

DANIEL
Living Redemptively In Babylon
Looking at the Future – Living in the Present

Shepherds 360
Fall 2024

Text: Daniel 9:19, 21; 12:8-10

Daniel 9:19, 21

*And he said, “O man greatly loved, fear not, peace be with you; be strong and of good courage.”
And as he spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, “Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me.” . . . But I will tell you what is inscribed in the book of truth. . . .*

Daniel 12:8-10

*I heard, but I did not understand. Then I said, “O my lord, what shall be the outcome of these things?” He said, **“Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end. Many shall purify themselves and make themselves white and be refined, but the wicked will act wickedly. And none of the wicked shall understand, but those who are wise shall understand.”***

Introduction:

This morning we are looking at the life of God’s servant Daniel who was called to live redemptively in one of the hardest places imaginable – Babylon. Daniel’s life is a testimony to God’s enablement so that he was able to live faithfully, obediently, courageously, and graciously as the King’s Man in a dark kingdom like Babylon.

This book merits our attention because, when properly understood, it provides a theological road-map to help guide us through the twelve chapters in Daniel so we don’t get lost, distracted, or misdirected along the way. For the journey to make an impact on us as believers, we need to make sure we don’t miss two important things:

First, we need to understand why we need what Daniel wrote some 2,600 years ago.

1. We live in uncertain times much like those in which Daniel and his friends lived, and like them, we must learn to live confidently for God in the face of an uncertain future.
2. We live in a secular and immoral culture that has invaded the church and infected our lives, and like Daniel, we must speak truth boldly and stand for righteousness courageously.
3. We live in spiritually dark times and as the darkness deepens, like Daniel, we must display the beauty of the gospel by living graciously and faithfully.
4. We live in desperate and confusing times, and like Daniel, we must strive to live humble, prayerful, and Bible-shaped lives.

Second, we need a theological roadmap to guide us along the way and keep us focused on the main things Daniel wants us to see and hear instead of being side-tracked by all of the interesting details that we will encounter in almost every chapter of the book.

And that is what I hope to provide for us in this workshop – a theological road-map that highlights four important landmarks that we need to continually keep in front of us as we travel through the terrain we will encounter in the twelve chapters that make up the book.

I. Nature of the Book (Daniel 1:17-20)

What kind of book did Daniel write?

- A. Daniel contains prophecies received in visions or dreams to inform and assure God's people about future times (7:1-12:4).***
- B. Daniel functions as apocalyptic literature written to encourage and strengthen God's people in distressing times (10:18-21)***
- C. Daniel's main function is wisdom from above designed to shape and guide life during wicked and confusing times.***

II. Purpose of the Book (Daniel 10:19)

*And he said, "O man greatly loved, fear not, peace be with you; **be strong and of good courage.**" And as he spoke to me, **I was strengthened** and said, "Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me."*

How is it that a book containing such wisdom and designed to strengthen and encouraged God's people so often fails to do so? Put differently, why is it that Daniel's writings do not produce in us what they produced in Daniel and his three friends?

Clearly the problem is not with Daniel or the book he wrote. The difficulty of living in Babylon, the volatility of the pagan rulers, the enmity and hostility of those around him, and the complexity of the visions and dreams did not stand in the way of this book strengthening and encouraging Daniel and his friends!

If we are going to benefit from Daniel's book, we must understand the purpose for which it was written (10:19):

Daniel's book is intended to strengthen us so that we live wisely and courageously for God in a pagan culture by acting, speaking, and responding:

- Faithfully (1:8-16; 3:8-18; 6:10-24)
- Graciously (2:14; 4:27)
- Redemptively (3:16-18)
- Courageously/Boldly (5:17-28)
- Confidently/Obediently (6:10)

III. Theme and Arrangement of the Book (Daniel 4:24-25)

²⁴ *this is the interpretation, O king: **It is a decree of the Most High**, which has come upon my lord the king, ²⁵ that you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. You shall be made to eat grass like an ox, and you shall be wet with the dew of heaven, and seven periods of time shall pass over you, **till you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will.***

A. Theme: God Rules and His Kingdom Matters More!

- God rules over the kingdoms of Men (4:24-25; 5:18-21)
- God's kingdom matters more than the Kingdoms of Men (4:24-25; 7:13-14)
- God will preserve His people in the kingdoms of the world while they faithfully wait and suffer for His appointed Champion to come and cast down the kingdoms of the world and establish His eternal kingdom (7:25-27)

B. Arrangement/Structure

- ***Introduction*** (1): God's Sovereign Authority over all human rulers and kingdoms (including Israel); His Covenant Faithfulness to judge His faithless people; and His Gracious Fidelity to preserve and promote His faithful people.
- ***Aramaic Section*** written to and about Gentile Kings and Kingdoms (2-7): Six court stories about Daniel and his friends that demonstrate God Rules over the Kingdoms of Men by Humbling, Judging, and Preserving.
- ***Hebrew Section*** written to God's people (8-10): Four visions given to Daniel to assure them that God's Kingdom Matters More than all the Powerful Kingdoms that will continue to exist, resist and oppress them until Messiah comes to establish His Kingdom and vindicate His people.

IV. Message of the Book (9:20-22)

²⁰ While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my plea before the LORD my God for the holy hill of my God, ²¹ while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the first, came to me in swift flight at the time of the evening sacrifice. ²² He made me understand, speaking with me and saying, "O Daniel, I have now come out to give you insight and understanding."

A. You are Greatly Loved (9:23; 10:11)

- **Daniel 9:23** – At the beginning of your pleas for mercy a word went out, and I have come to tell it to you, **for you are greatly loved**. Therefore consider the word and understand the vision.
- **Daniel 10:11** – And he said to me, “**O Daniel, man greatly loved**, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for now I have been sent to you.” And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling.

B. Your Prayers are Being Heard and Answered (9:23; 10:12)

- **Daniel 9:23** – At the beginning of your pleas for mercy a word went out, and I have come to tell it to you, **for you are greatly loved**. Therefore consider the word and understand the vision.
- **Daniel 10:12** – Then he said to me, “Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, **your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words**.”

C. There is Great Spiritual Opposition (10:13-14, 20)

- **Daniel 10:13-14** – **The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days**, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia, ¹⁴ and came to make you understand what is to happen to your people in the latter days. For the vision is for days yet to come.”
- **Daniel 10:20** – Then he said, “Do you know why I have come to you? **But now I will return to fight against the prince of Persia; and when I go out, behold, the prince of Greece will come**.”

D. Amazing Strength and Sustaining Grace is Available from God’s Word (10:15-19)

- **Daniel 10:15-19** – When he had spoken to me according to these words, I turned my face toward the ground and was mute. ¹⁶ And behold, one in the likeness of the children of man touched my lips. Then I opened my mouth and spoke. I said to him who stood before me, “**O my lord, by reason of the vision pains have come upon me, and I retain no strength.** ¹⁷ **How can my lord’s servant talk with my lord? For now no strength remains in me, and no breath is left in me.**” ¹⁸ Again one having the appearance of a man touched me and strengthened me. ¹⁹ And he said, “**O man greatly loved, fear not, peace be with you; be strong and of good courage.**” **And as he spoke to me, I was strengthened** and said, “Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me.”

Conclusion: Responding to the Book

- **Receive it Thankfully**
- **Read it Thoughtfully**
- **Interpret it Carefully and Understand it Prayerfully**
- **Apply it Personally**
- **Live it Faithfully**
- **Model it Graciously and Humbly**