

Daniel, Man of God, Statesman & Prophet

by Armin A. Wolff

As I mentioned before in the introduction of our Bible studies, do not just believe Armin Wolff, but be like the Bereans in Acts 17 -- read the scriptures carefully, pray for the Holy Spirit to open your understanding of God's word and come to your conclusion on this or any subject. A number of points raised as questions will hopefully create an incentive for you for further study on your own.

- *Engineer perspective*

Before we begin I'd like to state that I take the Bible literally unless it is clear from the context that some literary device is in play. As an engineer, I believe that the God who engineered this world so superbly and in such incredible detail is also able to communicate to us unambiguously. This does not mean however, that I understand everything God has communicated and that is where faith comes in. God's wisdom and intelligence are infinitely greater than yours or mine, and that is why in the end we must trust him and not lean on our own understanding which is extremely limited.

- *Why study the book of Daniel?*

One question we might ask is why study the book of Daniel? Daniel is a book of prophecy and history and a fascinating character study of a man of God. Other than the Lord Jesus himself he is one of two persons in the Bible of whom no evil is spoken. The Bible is a very candid book and usually paints its characters, warts and all. However, Daniel and Joseph of Egypt are the only two persons in the Bible other than Jesus of whom nothing negative is written.

- *Bookends of prophecy*

Both Daniel and the book of Revelation are about the end times. The apostle John writes from a heavenly perspective and Daniel writes from an earthly perspective. Daniel writes his prophecy from a earthly perspective, seeing his visions while here on the planet, while John is told to "come up here....." (Rev 4:1) John is called the beloved disciple (John 19:26) and Daniel is also called "greatly beloved" repeatedly. (Dan 9:23, 10:11, 10:19)

- *Detail of prophecy*

More than any other book of the Bible the book of Daniel shows us the incredible detail and the great lengths that God has gone to show us that this book is of divine authorship. As we get into that we will see that God gave Daniel insight into the events to come with incredible precision of timing. It clearly demonstrates that the origin of these 66 books we call the Bible have to come from beyond time and space and that this is especially evident in the book of Daniel.

- *Configuration of eternity*

One of the presuppositions and limitations we humans have is a very limited perspective on the concepts of time and eternity. When we were young and went to school we were often required to make time lines, such as a period with a beginning and end. When we think of eternity we are inclined to think of an infinite amount of time. We read in the Bible that God is eternal and so we imagine that God has lots of time. Modern science courtesy of Dr. Einstein among others tells us that time is a created thing along with matter and energy and thus has a definite beginning and will have a final end.

Since God created time, that means that he exists outside of time altogether and Isaiah tells us that God inhabits eternity.

Isa 57:15 For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name [is] Holy; I dwell in the high and holy [place], with him also [that is] of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

- *No one beside God can accurately know the future*

God tells us that he alone is able to predict events in time accurately and that he uses this unique ability to authenticate his word. No other book, sacred or secular, has future events accurately written down long before they happen, the Bible is unique in this.

Isaiah 46:9 Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me.

Isaiah 46:10 I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.

- *History in advance*

Since He has created everything He certainly has the ability to communicate with us and this communication is called the Bible and one of the methods by which he authenticates it by writing history in advance. He is the only one able to do this because he exists outside of time itself and sees the end from the beginning as he tells us.

- *Applicable to our time*

We shall see that this history Daniel writes about this very relevant to us since some of that is happening right in our day.

The Bible in general deals with prophecy through the lens of the nation of Israel, but the book of Daniel is a conspicuous exception to that. This book deals with gentile history from the time of the Babylonians until the end of the time of the gentiles when Jesus Christ returns.

