

DANIEL

1. Opening Thoughts.

- a. Our philosophy of history is crucial to our worldview. Every worldview has a philosophy of history. Our philosophy of history, as believers, must be distinctively biblical. “What we think of the meaning of history is inseparable from what we think of the meaning of life.”¹
- b. What you will be taught over the next 3-4 months is crucial for us to know, yet there are only a handful of small churches that teach it. This is because of poor biblical illiteracy, historical illiteracy, and the allegorical interpretation of prophecies related to Israel (“replacement theology”).
- c. Atheism says there is no God and history is run by cause and effect in a closed universe. Pantheism says history is cyclical and an illusion. Postmodernism says we can’t really know anything for sure about history. Deism says God kicked things off and then went on an extended vacation. Biblical theism says God actively rules over history and that history is therefore purposeful and directed.
- d. The biblical worldview answers the big questions of life as know other worldview can (reality, origin, identity, purpose, ethics, destiny, truth). Daniel informs us about three big questions areas in particular: reality, destiny, and truth.

2. Author: Daniel.

- a. Daniel claims to write the book (Da 12:4), and he uses the autobiographical first person from Da 7:2 onward. The Jewish Talmud agrees. Jesus attributed a quote for Da 9:27 to Daniel (Mt 24:15).
 - (1) **Da 12:4** 4 But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end.
 - (2) **Da 7:2** 2 Daniel declared, I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea.
 - (3) **Mt 24:15** 15 So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand)....
- b. Daniel’s name means “God is my judge.” In Babylon, he was given the name Belteshazzar (Da 1:7), which means “Bel protect his life” (see Je 51:44).
 - (1) **Da 1:7** 7 And the chief of the eunuchs gave them names: Daniel he called Belteshazzar....
 - (2) **Je 51:44** 44 And I will punish Bel in Babylon, and take out of his mouth what he has swallowed.
- c. Daniel was about 15 years old when he was exiled to Babylon. Josephus implies he and his three friends were made eunuchs (*Antiquities of the Jews* 10.10.1; cf. Da 1:3, 7).
- d. Daniel served the kings of Babylon from 605 to 539 bc and died around the time the Jerusalem temple began to be rebuilt in 536 bc. From 605-536 bc is precisely 70 years.

¹ Herbert Schlossberg, *Idols for Destruction*, 12.

- e. Nothing negative is ever written about Daniel. He is greatly beloved by God (Da 9:23; 10:11, 19) and commended by his contemporary, Ezekiel, as an example of righteousness (Eze 14:12-20).
- (1) **Da 9:23** 23 At the beginning of your pleas for mercy a word went out, and I have come to tell it to you, for you are greatly loved.
 - (2) **Da 10:11** 11 And he said to me, O Daniel, man greatly loved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for now I have been sent to you.
 - (3) **Da 10:19** 19 And he said, O man greatly loved, fear not, peace be with you. Be strong and of good courage.
 - (4) **Eze 14:13-16** 13 Son of man, when a land sins against me by acting faithlessly, and I stretch out my hand against it and break its supply of bread and send famine upon it, and cut off from it man and beast, 14 even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver but their own lives by their righteousness, declares the Lord Yahweh. 15 If I cause wild beasts to pass through the land, and they ravage it, and it be made desolate, so that no one may pass through because of the beasts, 16 even if these three men were in it, as I live, declares the Lord God, they would deliver neither sons nor daughters. They alone would be delivered, but the land would be desolate.
 - (5) **Eze 28:3** 3 ... You [the prince of Tyre] are indeed wiser than Daniel; no secret is hidden from you....
- f. Ps 119 was likely written by Daniel.
- (1) **Ps 119:46-47** 46 I will also speak of your testimonies before kings and shall not be put to shame, 47 for I find my delight in your commandments, which I love.
 - (2) **Ps 119:54** 54 Your statutes have been my songs in the house of my sojourning.
 - (3) **Ps 119:63** 63 I am a companion of all who fear you, of those who keep your precepts.

