

Book of Daniel



The Chiastic Structure of Daniel Chapter 1

A	Babylonia assumes supremacy over Israel (vv. 1-2)
B	Young men taken and subjected to pagan training (vv. 3-7)
C	Daniel seeks to remain faithful to God (vv. 8-14)
C'	Daniel remains faithful to God (vv. 15-16)
B'	Young men triumph in their pagan training (vv. 17-20)
A'	Daniel proves supreme over the Babylonians (v. 21)

(See John E. Goldingay, *Daniel*, pp. 8-12)

The Chapter Introduces 5 Themes

1. God's sovereignty, specifically as it relates to the exile
2. The desecration of the Temple
3. The moral and ethical contrasts between cultures
4. The importance of wisdom and the choices we make
5. The role of divinely imparted gifts

Daniel And His Friends Are Described As:

1. From the elite or noble class
2. From the tribe of Judah
3. Excellent physical specimens
4. Well educated

Daniel's decision to not take the food and wine offered was essentially a desire to remain ceremonially pure.



General Outline in Daniel of Narrative Pattern:

1. A situation or crisis arises
2. The situation or crisis forces a decision –
comply or remain faithful to the Lord
3. Faithfulness to the Lord brings difficulty
and potential suffering
4. God is glorified

Aramaic is a Semitic language (as is Hebrew and Phoenician). It was the common language of the Assyrian and Babylonian Empires and it gradually replaced Hebrew as the language of the Jews in those areas.

Why Aramaic?

The prevailing view is that Aramaic is the lingua franca of the region and this section speaks to matters pertaining to the whole world.

The unique nature of Nebuchadnezzar's dream demand:

Nebuchadnezzar demands the interpretation of his dream, without revealing the content of his dream.



There are four important lessons given here concerning Daniel

1. Upon hearing of the king's order to kill the wise men, Daniel responds with wise discernment, not anger or objections.
2. He commits the matter to God through prayer, enlisting his friends as well.
3. He responds with praise when the dream is revealed to him.
4. He credits God alone with the revelation.

Key Thought:

It is easy to *act* like a believer, but Daniel teaches us how to *react* like one.



Two prominent figures that were given the ability to interpret dreams.

1. Joseph (Gen 37:5-10)
2. Daniel (2:14-45)

In both cases, the dreams pertained to events in the future.

"Suppose there are prophets among you or those who dream dreams about the future, and they promise you signs or miracles,
² and the predicted signs or miracles occur. If they then say, 'Come, let us worship other gods'-- gods you have not known before--
³ do not listen to them. The LORD your God is testing you to see if you truly love him with all your heart and soul.
⁴ Serve only the LORD your God and fear him alone. Obey his commands, listen to his voice, and cling to him.
⁵ The false prophets or visionaries who try to lead you astray must be put to death, for they encourage rebellion against the LORD your God, who redeemed you from slavery and brought you out of the land of Egypt. Since they try to lead you astray from the way the LORD your God commanded you to live, you must put them to death. In this way you will purge the evil from among you.

Deuteronomy 13:1-5 NLT

Some examples in the NT of how God used dreams

1. Joseph told to take Mary as his wife and that the baby she was carrying was conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matt 1:20)
2. The wise men were told in a dream to return home by another route (Matt 2:12)
3. Joseph told to escape with Jesus and Mary to Egypt before Herod finds them (Matt 2:13-14)
4. Joseph is told to return to Israel because Herod is dead (Matt 2:19)
5. Joseph is warned that Herod's son is king, so goes to the region of Galilee (Matt 2:22)

Key Thought:

Without the revelation of God through a dream, the outcome of some events would have turned out dramatically different.



The 4 Kingdoms

Chapter 2	Chapter 7	Roman View	Greek View
Head of gold		Babylon	Babylon
Arms and chest of silver		Media-Persia	Medes
Belly and thighs of bronze		Greece	Persian
Legs of iron		Rome	Greece



Two Further Implications

1. God has a distinct plan for the world
2. God is ordering history to accommodate his plan

The Section Stresses the Contrast Between:

1. Transient kingdoms – Those of this world
2. Everlasting kingdom - God's