- *Daniel really written down long before*

The prophecies in the book of Daniel are so specific and so exact that critics have often said that the book was written after these things happened. Since the book of Daniel is part of the Old Testament we must understand that it was translated into Greek during the rule of Alexander the Great. Alexander in a sense forced the use of Greek upon the population he controlled which included also the Jews. Most Jews living at that time did not know Hebrew but Greek. Wishing to be able to read their scriptures they brought 70 scholars together to do that. This translation is known to us as the septuagint, meaning 70. They started doing this translation in the Egyptian city of Alexandria about 285 B.C. and finished in 270 BC. Whenever the Old Testament is quoted in the New Testament it is always from this translation. Thus Book of Daniel was in black and white three centuries before Jesus Christ was born.

- *Jesus expected the Jews to understand the book of Daniel*

Jesus Himself quotes from Daniel three times and admonishes his disciples to understand. He expected them to understand the 9th chapter of the book of Daniel.

Luke 19:41 As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it

*Luke 19:42 and said, "If you, even you, had only known on **this day** what would bring you peace--but now it is hidden from your eyes.*

Luke 19:43 The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side.

Luke 19:44 They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you."

- *God must reveal tough passages*

In The Bible generally but in the book of Daniel particularly there are passages are controversial and difficult to understand. We have however the promise of God, by the Holy Spirit, to interpret to the scriptures for us.

2 Peter 1:20 Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation.

2 Peter 1:21 For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

- *Pray for understanding*

Among other things prophecy was put into the scriptures to show us who God is and what he is doing in human history. Because God is eternal and we are time bound we can only understand these things by the illumination of the Holy Spirit through prayer, so that we may apply our knowledge to our life in holy living. That is the reason we study the Bible.

- *Daniel raised in a Godly environment*

He was raised in the southern kingdom when Josiah was king, one of the few righteous Kings, who reinstated the worship of God resulting in a spiritual revival. This Spiritual awakening had a great positive effect on young Daniel.

- *Falling away results in judgment*

After Josiah, Israel unfortunately once again departed from their faith and to such an extent that God sent them into captivity for 70 years. This judgment was sent upon Israel because they failed to keep the sabbatical year for 490 years as they were commanded to do in the law.

Leviticus 25:3 For six years sow your fields, and for six years prune your vineyards and gather their crops.

Leviticus 25:4 But in the seventh year the land is to have a Sabbath of rest, a Sabbath to the LORD. Do not sow your fields or prune your vineyards.

Leviticus 25:5 Do not reap what grows of itself or harvest the grapes of your untended vines. The land is to have a year of rest.

God in effect said to Israel "You owe me 70 years, one year for each year you failed to keep the Sabbath commandment I've given you and therefore am taking you out of the land so that the land can have the rest I commanded it should have".

2 Chronicles 36:21 The land enjoyed its Sabbath rests; all the time of its desolation it rested, until the seventy years were completed in fulfillment of the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah.

Thus begins an exact period of time to the day, known as the servitude the nation, where Israel loses its sovereignty and many of the promising young men and others of value are taken to captivity in Babylon. From this time forward, until the modern state of Israel was established in 1948, that land was always ruled by another nation. Similarly, the city of Jerusalem has not been under sovereign control of Jews from that time until the 1967 six day war at the end of which the star David was hoisted over the old city of Jerusalem.

Jesus speaks of this:

Luke 21:24 They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

Jerusalem at that time was ruled by Rome and in the year 70AD, about 35 years after Jesus spoke this, the Romans laid siege and destroyed the city and dispersed its inhabitants throughout the Roman Empire.

- *Daniel -- the administrator*

Daniel , a teenager of about 17 at the time was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar and brought to Babylon. By the supernatural intervention of God he was elevated to a high position in the Babylonian empire. Daniel holds the unique position of being a high administrator in two world empires. It is almost unheard of that a high official in a government or empire that is overthrown or conquered would again have a high position in the government or administration of the conquerors. Usually such high officials are either imprisoned or executed. Yet when the Babylonians were conquered by the Persians, Daniel once again rises to power because of the hand of God upon him.

