

1. God is sovereign over the nations and he is able to protect his people from persecution.

2. God knows the future and controls the future, down to the smallest detail.

3. Believers should follow the example of the faithful Israelites, remaining obedient to God even at the cost of death.

4. The Lord will prevail over the evil kingdoms of this earth and establish his own kingdom with the Messiah given all authority.

5. When God establishes his kingdom on earth, he will raise his saints bodily to enjoy everlasting righteousness.

### FAVORITE COMMENTARIES

Boice, James Montgomery. *Daniel: An Expository Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003. This book is more a collection of sermons than a commentary, and its strength is in application.

Feinberg, Charles L. *Daniel: The Man and His Visions*. Chappaqua, NY: Christian Herald Books, 1981. An explanation of the text by an OT scholar but written for the layperson. This provides a good mix of correct interpretation and application.

Miller, Stephen R. *Daniel*. New American Commentary, vol. 18. Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1994. My personal favorite, combining greater depth with generally accurate interpretations.

Pentecost, J. Dwight. "Daniel." In *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, vol. 1. Wheaton: Victor Books, 1985. Though briefer than the others, this one might be better for those who prefer to purchase a one-volume commentary on the whole Old Testament. The conclusions are generally accurate.

Other recommended commentaries include those by Gleason Archer, Joyce Baldwin, John F. Walvoord (free online at bible.org), and Leon Wood.

## DANIEL: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

### THE MESSAGE OF DANIEL

God is sovereign over his people in exile and over the Gentile nations who rule over them, as is demonstrated by his deliverance of the saints in persecution and his detailed knowledge of the precise course of future events. The Lord has determined that the defiant kingdoms of man will be replaced by God's everlasting kingdom on earth ruled by the Messiah.

### KEY WORDS OF DANIEL

exile, Gentiles, persecution, sovereignty, kingdom, faith, horn, beast, everlasting, saints, Israel, Jerusalem, 4, 70, abomination of desolation

### AN EXPOSITION OF THE BOOK OF DANIEL

(Chapter 1) The boy Daniel is introduced as an exile of Judah whose submission to God results in blessing. Daniel and his friends are judged to be ten times better than their Babylonian counterparts. (Chapter 2) Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream demonstrates that he can do what "no man on earth can do," a clear indication that God is speaking through him. It is important to establish that this dream and its interpretation come from God because the dream describes the entire course of human history, beginning with the Babylonian kingdom and ending with the establishment of God's everlasting kingdom on earth.

(Chapter 3) But the Israelite exiles remain under Gentile domination and the threats to faith and life are real. God's people are tempted to worship foreign idols, yet faith even in the face of death is necessary and will be rewarded by God. The king's decree of promotion for the faithful and destruction for those opposed to God foreshadows the ultimate destiny of all men. (Chapter 4) Despite appearances, no nation and no ruler is greater than Israel's God and when he so chooses he will humble an arrogant king. Because he fails to honor God's commission to him as a man, the

king loses his humanity and is transformed into a beast. Nebuchadnezzar learns a lesson that will be important to all future rulers of the four kingdoms: “the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes.” Thus no king or kingdom can resist the establishment of God’s kingdom.

(Chapter 5) The king who is especially liable to quick judgment is the one who despises holy objects and refuses to honor God. Belshazzar is particularly guilty because he had the witness of his predecessor Nebuchadnezzar yet he defied God. The Lord brings down the king and the kingdom in one night. (Chapter 6) Though a new kingdom is now in charge (the second of the four predicted), the threats to Israelite exiles remain while under Gentile rule. This time the danger is initiated not by the king but by his officials. Daniel demonstrates the utmost loyalty to God, and the Lord protects him from extreme danger, resulting in praise by a Gentile king. Israel should expect threats like these until God’s kingdom is established, and they should follow Daniel’s example of obedience, knowing that God is able to deliver.

(Chapter 7) The first vision that God gives directly to Daniel ties the two sections of the book together, relating to the first half by providing a parallel to the vision of four kingdoms but also laying the foundation for the remaining visions of the book. Connections should also be made in the two halves between the pride of kings and the persecution of the saints. The vision of this chapter is similar to that of chapter 2 but reveals for the first time the presence of a final evil ruler who is defeated and replaced by a man with divine characteristics who is given sovereignty over the whole world to establish an everlasting kingdom.

(Chapter 8) With details already known about the first (Babylonian) kingdom and the fourth kingdom with its evil ruler, this vision describes the nature of the second (Medo-Persian) and third (Greek) kingdoms. Special focus is given to the last ruler of the third kingdom (Antiochus IV Epiphanes) who wages a vicious persecution of the saints and puts an abomination in the temple.

Because of similarities with the last ruler of the fourth kingdom (the Antichrist), this individual clearly foreshadows the final evil ruler who will attack God’s people and temple.

(Chapter 9) Though the presence of four kingdoms before the establishment of God’s kingdom might suggest that Israel’s exile will last longer than the initially predicted 70 years in Jeremiah 25, Daniel receives confirmation of this fact after a prayer confessing the sins of the nation. His prayer serves as a model for Israelites as long as they are separated from God and his dwelling place. The angelic response to Daniel’s prayer is that the exile would last for 70 sevens, or a period of 490 years, at the end of which sin would be abolished and everlasting righteousness would be established for Israel and Jerusalem. But these 70 sevens are not all consecutive, for the Messiah would be killed after 483 years and sometime later the final ruler of the fourth kingdom would set up an abomination that would cause the temple to be desolate.

(Chapter 10) The final vision of the book is introduced with some insight into the angelic battles that are being waged over Israel and God’s plan for his people. (Chapter 11) The vision concerns a great war that centers around Israel and continues throughout the second (Medo-Persian), third (Greek), and fourth (Roman) kingdoms. The history of the third kingdom is described in great detail culminating in a most severe persecution by the king of the North (Antiochus IV Epiphanes) who kills many saints and abolishes worship in the temple. His actions foreshadow that of the final ruler of the fourth kingdom who invades Israel. (Chapter 12) At the end of the period of great distress, God will intercede to deliver his people, and the saints will be resurrected bodily to enjoy God’s eternal kingdom on earth.

#### **APPLICATION**

Though directed initially to Israel, believers in the church can benefit from this book in many ways: