria, 9. Palestine with Judea and 10. Egypt). They had no real power, but only that which they were given by Caesar.
- Concerning the heads, later on in chapter 17:10-11, it says concerning the Caesars "*five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while. And the beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth, and is {one} of the seven, and he goes to destruction.*" There are EIGHT heads and that eight is Domitian.
- The text says "*The beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion*" (Rev 13:2).
 - a. John's vision is looking back and Daniel's vision is looking forward.
 - b. John sees the events of the Roman Empire from a closer perspective whereas Daniel sees them on the outer scope of his prophetic vision.

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- c. John sees a Roman Beast with the background of a Leopard, a Bear and a Lion.
Daniel a Roman Beast through the images of a Lion, a Bear and a Leopard.

BOTH ARE SEEING GOD'S LOVE STORY THROUGH A TIMELESSNESS!



This is what stands out most of all about Daniel, for God's Love Story is Timeless. He loved us before we were born, before the creation of the earth and even before time itself. God's Love story is TIMELESS! All these dreams and visions in Daniel are working toward that moment in time when the "King of the Jews" will have His body nailed to a cross to show us His love for us. It is pointing to that wonderful kingdom that has been established in this realm and to connect us to the eternal realm.

- There was the Vision of the Great Tree from chapter four that revealed a humbling of Nebuchadnezzar, the beginning of the decline of the Babylonian Empire.
- There was the Handwriting on the Wall interpretation made by Daniel in chapter 5, revealing the near future event of the fall of the Babylonian Empire and King Belshazzar. The king was killed that very night by Darius the Mede (5:31).
- There was the vision of the Ram and Goat in chapter 8, revealing more information about the coming Medo-Persian and Greek Empires to come (Dan 8:20-21).
- There was Daniel's prayer and angelic vision in chapter 9 that reveals even more things about the coming Messiah.
- There was the vision of the end times from chapter 10, revealing even more information on the fall of the nations and supremacy of God's kingdom.

Application: Encouragement

All the people of God, whether from the Garden of Eden in the beginning until the resurrection unto the Great Day, God's Love Story is Timeless. It was the forward looking visions of the coming kingdom of the Messiah that comforted the exiles in Daniel's day. It was reflection on the cross of God's love that comforted the persecuted of John's day. It is the joy of knowing you are in the kingdom and heavenward bound to God's Love Story that will get us through the tough times here.

GOD'S LOVE STORY IS TIMELESS!