- *Archeology confirms Daniel's book*

In 1899-1917 German Archaeologists discovered the remains of Nebuchadnezzar's palace portions of which Saddam Hussein had rebuilt along with other parts of old Babylon. The banquet hall where Saddam used to hold affairs of state is the place where the handwriting on the wall appeared that we will study about later as we get into that portion of the book.

- *History of the Gentiles*

Most of the Bible deals with and focuses upon history through the lens of Israel, but the book of Daniel is a remarkable exception to this, in that it deals with the history of the Gentiles. Chapter four of the book of Daniel is written by Nebuchadnezzar's himself as a memo or proclamation throughout his whole empire. God commissioned a gentile king to write a chapter of His holy word!

- *Book divides into two parts*

The book of Daniel is divided into two parts. The first six chapters are historical narrative at its colorful best; chapters 7 through 12 are a series of visions of the future. The first part of Daniel was written in a Aramaic, a gentile language, since it deals with gentile history. The second part of Daniel is written in Hebrew. This is one reason some why some scholars wrongly conclude that there were several authors who wrote this book. Daniel was 67 years old when the prophecies began to be given to him.

- *History from God's perspective*

In the prophetic vision given to Nebuchadnezzar, the kingdoms of earth were depicted in terms of glittering and strong metals. From God's point of view, they are all seen as ravaging beasts.

- ***Chapter 1 highlights***

Obedience to God always brings blessings. Daniel and his friends were given wisdom and understanding because of their obedience. That is always the order in which things must be in God's economy. First, there must be obedience and then follows revelation, wisdom and knowledge. If we are obedient to God, only the then will he reveal himself to us.

- *Staying power*

Daniel 1:21 And Daniel remained there until the first year of King Cyrus.

Daniel endured not only through the entire Babylonian empire, but also to this succeeding Persian empire under Cyrus. It is very rare for a high official to continue in the administration of a succeeding empire, or in our case in the United States carrying on from a previous administration under the old president to the new.

- ***Chapter 2 highlights***

Old Neb had a dream. Nobody could tell the dream, but after an all night prayer meeting with his friends, God gave Daniel the answer.

- *Daniel gives God the honor*

Unlike the king's commander, Daniel does not take credit for what he is about to tell the king, but essentially tells the king what the other wise men had already told him, namely that there is no one on earth that could give the correct answer he was seeking.

Daniel 2:27 Daniel replied, "No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about,

Daniel 2:28 but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you lay on your bed are these:

- **Chapter 3 highlights**

Daniel 3:25 He said, "Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods."

We tied three up and now there are four unbound and walking around in the fire and the fourth looks like "BAR ELOHIM". The word "ELOHIM" is a plural form that in this place is usually translated together with "BAR" as son of gods. The word ELOHIM is used in the first verse of the Bible and in many other places where it is translated as God. So here we have the son of God saving the three Hebrews from the fiery furnace as a picture of the son of God saving us from the fires of hell. Here is another example of the many patterns found in scripture.

- **Chapter 4 highlights**

King Nebuchadnezzar, having returned to power after seven years of humiliating mental illness, is given the commission by God to write this entire chapter as an official proclamation which was broadcast in 562BC in the entire empire.

- *The sin of pride*

A central lesson of this chapter is for us to understand that God hates pride. God is not content to be number one on a list of 10, but wants to be and must be number one on the list of one. I don't know how God classifies sin, but because this was the sin of Satan rising against God, I believe that pride is at or near the top of the list of sins that God hates most.

- **Chapter 5 highlights**

The end of the Babylonian Empire

In Chapter 5 we come to the end of the Babylonian empire as it is replaced by a the Medo- Persian empire under Darius. Many sayings still in our language today come from this chapter. "The handwriting is on the wall...", "he is a lightweight.."

- *Enter the aged Daniel*

Daniel 5:13 So Daniel was brought before the king, and the king said to him, "Are you Daniel, one of the exiles my father the king brought from Judah?"

