

The Book of Daniel

John Lennox is Professor of Mathematics at Oxford University and a Fellow in Mathematics and Philosophy of Science at Green Templeton College, Oxford. He is also an Honorary Fellow of Wycliffe Hall, an Adjunct Professor of the Oxford Centre for Christian Apologetics and he teaches for the Oxford Strategic Leadership Programme at the Executive Education Centre, Saïd Business School, Oxford. He is particularly interested in the interface of science, philosophy and theology and his most recent books include *Seven Days that Divide the World* (on Genesis 1), *Gunning for God* (on the new atheism) and *Stephen Hawking and God* (a response to *The Grand Design*). In the past five years, Professor Lennox has debated a number of the world's leading atheists including Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens and Peter Singer. (website: www.johnlennox.org)

PART A	PART B
Ch. 1 <u>Babylonian Court</u> . Daniel refuses to eat the king's food. He and his friends are vindicated.	Ch. 6 <u>Medo-Persian Court</u> . Daniel refuses to obey the king's command and refrain from praying to God. He is vindicated.
TWO IMAGES	TWO VISIONS OF BEASTS
Ch. 2 Nebuchadnezzar's dream-image.	Ch. 7 Four beasts.
Ch. 3 Nebuchadnezzar's golden image.	Ch. 8 Two beasts.
TWO KINGS DISCIPLINED	TWO WRITINGS EXPLAINED
Ch. 4 The glory of Babylon. The discipline and restoration of Nebuchadnezzar	Ch. 9 The desolations of Jerusalem. The prophecy of Jeremiah regarding discipline and restoration of Jerusalem
Ch. 5 The 'writing on the wall', and the destruction of Belshazzar. The end of Babylon.	Chs. 10-12 The 'Writing of Truth', and the eventual destruction of 'the king' (11:36-45). The end.
	© The Literary Structure Of The Book Of Daniel and Its Implications. David W. Gooding. <i>The Tyndale Old Testament Lecture</i> , 1980.

VALUES

1. God's vessels in idol's temple – relativising the absolute
2. Image of gold, silver, bronze, iron
3. Neb's golden image – the worship of the state – absolutising the relative
4. Babylon built for Neb's glory
5. God's vessels used by Belshazzar
Mene – mene – tekem – uparsin

LAW, TRUTH AND TIME

6. Law of God and law of MP that does not change. 30 days prayer to Darius
7. 4th beast thinks of changing times and law: the judgement books. 3+1/2 times saints oppressed
8. Daily sacrifice stopped. Truth thrown to ground. Vision is true. 2,300 evenings and mornings
9. Disobedience to Law of God...not attending to truth. 70 and 70 times 7
10. Book of truth...Names in Book. Daily sacrifice abolished. 3+1/2 times, 1,290 + 1,335 days

DANIEL 1. KING'S COLLEGE BABYLON: SETTING A COMPASS FOR LIFE

Does history have a meaning?

The significance of the historical setting: "The Lord gave Jehoiakim into his hand"

Are there ultimate values?

The significance of the temple vessels and what Nebuchadnezzar did with them.

Does the individual have significance?

Nebuchadnezzar's educational policy.

The significance of names: a question of identity.

Daniel = God is my judge (Belteshazzar = May Bel protect his life? Treasurer of Bel?)

Hananiah = The Lord shows grace (Shadrach = Command of Aku)

Mishael = Who is what God is? (Meschach = Who is what Aku is?)

Azariah = The Lord helps (Abednego = Servant of Nabu)

The foundation philosophy of Babylon city: Genesis 10-11

Protesting at the University food and wine.

Ancient creation myths: Babylonian Enuma Enish, Atrahasis

The accounts are polytheistic

There is a power struggle for supremacy among the gods

Humans (often) made to lessen work of gods

Creation proceeds through sexual union of the gods

Theogony precedes cosmogony: in the beginning is primeval matter, all else including the gods arise from it (Primeval sea Nammu – Sumerian, Nun – Egyptian)
= primeval soup!

