

Daniel: Stand – An Introduction

INTRODUCTION

Central themes:

- God's sovereignty over history, empires, and kings.
- All the kingdoms of this world will come to an end and will be replaced by the Lord's kingdom, which will never pass away (2:44; 7:27).
- Though trials and difficulties will continue for God's people up until the end, those who are faithful will be raised to glory, honour, and everlasting life in this final kingdom. (12:1–3).

Outline

Made up of two halves

Daniel 1–6 contains stories from the lives of Daniel and his three friends. They show how God's people should live in a world that is not their home.

Daniel 7–12 contains apocalyptic visions. They are designed to reassure God's people that, in spite of their present persecution and suffering, God is in control and will ultimately be victorious.

Rat Race

"Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it." 2 Corinthians 9:24

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." 2 Tim 4:7

World Views

Secular worldview believes:

- we establish our own moral values apart from the influence of anyone, most notably God,
- we self-determine our destiny — masters of our own fate,
- we are intrinsically good,
- we alone determine the boundaries of our knowledge and achievements
- we are unconstrained by any moral standards

Christian worldview believes:

- we are subject to an all-powerful God who created the heavens and the earth.
- this living, omnipotent God possesses all knowledge
- because of His great love for us, He has established absolute moral standards for our guidance and protection.
- He is holy, loving, and personal.

“The life which is unexamined is not worth living.” Socrates

“See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.” Colossians 2:8

“The secularists have been doing a much better job of influencing our culture than we Christians. In the US, prayer in schools was made illegal in 1961, abortion was made legal in 1973, and all major networks stopped censoring their TV programming in 1989. Since those watershed decisions, virtually every other valued institution has experienced significant erosion.... Today, Christians are as much a minority, and their values and views are as impotent, as any minority group at any time in modern history.” Patrick Morley

BACKGROUND

“The story of Daniel and his friends is a clarion call to our generation to stand, to be courageous; not to lose our nerve and allow the expression of our faith to be diluted and squeezed out of the public space and thus rendered spineless and ineffective. Their story will also tell us that this objective is not likely to be achieved without cost.” John Lennox

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the articles of the house of God, which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the articles into the treasure house of his god. Daniel 1:1-2

- What would become of that vision if Jerusalem were to be sacked and the lineage of David eliminated?
- How could Daniel and his friends any longer believe that there was a God who had revealed himself to their nation in a special way?

- If God is real, how could a pagan emperor like Nebuchadnezzar violate the sanctity of God's unique temple and get away with it?
- *Why did God do nothing?*

What do you do when you end up in Babylon?