

LIVING GODS WILL

Prophet of God

DANIEL



Daniel in the Lion's Den by Gauthier

Prophet of God **DANIEL**

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Born: 620 BC, Jerusalem

Died: 538-532 BC

Daniel was a prophet of **God**.

Daniel had the gifts from God of **interpreting dreams** and **prophecy**.

Daniel survived being put into a **den of lions**.

Daniel had a powerful devotion to **prayer**.

Daniel's parents chose a Hebrew name for their son meaning "**God is my judge**," testifying of their faith in the one, **true God**.

We can read about the life of **Daniel** in his own writings in the **book of Daniel** and also in **Ezekiel 14:14, 20 and 28:3**.

There are some striking similarities between the life of **Daniel** and that of Jacob's son **Joseph**. Both of them prospered in foreign lands after interpreting dreams for their rulers, and both were elevated to high office as a result of their faithfulness to **God**.

After Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, besieged Jerusalem, he chose noble men from Israel's royal household who were handsome and showed an aptitude for learning, to be trained in the ways of the Babylonians.

After their three years' training, they would be put into the king's service (**Daniel 1:1-6**). **Daniel**, whose name means "**God is my judge**," and his three countrymen from Judea were chosen and given new names.

Daniel became "**Beltshazzar**," while Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah became "**Shadrach**," "**Meshach**," and "**Abednego**." The Babylonians most likely gave them new names that were completely disassociated with their Hebrew roots to hasten **Daniel** and his friends' assimilation into the Babylonian culture.

Daniel and his compatriots proved to be the wisest of all the trainees, and, at the end of their training, they entered the service of King Nebuchadnezzar.

Daniel's first sign of faithfulness to **God** was when he and his three friends rejected the rich food and wine from the king's table, because they deemed it a defilement, and became vegetarians. As their health improved, they were permitted to continue with their chosen diet.

In their education, the four men from Judah became knowledgeable in all Babylonian matters, and **Daniel** was given by **God** the ability to understand dreams and visions of all kinds (**Daniel 1:17**).

In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar was troubled with a dream that he could not interpret. Beyond interpretation, Nebuchadnezzar commanded his magicians, enchanters, sorcerers, and astrologers to also describe his dream.

These men were willing to try to interpret the dream if Nebuchadnezzar first told them what it was, but they said that revealing the dream itself was an impossible task for humans.

The king decreed that all the wise men, including **Daniel** and his companions, must be put to death. However, after **Daniel** sought **God** in prayer, the mystery of the king's dream was revealed to **Daniel**, and he was taken to the king to interpret it.

Daniel immediately attributed his ability to interpret dreams to the one true **God** (**Daniel 2:28**).

The key feature of the dream was that one day there will be a kingdom set up by **God** that will last forever, and that **God's** kingdom will destroy all previous, man-made kingdoms (**Daniel 2:44-45**).

For his wisdom, **Daniel** was honored by King Nebuchadnezzar and placed in authority over all the wise men of Babylon. At **Daniel's** request, his three countrymen were also placed in positions of authority as administrators of Babylon.

Later, King Nebuchadnezzar had another dream, and again **Daniel** was able to interpret it. The king acknowledged that **Daniel** had the spirit of his holy **God** within him (**Daniel 4:9**).

Daniel's interpretation of the dream was correct. After experiencing a period of insanity, Nebuchadnezzar was restored to health, and he praised and honored **Daniel's God** as the Most High (**Daniel 4:34-37**).

Nebuchadnezzar's son, Belshazzar, became the new king, and during a banquet he ordered the gold and silver goblets that had been stolen from the holy temple in Jerusalem to be brought out for use.

In response to the defilement of such holy items, Belshazzar sees a hand writing on the wall. His astrologers are unable to assist him in its translation, and so **Daniel** is called upon to interpret the writing (**Daniel 5:13-16**).

