

## A 'Simple' Guide to Daniel

The Book of Daniel is an extraordinary mix of historical narrative and prophetic visions. We see Daniel's unshakable faith in God and through the detailed prophetic visions evidence of the power of God's eternal plan. Throughout Daniel we see that God has absolute sovereignty over all creatures, people, nations and empires. In addition, he perfectly knows the future and it will happen exactly as he intends. For example: *"He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding"* Daniel 2:21 *"The God of the heavens will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, and this kingdom will not be left to another people. It will crush all these kingdoms and bring them to an end but will itself endure forever."* Daniel 2:44 cf Daniel 4:17, 25b, 34b-35 (Psalm 22:8; 47:8; 103:19; Isaiah 46:9-11)

### Timing of Daniel

605BC Daniel is taken captive to Babylon - Daniel 1:1-3. He served for all of the Babylonian captivity as a prophet and government minister. He continued under the Medes & Persian Empire until at least the third year of Cyrus in 536BC - Daniel 10:1 It is unlikely that he ever returned to Jerusalem but in this 70 year period of captivity/exile (his whole adult life) he unwaveringly followed and served God.

### Outline of Daniel

#### Chapters 1-6 **Key events in Daniel's life**

- Daniel's captivity and training in Babylon (1)
- Nebuchadnezzar's dream and Daniel's interpretation (2)
- The Golden Image and deliverance from the Fiery Furnace (3)
- Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a Tree, his humbling and restoration (4)
- Belshazzar's banquet and the Writing on the Wall (5)
- Daniel's rescue from the Den of Lions (6)

#### Chapters 7-12 **Daniel's dreams and visions**

- Dream of the Four Beasts (7)
- Vision of a Ram and a Goat (8)
- Daniel's Prayer and Vision of 70 weeks (9)
- Vision of future Kings (10-12)

Daniel's various dreams and visions which have a number of possible interpretations, show us that God has a plan for His people and that he knows how and when this will all work out in future events.

These visions, which are simultaneously captivating and complicated, include:

- **Nebuchadnezzar's Dream:** A statue of various metals foretelling four kingdoms and are historically understood to refer to the Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Roman Empires. The final fifth kingdom will be the everlasting Kingdom of God.
- **The Four Beasts:** Also historically considered to represent the same four kings or empires but would also seem to have complete fulfilment sometime in the future.