Deification of the forces of nature

Contemporary creation myths: materialistic – any intelligence behind the universe is part of nature and not supernature, that the forces of nature are the ultimate controllers of nature.

The denial of God means that matter/energy must be invested with creative powers.

This is the essence of idolatry

The ten-day test and its outcome.

Daniel and his friends ten times better!

DANIEL 2. THE DREAMING KING: REASON, REVELATION AND KNOWLEDGE

The context of the dream.

The relevance of Nebuchadnezzar's challenge to the dating and authenticity of Daniel – the book itself discusses the basic issue of whether there is a difference between revelation and human ability.

The difference between futurology and prophecy 2 Peter 1.19-21

Reason not opposed to revelation: reason used to (read and) understand revelation.

Coherence as a criterion of truth.

The content and interpretation of the dream

A colossal, composite man: a succession of empires

The major lessons from the dream

God is the source of imperial power

Human tenure of power is limited

Political systems are not of absolute value

The fatal weakness: an unstable man

The supernatural power of the Stone: a kingdom from beyond

The identity of the Stone

“The stone that the builders rejected has become the capstone. Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed” Luke 20.17-18

The lesson for Nebuchadnezzar

The absolute supremacy of God and his capacity to reveal mysteries.

DANIEL 3 NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S GOLDEN IMAGE

Nebuchadnezzar's failure to learn the lesson of the dream image.

The deification of the state: testing the loyalty of the top officials.
The use of music to manipulate and fire to threaten.

The astrologers denounce Shadrach Meschach and Abednego for disloyalty and disobedience.

The power behind the image: "what god will be able to rescue you from my hand."
Nebuchadnezzar's conviction that his power is absolute and his discovery that this is false because life itself is not an absolute value to the three Jews. This raises the question of the value of human life.

The courage of Daniel's friends: the difference between what God can do and what he wills to do.

The suffering and the glory – a 'son of the gods' in the fire.

The vindication of the three. The citation: "who yielded up their bodies".

DANIEL 4. THE TESTIMONY OF AN EMPEROR: GOD’S DISCIPLINE AND RESTORATION

Note that the chapter is written in the first person: it is Nebuchadnezzar’s message to the nations.

The dream of the colossal tree. Its beautiful leaves and abundant fruit. Its cutting down and restoration.

Daniel’s interpretation of the dream. Nebuchadnezzar told of his impending discipline and restoration and challenged to “break off” his sins by practising mercy and showing righteousness.

The fulfilment of the dream. The pride of the King regarding the city and culture of Babylon: his mistake about the source and goal of his genius.

The discipline of the king: the mind of a man becomes the mind of an animal for 7 years

The restoration of the king’s reason and glory: his praise of God and his understanding of the lesson.

DANIEL 5. THE DISCIPLINE AND DESTRUCTION OF BELSHAZZAR

Belshazzar’s wine: his command to fetch the golden vessels to drink in. The significance of Belshazzar’s act: praising the gods of gold and silver, bronze, iron, wood and stone.

The writing on the wall – a matter of values. Its interpretation by Daniel: God’s evaluation of Belshazzar.

The end of Belshazzar and the end of Babylonian supremacy.

DANIEL 6 THE LAW OF THE MEDES AND PERSIANS VS. THE LAW OF GOD.

The Medo-Persian governmental system: the difference between absolute and constitutional monarchy expressed in the law of the Medes and Persians.

The attempt to discredit Daniel. His exemplary testimony. The resolution of the satraps to use “the law of his God” against him. A conflict of two laws. The question of the existence of absolute law?

The nature of the suggested law: positive discrimination. The principle involved: the difficulty of reversing statute law. The implications of the principle for contemporary society.

Daniel refuses to stop praying to God for the 30 days required by the edict. Darius’ regret and powerlessness: the lions powerlessness. Lions and laws? The difference between man and the animal.

The vindication of Daniel and the action of the king in destroying the conspirators.