As a reward for interpreting the writing, **Daniel** is promoted by King Belshazzar to the third highest position in the Babylonian kingdom (**verse 29**). That night, as **Daniel** had prophesied, the king was slain in battle, and his kingdom was taken over by the Persian Cyrus the Great, and Darius the Mede was made king.

Under the new ruler, **Daniel** excelled in his duties as one of the administrators to such a degree that King Darius was contemplating making him head over all the kingdom (**Daniel 6:1-3**).

This infuriated the other administrators so much that they looked for a way to bring **Daniel** down. They could find no wrongdoing on **Daniel's** part, so they focused on the matter of **Daniel's** religion.

Using flattery, the administrators coaxed Darius into issuing a decree forbidding prayers to any god other than the king for the next thirty days. The penalty for disobedience was to be thrown into a **den of lions**.

Daniel disobeyed the edict, of course, and continued to pray openly to the true **God**. As **Daniel** made no attempt to hide his activity, he was seen praying and arrested.

With much regret the king gave the order for **Daniel** to be thrown into the lions' den, but not without a prayer that **Daniel's God** would rescue him (**Daniel 6:16**).

The next day, when **Daniel** was found alive and well, he told the king that **God** had sent an **angel** to shut the lions' mouths and so he had remained unharmed. This miracle resulted in King Darius sending out a decree that all his subjects were to worship the **God of Daniel**. **Daniel** continued to prosper throughout King Darius' reign.

Daniel is also well known for the prophetic dreams and visions **God** gave him, recorded in the **book of Daniel**. **Daniel's** prophecies cover a broad range of human history, as he predicted the rise and fall of the Greek and Roman Empires and the rise of a powerful king who:

"will do as he pleases. He will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will say unheard-of things against the God of gods" (**Daniel 11:36**).

Daniel's "seventy weeks" prophecy spoke of a Messiah who would be killed (**Daniel 9:24-27**). We saw this prophecy fulfilled with **Jesus**.

The remainder of the prophecy—the seventieth week—will be fulfilled in the end times. **Daniel** had other apocalyptic visions as well, and understanding his prophecies is important to eschatology.

Daniel exercised great integrity and, in doing so, received the respect and affection of the powerful rulers he served. However, his honesty and loyalty to his masters never led him to compromise his faith in the one true **God**.

Rather than it being an obstacle to his success, **Daniel's** continual devotion to **God** brought him the admiration of the unbelievers in his circle. When delivering his interpretations, he was quick to give **God** the credit for his ability to do so (**Daniel 2:28**).

Daniel's integrity as a man of **God** gained him favor with the secular world, yet he refused to compromise his faith in **God**. Even under the intimidation of kings and rulers, **Daniel** remained steadfast in his commitment to **God**.

Daniel also teaches us that, no matter whom we are dealing with, no matter what their status is, we are to treat them with compassion. See how concerned he was when delivering the interpretation to Nebuchadnezzar's second dream (**Daniel 4:19**).

As Christians, we are called to obey the rulers and authorities that **God** has put in place, treating them with respect and compassion; however, as we see from **Daniel's** example, obeying **God's** law must always take precedence over obeying men (**Romans 13:1-7; Acts 5:29**).

As a result of his devotion, **Daniel** found favor with man and with **God** (**Daniel 9:20-23**). Notice also in those verses what the angel **Gabriel** told **Daniel** about how swiftly the answer to his prayer was dispatched.

This shows us how ready the **Lord** is to hear the prayers of His people. **Daniel's** strength lay in his devotion to prayer and is a lesson for us all. It is not just in the bad times but on a daily basis that we must come to **God** in prayer.

SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE

Daniel 10:12 Then he said to me, "Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words."

Daniel 2:48 Then the king gave Daniel high honors and many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon.

Daniel 2:6 But if you show the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. Therefore show me the dream and its interpretation."

Daniel 6:16 So the king gave the command, and they brought Daniel and cast him into the den of lions. But the king spoke, saying to Daniel, "Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you."

Daniel 6:22 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."



Daniel on the Sistine Chapel by Michelangelo