Daniel 5:14 I have heard that the spirit of the gods is in you and that you have insight, intelligence and outstanding wisdom.

At this time Daniel would be in his late eighties and most likely retired from active service in Government. In this emergency the aged senior statesman is once again called on to perform a service that no one else can do. Daniel, without fear, recounts a bit of history Belshazzar had forgotten. Again the issue is pride, which God will in no way put up with.

Daniel 5:22 "But you his son, O Belshazzar, have not humbled yourself, though you knew all this.

- *Belshazzar slain*

On the 12th of October of 539 BC Belshazzar was executed by the invading troops. Many residents of the city did not even know that they had been conquered for three whole days. 16 days later Cyrus makes his grand entry into the city of Babylon.

- *The Babylonian empire ends*

Daniel 5:31 and Darius the Mede took over the kingdom, at the age of sixty-two.

- **Chapter 6 highlights**

This is of course the well known story of Daniel in the lions den

- *Advanced in years*

Daniel was deported from his homeland of Israel as a 17 year old teenager and since the 70 year captivity ended shortly after the fall of Babylon, he would be 83 to 87 years old at this time. He served over 60 years in public office.

- *Daniel does not change his habit of prayer*

Daniel 6:10 Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.

Daniel simply continued what he had been doing previously all his life. He did not close the window or go and pray in hiding, neither did he flout his faith by shouting his prayers through the open window.

- *Serves God continually*

Daniel 6:16 So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions' den. The king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!"

What a witness of Daniel this observation of the king is. Do the unbelievers around us know that we serve our God, the Lord Jesus continually? What a model Daniel is for us to emulate!

- *Another decree*

Similar to Nebuchadnezzar, Darius is impressed by the power of and majesty of Daniels God.

Daniel 6:25 Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations and men of every language throughout the land: "May you prosper greatly!"

Daniel 6:26 "I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel. "For he is the living God and he endures forever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end.

Daniel 6:27 He rescues and he saves; he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions."

Daniel 6:28 So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

- **Chapter 7 highlights**

Here begins the telling of a series of dreams and visions of the future.

- *Thrones of Judgment*

Daniel 7:9 "As I looked, "thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze.

- *Ancient of days*

This word construct is used 3 times! in this chapter in verses 9,13 and 22. This phrase, "Ancient of days -- literally the eternal timeless one -- usually, as here, in reference to the Father but also used of the son being eternal with the Father.

- *Saints and the Lord will rule together*

Daniel 7:27 Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.

With the evil one judged the ruler-ship of our planet will be given to the saints, that is **all** saints from all of time. The word 'saint' incorporates the idea of holy and separated by God for His purpose. We as part of the church group of saints will be partakers of His rule.

- **Chapter 8 highlights**

- *Starry host*

The term host of heaven is used of heavenly beings, such as angels, planets, stars and other astronomical objects, but also in reference to the people of God in both the old and new testaments.

Daniel 8:10 It grew until it reached the host of the heavens, and it threw some of the starry host down to the earth and trampled on them.

Daniel 12:3 Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.

- **Chapter 9 highlights**

Prayer comprises about two-thirds of the text of this chapter. Daniel's response to prophecy was to pray for its fulfillment even though he knew that's Gods word was sure and that it would certainly come to pass.

Daniel 9:3 So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes.

That is also why we pray "Come Lord Jesus yes come" even though His coming is a sure thing.

Daniel 9:21 while I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice.

- *Gabriel appears again*

God answers Daniel's prayer by sending the same special messenger He also sent to Mary, centuries later. Gabriel is one of three named angels in the Bible. Whenever Gabriel appears, it is on a message concerning the Messiah, in this chapter his first and second coming. He tells Daniel that he is 'highly beloved'.

- **Chapter 10 highlights**

Daniel 10:7 I, Daniel, was the only one who saw the vision; the men with me did not see it, but such terror overwhelmed them that they fled and hid themselves.