3. Date: 530 bc

- a. For apologetical purposes, determining the date of *Daniel* is very important.
- b. Critics of the Bible argue *Daniel* was written in the second century bc. They say this because of the extreme accuracy of its prophecies, especially, Da 11. They also point to historical inaccuracies concerning Belshazzar (Da 5:1) and Darius the Mede (Da 5:31; 6:1).
 - (1) Porphyry of Tyre, a 3rd-century critic of Christianity, was the first to advance the theory that Daniel was written after the fact. Porphyry was a student of the neo-Platonic philosopher Plotinus.
 - (2) “(P. 491) (617-618) Porphyry wrote his twelfth book against the prophecy of Daniel, (A) denying that it was composed by the person to whom it is ascribed in its title, but rather by some individual living in Judaea at the time of the Antiochus who was surnamed Epiphanes. He furthermore alleged that "Daniel" did not foretell the future so much as he related the past, and lastly that whatever he spoke of up till the time of Antiochus contained authentic history, whereas anything he may have conjectured beyond that point was false, inasmuch as he would not have foreknown the future. Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, made a most able reply to these allegations in three volumes, that is, the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth. Appollinarius did likewise, in a single large book,

namely his twenty-sixth. (B) Prior to these authors Methodius made a partial reply. But inasmuch as it is not our purpose to make answer to the false accusations of an adversary, a task requiring lengthy discussion, but rather to treat of the actual content of the prophet's message for the benefit of us who are Christians, I wish to stress in my preface this fact, that none of the prophets has so clearly spoken concerning Christ as has this prophet Daniel. (619-620) For not only did he assert that He would come, a prediction common to the other prophets as well, but also he set forth the very time at which He would come. Moreover he went through the various kings in order, stated the actual number of years involved, and announced beforehand the clearest signs of events to come. And because Porphyry saw that all these things had been fulfilled and could not deny that they had taken place, he overcame this evidence of historical accuracy by taking refuge in this evasion, contending that whatever is foretold concerning Antichrist at the end of the world was actually fulfilled in the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, because of certain similarities to things which took place at his time. But this very attack testifies to Daniel's accuracy. For so striking was the reliability ¹⁶ of what the prophet foretold, that he could not appear to unbelievers as a predictor of the future, but rather a narrator of things already past. And so wherever occasion arises in the course of explaining this volume, I shall attempt briefly to answer his malicious charge, and to controvert by simple explanation (p. 492) the philosophical skill, or rather the worldly malice, by which he strives to subvert the truth and by specious legerdemain to remove that which is so apparent to our eyes.”²

- c. However, *Daniel* was certainly written by 500 bc. Much of it was written by Daniel himself (Da 7:2). Close acquaintances may have written or collected chapters 1-6 shortly after Daniel's death (c. 536 bc). Evidence includes:
- (1) That the fulfilment of predictive prophecy is impossible is a *presuppositional, circular* argument.
 - (2) Daniel's Aramaic (Da 2-7) is a form of early Imperial Aramaic, not later Aramaic.
 - (3) Daniel's use of Persian words makes sense because most of the book was written in the Persian period, between 539-500 bc.
 - (4) Far more Greek words would be expected if the book were written in the second century bc.
 - (5) Inscriptions at Haran show Belshazzar reigned in Babylon while his father Nabonidus was fighting the invading Persians (Da 5).
 - (6) Darius the Mede (Da 5:31; 6:1) has been identified as Gubaru, a governor appointed by Cyrus.
 - (7) Daniel was already canonical at Qumran at about 100 bc. How could it become so quickly canonical if it had just be produced a mere half century before?

4. Audience: Jews living around 530 bc.

² St. Jerome, Commentary on Daniel (1958). pp. 15-157 [Translated by Gleason L. Archer, https://www.tertullian.org/fathers/jerome_daniel_02_text.htm].

- a. The original audience are Jews living both in and outside Judea around 500 bc. Jews of this time period would be asking:
 - (1) Why did God allow the Babylonian exile to happen? Aren't we his special nation?
 - (2) Is God truly sovereign over the nations and their gods?
 - (3) What about all the messianic promises? When will Messiah and his kingdom come? They were asking the same questions as the disciples in Mt 24 and Ac 1.
 - (a) **Mt 24:3** 3 As [Jesus] sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately saying, Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?
 - (b) **Ac 1:6-7** 6 So when they had come together, they asked him, Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? 7 He said to them, It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority.
 - (4) How long will the "times of the Gentiles" (Lk 21:24) last?
 - (a) **Lk 21:24** 24 They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

