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# **DANIEL**

**and the lion's den**



## God Rules • Not Man

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### Let's think about Daniel ...

- **Who** was Daniel?
- **When** did Daniel live?
- **Where** did Daniel live?
- **What** was Daniel doing?
- **Why** was Daniel in trouble?
- **What** did God do for Daniel?
- **How** can Daniel help us?



## God Rules • Not Man

### Who was Daniel?

- Daniel was 1 of 4 Jewish young men chosen to serve in Nebuchadnezzar's court:

#### Jewish Name

#### Babylonian Name

<b>Daniel</b> - God judges/is mighty, My judge is El	<b>Belteshazzar</b> - (Bel/Marduk) guard his life
<b>Hananiah</b> - Yahweh has been/is gracious	<b>Shadrach</b> * - the command of Aku (moon-god)
<b>Mishael</b> - who belongs to/is like God	<b>Meshach</b> * - who is what Aku is
<b>Azariah</b> - Yahweh has helped	<b>Abed-Nego</b> - servant of (the god) Nebo/Nabu



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### Who was Daniel?

- Daniel was 1 of 4 Jewish young men chosen to serve in Nebuchadnezzar's court:
  - They were chosen:
    - for their appearance **1.4**
    - for their wisdom, possessing knowledge & being quick to understand **1.4**
    - to serve in the king's place **1.4**
    - to learn the language & literature of the Chaldeans **1.4**
  - They were prepared:
    - with special diets **1.5**
    - for three years **1.5**



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### Who was Daniel?

- The opening chapter indicates that their training was somewhat of a larger assimilation/re-education/indoctrination effort:
  - Jehoiakim, king of Judah -> taken to Babylon/Chaldea (astrology/fortune tellers)
  - Articles from Jerusalem temple -> to Shinar/Babylon -> to *their* god's house
  - Sons of nobility and kings in Jerusalem -> servants in Babylon
  - Familiar w/Jewish culture, lang & lit. -> trained in Babylonian culture, lang & lit
  - Followed Jewish dietary restrictions -> a diet of food offered to pagan gods\*
  - Names honoring Jehovah -> names "honoring" pagan gods



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### Who was Daniel?

- “The learning process was therefore also an **induction** into the **worldview** and **culture** of Babylonia. Training foreigners in this way was intended to **assimilate** them into Babylonian life and make the skills of the best of them available to the Babylonians rather than to their real or potential enemies.” (emphasis added)

Ernest C. Lucas, “Daniel,” in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, vol. 4, p 528 of ZIBCOTT





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### Who was Daniel?

- Daniel was a man of conviction:
  - He purposed not to defile himself **1.8**
    - He would not eat or drink the king's food **1.8**
    - He asked to be “excused” ...that he might not defile himself **1.8**
    - The chief eunuch was concerned ... you “endanger my head” **1.10**
    - Daniel suggested a 10-day test **1.11-14** • which *they* passed **1.15-16**
    - All 4 men excelled in their studies (providence) • Daniel knew visions/dreams **1.17**
    - Tested by the king • None like them • 10x better than all others **1.18-20**



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### When did Daniel live?

- Daniel lived at the very end of Judah's reign **1.1**
  - Nebuchadnezzar came to & besieged Jerusalem in Jehoiakim's 3rd yr **1.1**
  - Josiah died 609 BC • Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem 606 BC
  - 606 BC - 1st wave of exiles • 596 BC - 2nd wave • 586 3rd wave
  - Daniel, Hanaiah, Mishael, Azariah taken to Babylon in 606 BC/1st wave
  - Captivity - 70 years/606-536 BC **Jer 29.10** • Daniel there until Cyrus' 1st yr **1.21**



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### Where did Daniel live?

- Daniel was born in Judah
  - A descendant of either kings or nobles **1.3, cf. Esther 1.3, 6.9**
  - Brought to the city of **Babylon**, capital of the country of **Babylon/Chaldea**
  - Served Nebuchadnezzar in the court/palace of the king as an advisor
    - Daniel, Hanaiah, Mishael & Azariah fulfilled **Is 39.7** “And they shall take away some of your sons who will descend from you, whom you will beget; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.’ ”



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### What was Daniel doing?

- Babylon/Chaldea was known for its emphasis on ...
  - Superior knowledge • Wisdom • Mystical revelations •
  - Astrology • Fortune telling • “omen lore”
- After Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, look who he called: “Now in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was so troubled that his sleep left him. Then the king gave the command to call the **magicians**, the **astrologers**, the **sorcerers**, and the Chaldeans to **tell the king his dreams**. So they came and stood before the king.” **2.1-2**



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### What was Daniel doing?

- Daniel, Hanaiah, Mishael & Azariah, faithful Jews, were expected to participate in, and help solve, problems like discerning/interpreting dreams & visions.
  - It was **expected** that they would do so based on their three years of training in the languages and the literature of the Chaldeans.
- The magicians in Nebuchadnezzar's court wanted to know the dream **before** they gave the interpretation. The king refused to tell them. He argued that they should **first** tell him the dream and **then** its meaning. If not, they would be killed.
  - Note their reply: "It is a difficult thing that the king requests, and there is no other who can tell it to the king **except the gods**, whose dwelling is **not with flesh.**" **2.11**



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### What was Daniel doing?