The decree of the king to all the nations.

DANIEL 7. A SUCCESSION OF EMPIRES: WILD ANIMALS REPLACED BY A MAN

“I saw in my vision at night” vs 2

The composite animals in Daniel’s zoo.

A lion with eagles wings that stood on two feet like a man and with the mind of a man

A beast like a bear that devoured much flesh

A beast like a leopard with four wings

“After this I saw in the night visions” vs 7

The fourth beast: its hideous strength. Its ten horns and little horn with human eyes.

The majestic judgement of God. The books opened. The beast destroyed.

The necessity of judgement.

“I saw in the night visions” vs 13

The coming of the Son of Man on the clouds of heaven.

The interpretation of the vision

Focus on the fourth beast. It makes “war against the saints and prevailed over them”. It speaks against the most high. It thinks to change “the times and the law” and they are given to him for “time, times and half a time”.

The judgement: the beast destroyed and the everlasting kingdom given to the saints.

DANIEL 8. DANIEL'S VISION OF THE RAM AND HE-GOAT

The content of the vision

The ram with two horns (Medo-Persia vs.20): “no one could rescue from his power”

The he-goat with one great horn (Greece vs.21): “there was no one to rescue the ram from his power”

The great horn broken and replaced by four horns

The little horn out of one of them that grows great, removes the regular burnt offering, throws truth to the ground.

The limits of desolation: 2,300 evenings and mornings

The interpretation of the vision

The vision is for “the time of the end”.

The nature of prophecy: historical events and people form thought models of the future.

The little horn, the king of great power who stands against the Prince of Princes.

The vision refers to “many days to come”

DANIEL 9 THE DISCIPLINE AND RESTORATION OF JERUSALEM

Daniel's study of Jeremiah

The seventy years predicted for the desolations of Jerusalem (see Jer. 25.1-14).

Daniel's prayer and confession

His solidarity with his nation. His analysis of the problem: "we have turned aside from your commandments and laws". His admission of guilt and the justice of God's discipline.

Daniel's appeal for God to turn his wrath from his city Jerusalem. The basis of his appeal: the reputation of God and the mercy of God.

Gabriel brings an answer from God.

The timing of the answer: the hour of evening sacrifice

The reason the answer was given: Daniel greatly loved

The seventy sevens

Their focus: Daniel's people and city.

The purpose: to finish transgression, put an end to sin, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint a most holy place.

The time sequence and its significance.

- The decree to rebuild the city

- The cutting off of the anointed one

- The destruction of the city and sanctuary

- Its end and the end.

- The final seven and its desolations – until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator

Christ's comment on Daniel in connection with the timing of his coming Matt. 24.15.

DANIEL 10-12. THE BOOK OF TRUTH: THE FLOW OF HISTORY UNTIL THE TIME OF THE END

Daniel's description of the revelation

A great conflict

The preparation for the vision

Three weeks mourning

The location of the vision: by the Tigris

The vision of the glorious man above the river (cf. Revelation 1).

Daniel's response like that of John: he fell on his face

The hand that touched and strengthened him.

The explanation of the delay

The conflict among the awesome princes.

Daniel receives strength to understand what is in the "book of truth".

The flow of history

The detailed history from the end of the Medo-Persian empire (four more kings), its conquest by Alexander the Great, the splitting up of Alexander's kingdom on his death between his four generals. The tensions, wars, intrigues and liaisons between the Ptolemies in the south and the Seleucids in the north (with Israel in between) up to Antiochus Epiphanes and his activities in 167 BC.

Antiochus as thought-model of the future. The king with strange power who magnifies himself above every god and blasphemes God.

The "time of the end". The end of that king. The time of great trouble for Daniel's people and the resurrection of the dead.

Daniel's concern: "How long to the end of these wonders". Three and a half times to the end of the shattering of the holy people. The words shut up until the time of the end.

"Go your way until the end. And you shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days" Dan. 12.13

© John Lennox 2012

Contents not to be copied without permission.