5. Historical/Theological Context.

- a. God's dealings with Israel.
 - (1) 1400 bc.
 - (a) Sabbath years.
 - 1) **Ex 23:10-12** 10 For six years you shall sow your land and gather in its yield, 11 but the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the poor of your people may eat. And what they leave the beasts of the field may eat. You shall do likewise with your vineyard and with your olive orchard. 12 Six days you shall do your work, but on the seventh day you shall rest, that your ox and your donkey may have rest, and the son of your servant woman, and the alien, may be refreshed.
 - 2) **Le 25:2-7** 2 Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, When you come into the land that I give you, the land shall keep a Sabbath to Yahweh. 3 For six years you shall sow your field, and for six years you shall prune your vineyard and gather in its fruits, 4 but in the seventh year there shall be a Sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a Sabbath to Yahweh. You shall not sow your field or prune your vineyard. 5 You shall not reap what grows of itself in your harvest, or gather the grapes of your undressed vine. It shall be a year of solemn rest for the land. 6 The Sabbath of the land shall provide food for you, for yourself and for your male and female slaves and for your hired worker and the sojourner who lives with you, 7 and for your cattle and for the wild animals that are in your land. All its yield shall be for food.
 - 3) **Le 26:27-35** 27 ...If in spite of this you will not listen to me, but walk contrary to me, 28 then I will walk contrary to you in fury, and I myself will discipline you sevenfold for your sins. ...33 I will scatter you among the nations, I will unsheathe the sword after you, your land shall be a desolation, and your cities shall be a waste. 34 Then the land shall enjoy

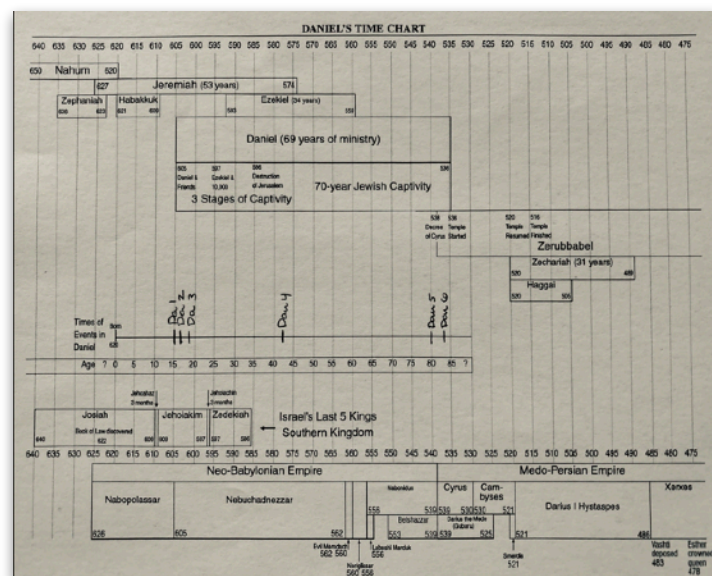
its Sabbaths as long as it lies desolate, while you are in your enemies' land. Then the land shall rest, and enjoy its Sabbaths. 35 As long as it lies desolate it shall have rest, the rest that it did not have on your Sabbaths when you were dwelling in it.

- 4) **Le 26:43** 43 ... The land [of Israel] shall be abandoned by them and enjoy its Sabbaths while it lies desolate without them, and they shall make amends for their iniquity, because they spurned my rules and their soul abhorred my statutes.

(b) Five cycles of discipline (Dt 28).

- 1) **Dt 28:62-66** 62 Whereas you were as numerous as the stars of heaven, you shall be left few in number, because you did not obey the voice of the Lord your God. 63 And as the Lord took delight in doing you good and multiplying you, so the Lord will take delight in bringing ruin upon you and destroying you. And you shall be plucked off the land that you are entering to take possession of it. 64 "And the Lord will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other, and there you shall serve other gods of wood and stone, which neither you nor your fathers have known. 65 And among these nations you shall find no respite, and there shall be no resting place for the sole of your foot, but the Lord will give you there a trembling heart and failing eyes and a languishing soul. 66 Your life shall hang in doubt before you. Night and day you shall be in dread and have no assurance of your life.

- (2) 722 bc - Israel defeated and deported by Assyria.
- (3) 701 bc - Judah, under Hezekiah, miraculously saved from the Assyrian king Sennacherib.
- (4) 740-688 bc - Isaiah predicts the rise of Babylon and later Cyrus (Is 44:28; 45:1).



- (5) 627-574 bc - Jeremiah's ministry.
- (6) 626 bc - Babylon under Nabopolassar rebels against the Assyrian empire.

- (7) 621 bc - Book of the Torah found in Jerusalem (2 Ki 22:8-10); revival under Josiah (2 Ki 23:1-23); Daniel born.
- (8) 612 bc - Babylon conquers the Assyrian capital of Nineveh.