- “So Daniel went in and asked the king to give him time, that he might tell the king the interpretation. Then Daniel went to his house, and made the decision known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, that they might seek mercies from the God of heaven concerning this secret, so that Daniel and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. So Daniel blessed the God of heaven.” **2.16-19**



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### What was Daniel doing?

- Daniel's solution:
  - From, and thus rooted in, ....
    - Jehovah God • God's **sovereign** rule • God's **wisdom** • God's **knowledge**
    - God's **revealed** word, **generally** in nature/Scripture; **specifically** to Daniel **2.20-23**
    - “Then Arioch quickly brought Daniel before the king, and said thus to him, “I have found a man of the captives of Judah, who will make known to the king the interpretation.” **2.25** • “Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen, and its interpretation?” **2.26**



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### What was Daniel doing?

- Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, “The secret which the king has demanded, the **wise men**, the **astrologers**, the **magicians**, and the **soothsayers cannot** declare to the king. But **there is a God** in heaven who **reveals secrets**, and **He has made known** to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream, and the visions of your head upon your bed, were these: 2.27-28, cf 2.29-30
- Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar his dream • He told the king its meaning **2.31-45**





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### What was Daniel doing?

- Nebuchadnezzar re God:
  - “Truly your God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret.” **2.47**
- Nebuchadnezzar re Daniel, Hanaiah, Mishael & Azariah:
  - Then the king **promoted** Daniel and gave him many great gifts; and he made him **ruler** over the whole province of Babylon, and **chief administrator** over all the wise men of Babylon. Also Daniel petitioned the king, and he set **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego** over the affairs of the province of Babylon; but Daniel sat in **the gate of the king. 2.48-49**



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### Why was Daniel in trouble?

- Initially, Daniel was lauded for interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's dream
  - He not only told the king what the dream was ... He **interpreted** the dream
  - **God** revealed the dream and its meaning to Daniel • Daniel **gave credit** to God
- Later, Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold **3.1**
  - The command: “you shall fall down and worship the gold image” **3.4-5**
  - If you refuse: “be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.” **3.6**
- “All the people, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the gold image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.” **3.7**



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### Why was Daniel in trouble?

- But not the Jews: “certain Chaldeans came forward and accused the Jews” **3.8**
  - “There are certain Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego; these men, O king, have **not** paid due regard to you. They do **not** serve your gods or worship the gold image which you have set up.” **3.12**
- The king’s challenge:
  - Worship the image (good) • Or the fiery furnace **3.15**
  - “And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?” **3.15**



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### Why was Daniel in trouble?

- Their response:
  - “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up.” **3.16-18**
- Nebuchadnezzar had them bound and thrown into the fire **3.19-23**
  - But God sustained them **3.24-30** • Nebuchadnezzar promoted them **3.30**



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### Why was Daniel in trouble?

- Daniel interpreted a second dream for Nebuchadnezzar **4.1-37**
- Belshazzar's feast **5.1ff**
  - The writing on the wall **5.5ff**
  - Astrologers, Chaldeans, soothsayers, wise men could not explain it **5.7-9**
  - The queen remembered Daniel • He interpreted the writing **5.10ff**
  - He referenced Nebuchadnezzar's dream and interpretation **5.17ff**
  - Nebuchadnezzar was humbled, but Belshazzar was not **5.20, 22**
  - Daniel gave the meaning of the writing on the wall **5.25ff** • Fulfilled that night **5.30**



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### Why was Daniel in trouble?

- Darius the Mede becomes king **5.30ff**
  - He established 120 satraps • Three governors • Daniel was one of them **6.1-2**
  - Daniel distinguished himself above governors and satraps **6.3**
  - Darius sought to give Daniel even more authority **6.3**
  - Other governors and satraps looked for some fault in Daniel **6.4**
- Their solution: “We shall not find any charge against this Daniel **unless** we find it against him **concerning the law of his God.**” **6.5**
  - No petitions to any “god or man for thirty days, except you” **8.7**



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### Why was Daniel in trouble?

- Daniel went home to pray 6.10
  - In his upper room • With the windows open toward Jerusalem
  - He knelt down on his knees • Three times that day
  - And prayed • Giving thanks before God
  - “As was his custom since early days”
- Daniel’s opponents:
  - Reminded the king about the decree • Told him that Daniel violated it **6.11ff**
  - According to the decree, Daniel was thrown into a den of lions **6.14-21**



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### Why was Daniel in trouble?

- “And when he came to the den, he cried out with a lamenting voice to Daniel. The king spoke, saying to Daniel, “Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?” Then Daniel said to the king, “O king, live forever! My God sent His angel and shut the lions’ mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you.” **6.20-23**





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### What did God do for was Daniel?

- God's sovereignty/rule was constantly highlighted:
  - In the life of Daniel
  - In the lives of Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah
  - In the life of Nebuchadnezzar
  - In the life of the chief eunuch
  - In the life of Belshazzar
  - In the kingdom of the Babylonians • In the kingdom of the Medes/Persians
  - In the life of the Jews in captivity



## God Rules • Not Man

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### How can Daniel helps us?

- God still rules, not man
  - In individual lives
  - In families
  - In congregations
  - In all governments: local, state, national, international
- Our faith, like Daniel's, Hananiah's, Mishael's and Azariah's must be ...
  - In **God** • In God's **promises** • In God's **word** • **With** God's people
  - Our lives, like their's, must **always** be rooted in **the God who rules**