Daniel 10:8 So I was left alone, gazing at this great vision; I had no strength left, my face turned deathly pale and I was helpless

One would think that by now Daniel, having had previous encounters with the spirit dimensions, would have gotten over his frightened response, but this is evidently not the case. Although the men with Daniel did not see the vision itself, they were scared by something to the point where they fled in terror.

- *Spirit beings behind earthly kingdoms*

Daniel 10:20 So he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? Soon I will return to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I go, the prince of Greece will come;

Daniel 10:21 but first I will tell you what is written in the Book of Truth. (No one supports me against them except Michael, your prince.

From the above it is apparent that behind the visible world empires at war, there are spirit beings in conflict. This also applies to the personal level.

- **Chapter 11 highlights**

Were Daniel writes what is now history to us, but which was yet future to him.

- *Accurate description of history in advance*

The details given to Daniel are so uncannily precise that unbelieving liberal scholars try desperately to find later dates and other authors for these writings of the prophet Daniel. The problem with this intellectual unbelief is that all of what Daniel wrote was translated from Hebrew into Greek and much of the prophecy became history after this translation was done. This translation was done in Egypt and is called the Septuagint. All old testament scripture quoted in the new testament is from this translation.

- *Details of the rise and fall of the Greeks under Alexander*

Much of the rise and crumbling of the Grecian empire that was built by Alexander the Great is foretold and was exactly fulfilled. He details of the atrocities of Antiochus Epiphanes who ordered that a pig be sacrificed in the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem.

Daniel 11:32 With flattery he will corrupt those who have violated the covenant, but the people who know their God will firmly resist him.

- *Faithful Jews revolt*

The faithful Jews finally overcome those among them who benefited from some of the evil of Antiochus and joined the successful Maccabean revolt, which ultimately led to the re-dedication of the Temple. This event is celebrated to this day at Hanukkah and begins the period of the Hasmoneans.

- **Chapter 12 highlights**

- *A word to the wise*

Those who bring others to Christ, who is righteousness, are deemed wise and their wisdom will shine forth for all to see for all eternity.

Daniel 12:3 And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

- *Sealed and unsealed books*

Daniel is told here to specifically seal the book until the time of the end and John, writing the book of revelation is specifically told not to seal his book. Much of what Daniel wrote is now clear because it is history to us, whereas Revelation is still mostly future. As the prophecies of scripture are getting close to fulfillment we can understand what was written about so long ago. The restoration of a physical nation of Israel was an enigma to most theologians and scholars until it actually took place on May 14 1948.

Daniel 12:4 But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase."

- *Human knowledge explosion*

Computers have made information available on a vast scale to anyone in our modern society. Today, anyone with an Internet connection to a computer, has a vast store of knowledge available with a few clicks of a mouse. Information scientists tell us that the sum total of knowledge doubles every ten years.

- *The writers of scripture did not always understand*

Daniel, like the other writers of scripture did not necessarily always understand what the Holy Spirit was causing them to write or what they were experiencing. He even asked about it and was told again that what he was writing was not for his benefit and understanding, but for those who would be alive at the time when these things would take place.

Daniel 12:8 I heard, but I did not understand. Then I said, "O my lord, what shall be the outcome of these things?"

Daniel 12:9 He said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end.

- *The wicked and the righteous shall take their course*

Daniel here, as well as John in Revelation tells us that things are going to go this way, The wicked at that time will choose continued wickedness and the righteous will continue to choose righteousness

Daniel 12:10 Many shall purify themselves and make themselves white and be refined, but the wicked shall act wickedly. And none of the wicked shall understand, but those who are wise shall understand.

- *Be daring in faith*

My prayer for us is that we will be daring in our faith, just as Daniel was, and when the trials come, be able to trust and rely upon and love the same God that Daniel did during his long and fruitful sojourn on this Earth.