- (9) 609 bc - Josiah attacks the Egyptian Pharaoh Neco and dies (2 Ch 35:20-24).
- (10) 605 bc - Babylon defeats Egypt at Carchemish and becomes master of the Middle East. Nebuchadnezzar deports Daniel and others to Babylon. The “times of the Gentiles” (Lk 21:24) begins. The seventy year Sabbath rest begins (Je 25:11; cf. 32:1-15).
 - (a) **Je 25:11** 11 This whole land shall become a ruin and a waste, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.
 - (b) **2 Ch 36:20-21** 20 [Nebuchadnezzar] took into exile in Babylon those who had escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and to his sons until the establishment of the kingdom of Persia, 21 to fulfil the word of Yahweh by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. All the days that it lay desolate it kept Sabbath, to fulfil seventy years.
 - (c) **Lk 21:24** 24 They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles [for a third time], until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled (see Da 2, 7, 9, 11-12).
- (11) 597 bc - Ezekiel and 10,000 more Jews deported to Babylon.
 - (a) **2 Ki 24:10-15** 10 At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up to Jerusalem, and the city was besieged. 11 And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to the city while his servants were besieging it, 12 and Jehoiachin the king of Judah gave himself up to the king of Babylon, himself and his mother and his servants and his officials and his palace officials. The king of Babylon took him prisoner in the eighth year of his reign 13 and carried off all the treasures of the house of Yahweh and the treasures of the king’s house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold in the

temple of Yahweh, which Solomon king of Israel had made, as Yahweh had foretold. 14 He carried away all Jerusalem and all the officials and all the mighty men of valour, 10,000 captives, and all the craftsmen and the smiths. None remained, except the poorest people of the land. 15 And he carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon. The king's mother, the king's wives, his officials, and the chief men of the land he took into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon.

(12) 593-559 bc - Ezekiel's ministry.

(a) **Eze 11:16-21** 16 Therefore say, Thus says the Lord Yahweh: Though I removed them far off among the nations, and though I scattered them among the countries, yet I have been a sanctuary to them for a while in the countries where they have gone. 17 Therefore say, Thus says the Yahweh: I will gather you from the peoples and assemble you out of the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel. 18 And when they come there, they will remove from it all its detestable things and all its abominations. 19 And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, 20 that they may walk in my statutes, keep my rules, and obey them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God. 21 But as for those whose heart goes after their detestable things and their abominations, I will bring their deeds upon their own heads, declares the Lord Yahweh.

(13) 586 bc - Babylon destroys Jerusalem; third and final deportation.

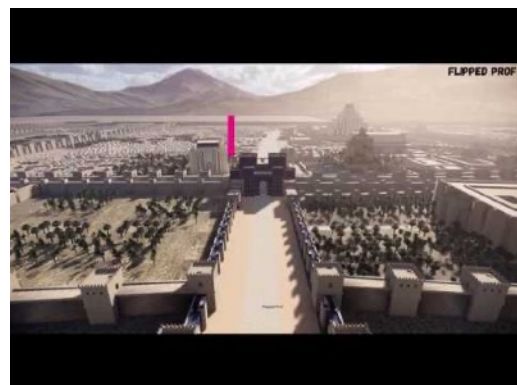
(a) **2 Ki 24:20-25:21** 20 For because of the anger of Yahweh it came to the point in Jerusalem and Judah that he cast them out from his presence. And Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon. 1 And in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came with all his army against Jerusalem and laid siege to it. And they built siegeworks all around it. 2 So the city was besieged till the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. 3 On the ninth day of the fourth month the famine was so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land. 4 Then a breach was made in the city, and all the men of war fled by night by the way of the gate between the two walls, by the king's garden, and the Chaldeans were around the city. And they went in the direction of the Arabah. 5 But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king and overtook him in the plains of Jericho, and all his army was scattered from him. 6 Then they captured the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah, and they passed sentence on him. 7 They slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah and bound him in chains and took him to Babylon. 8 In the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month—that was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon—Nebuzaradan, the captain of the bodyguard, a servant of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. 9 And he burned the house of the Lord and the king's house and all the houses of Jerusalem; every great house he burned down. 10 And all the army of the Chaldeans, who were with the captain of the guard, broke down the walls around Jerusalem. 11 And the rest of the people who were left in the city and the deserters who had deserted to the king of Babylon, together with the rest of the multitude, Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried into exile. 12 But

