

Daniel

Overview

- In a word: Kingdom
- In a sentence: Daniel describes the climactic ending of the world that existed up until Messiah and the establishment of Yahweh's kingdom on earth- a new world.

Context and Setting

- Daniel was one of the captives taken away to Babylon after the destruction of Jerusalem.
- Daniel serves Babylonian kings and looks forward to Jeremiah's promise of the end of exile after 70 years.

Thematic Comments

- The book of Daniel focuses on Yahweh's control of history and his incredible power to weave history toward his goal of establishing his kingdom and reuniting heaven and earth.
- Daniel is about the preservation and even the renewal of God's people during the "ichabod" period of their history.
- Keep the Babel/Babylon linkages in mind. There are three Babylons in the bible.
- Daniel closes the former days and initiates the latter days.
- There are likely 10 commandments linkages, but I couldn't fully trace it out myself. If these are legit they indicate that Daniel is like a new Moses leading the people through a new wilderness (Babylon/exile) to a new promised land (the kingdom).
- **Of all the books in the Old Testament, Daniel has the highest concentration of allusions to the Joseph narrative.** The exegetical evidence suggests that Daniel, noting the parallels between his own life as a dream-interpreting exile and Joseph's, saw himself as a new Joseph and interpreted his own experiences in the light of Joseph's story. As a result, Daniel crafted his narrative to highlight these correspondences as a way of signalling his redemptive-historical significance for exilic Israelites. (Samuel Emadi. From Prisoner to Prince: The Joseph Story in Biblical Theology. IVP Academic, 2022.)
- Joseph and Daniel stand at the two poles of Israel's Old Testament history. Joseph and his brothers (the eponymous tribal heads) are the first generation of the Israelite nation. As such, they foreshadow the history of the nation they will sire – just as events in Abraham's life did the same (Gen. 12:10–20; 22). As Genesis indicates, this tribal family did not blossom into a nation in Canaan, but in exile in Egypt (Gen. 46:3; 47:27; Exod. 1:8). And the family blossomed only because Joseph secured their well-being by advancing into the highest ranks of a foreign court. Joseph achieved his rank by interpreting the dreams of the king and being a man of recognizable wisdom. When famine forced them to Egypt, Joseph provided for them, and the nation multiplied from seventy to a great multitude (Gen. 46:3; 47:27).

Thus, Israel was born in exile (Gen. 46:3). Yet, as Joseph predicts, they will not die in exile (Gen. 50:24–25). God will rescue his people (even Joseph) and take them back to Canaan. Joseph’s ministry to his family, therefore, was not ultimately to settle them in Egypt but to prepare them for the exodus. Daniel stands at the opposite pole of Israel’s Old Testament history. **In Daniel the story of Israel ‘comes full circle’.**²³ **If Jacob’s sojourn in Egypt is the birth of the nation (Gen. 46:3), then the exile, by all appearances, is its death (cf. Ezek. 37:1–14). Yet, Daniel’s Joseph-like story suggests life after death – a new birth in exile.** Daniel, like Joseph, is a young man sent ahead of the nation, who secures its well-being by advancing into the highest ranks of a foreign court. Daniel achieves his rank by interpreting the dreams of the king and being a man of recognizable wisdom. In some sense, the stakes are even higher for Daniel. His task is more difficult than Joseph’s. Whereas Joseph only needed to interpret Pharaoh’s dream, Daniel had to know the content of the dream without being told. Whereas Joseph’s life was never in peril, Daniel risks his life and the lives of his friends (Dan. 2:13). Whereas Pharaoh enjoined his servants to honour Joseph (Gen. 41:40, 43), Nebuchadnezzar himself bows to Daniel (Dan. 2:46).²⁴ Daniel himself understands rescue from captivity as a new exodus.

Structure

- Ch. 1 (hebrew) Who is Master?
- Ch.2 (aramaic) The King's Dream background-color:: yellow
 - Ch. 3 Yahweh's people in the fire background-color:: pink
 - Ch. 4 The Pride of Nebuchadnezzar background-color:: green
 - Ch. 5 The Pride of Belshazzar background-color:: green
 - Ch. 6 Yahweh's people in the Lion's Den background-color:: pink
- Ch. 7 Daniel's Dream - The Son of Man Receives the Kingdom background-color:: yellow
- Ch. 8 (hebrew) Vision of final two kingdoms of ch.7 background-color:: purple
 - Ch. 9 Daniel's Prayer - 70 Weeks background-color:: blue
- Ch. 10-12 Vision of Final Two Kingdoms background-color:: purple
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Exegetical Notes