the captain of the guard left some of the poorest of the land to be vinedressers and plowmen. 13 And the pillars of bronze that were in the house of the Lord, and the stands and the bronze sea that were in the house of the Lord, the Chaldeans broke in pieces and carried the bronze to Babylon. 14 And they took away the pots and the shovels and the snuffers and the dishes for incense and all the vessels of bronze used in the temple service, 15 the fire pans also and the bowls. What was of gold the captain of the guard took away as gold, and what was of silver, as silver. 16 As for the two pillars, the one sea, and the stands that Solomon had made for the house of the Lord, the bronze of all these vessels was beyond weight. 17 The height of the one pillar was eighteen cubits, and on it was a capital of bronze. The height of the capital was three cubits. A latticework and pomegranates, all of bronze, were all around the capital. And the second pillar had the same, with the latticework. 18 And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest and Zephaniah the second priest and the three keepers of the threshold; 19 and from the city he took an officer who had been in command of the men of war, and five men of the king's council who were found in the city; and the secretary of the commander of the army, who mustered the people of the land; and sixty men of the people of the land, who were found in the city. 20 And Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard took them and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah. 21 And the king of Babylon struck them down and put them to death at Riblah in the land of Hamath. So Judah was taken into exile out of its land.

- (b) **Je 22:5-9** 5 But if you will not obey these words, I swear by myself, declares Yahweh, that this house [the Jerusalem temple] shall become a desolation. 6 For thus says Yahweh concerning the house of the king of Judah: You are like Gilead to me, like the summit of Lebanon, yet surely I will make you a desert, an uninhabited city. 7 I will prepare destroyers against you, each with his weapons, and they shall cut down your choicest cedars and cast them into the fire. 8 And many nations will pass by this city, and every man will say to his neighbor, Why has Yahweh dealt thus with this great city? 9 And they will answer, Because they have forsaken the covenant of Yahweh their God and worshiped other gods and served them.
- (14) 562 bc - Evil-merodach frees Jehoiachin.
- (a) **2 Ki 25:27-30** 27 And in the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, Evil-merodach [son of Nebuchadnezzar] king of Babylon, in the year that he began to reign [562 bc], graciously freed Jehoiachin king of Judah from prison. 28 And he spoke kindly to him and gave him a seat above the seats of the kings who were with him in Babylon. 29 So Jehoiachin put off his prison garments. And every day of his life he dined regularly at the king's table, 30 and for his allowance, a regular allowance was given him by the king, according to his daily needs, as long as he lived.
- (15) 539 bc - Medes and Persians conquer Babylon.
- (16) 538 bc - Zerubbabel leads a return of Jews to Jerusalem in Cyrus' first year.
- (17) 536 bc - Jeremiah's seventy years ends (Je 29:10-14). Jerusalem temple begins to be rebuilt; Daniel receives the vision of Da 10-12 (Da 10:1).

- (a) **Je 29:10-14** 10 For thus says Yahweh: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfil to you my promise and bring you back to this place. 11 For I know the plans I have for you, declares Yahweh, plans for shalom (שָׁלוֹם) and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. 12 Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. 13 You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. 14 I will be found by you, declares Yahweh, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares Yahweh, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.
- (18) 530 bc - The book of Daniel completed.
- (19) March 4, 444 bc - Artaxerxes Longimanus's decree begins Daniel's 69 weeks (Da 9:25-26; Ne 2:1-8).
- (a) "This decree was the fourth of four decrees made by Persian rulers in reference to the Jews. The first was Cyrus' decree in 538 b.c. (2 Chron. 36:22–23; Ezra 1:1–4; 5:13). The second was the decree of Darius I (522–486) in 520 b.c. (Ezra 6:1, 6–12). This decree actually was a confirmation of the first decree. The third was the decree of Artaxerxes Longimanus (464–424) in 457 b.c. (Ezra 7:11–26). The first two decrees pertain to the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem and the third relates to finances for animal sacrifices at the temple. These three say nothing about the rebuilding of the city itself. Since an unwalled city was no threat to a military power, a religious temple could be rebuilt without jeopardizing the military authority of those granting permission to rebuild it. No one of these three decrees, then, was the decree that formed the beginning of the 70 sevens. The fourth decree was also by Artaxerxes Longimanus, issued on March 5, 444 b.c. (Neh. 2:1–8). On that occasion Artaxerxes granted the Jews permission to rebuild Jerusalem's city walls. This decree is the one referred to in Daniel 9:25."³
- (20) March 29, ad 33 - Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem.
- (21) Ad 33-??? - Church age.
- (22) ??? - Daniel's seventieth week begins.
- b. Babylon.

- (1) Babylon, "gate of the gods," on the eastern bank of the great river Euphrates, was the largest city in the world at the time. The famous Ishtar gate was one of eight fortified gates set in a broad wall surrounding the city. Dominating the city skyline was a spectacular ziggurat called *Etemenanki*, "House of the Foundations of Heaven and Earth." Babel, the original city that stood on the same site, also contained a tower (Ge 11:4). The famous *Enuma Elish*,



³ J. Dwight Pentecost, "Daniel," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 1362.

Babylon's most famous piece of literature, describes war among the gods and the creation of the universe.

- c. The sixth century bc was an extraordinary time in history. Due to the the exile and influence of the Jews and the increased activity of Satanic forces, several history-transforming worldviews developed.
 - (1) Greek philosophy
 - (2) Buddha:
 - (3) Confucius
 - (4) Lao-tzu:

6. Message and Purpose.

- a. Human empires will come and go, but God, who directs history, will certainly fulfil his promise to send his Messiah who will establish his kingdom. During the times of the Gentiles, God will not forget his promises to Israel.
- b. The primary purposes of Daniel are: (1) to encourage the remnant of Israel to patiently endure as God works out his plan for history; and (2) to teach the Gentiles, especially Gentile rulers, that the God of Israel is the one in charge.

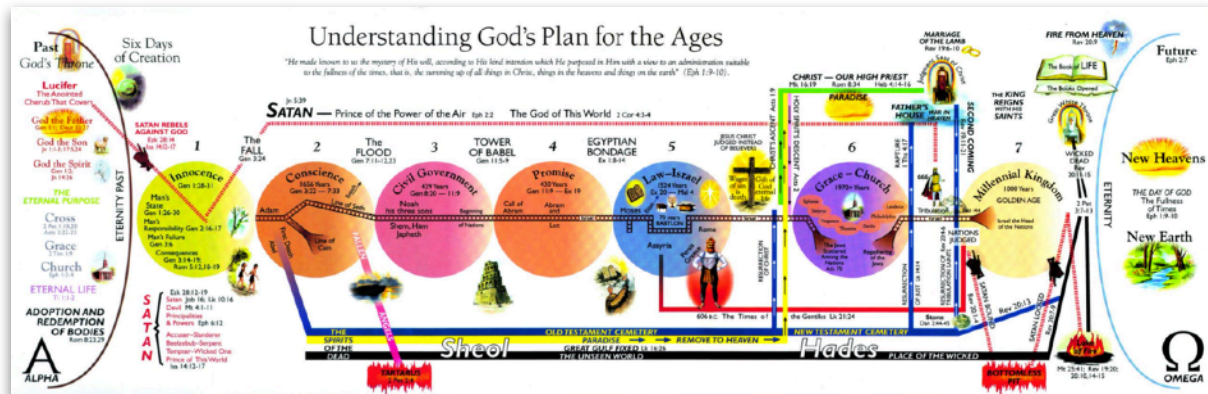
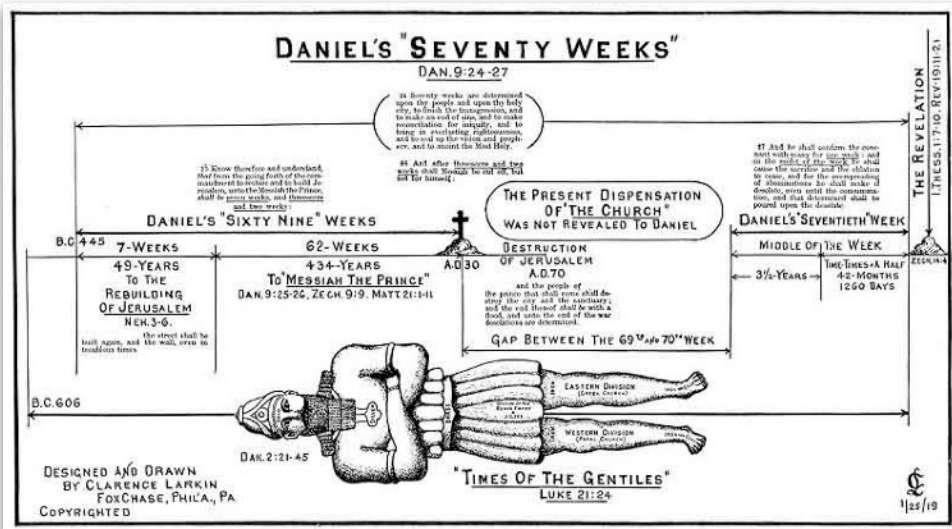
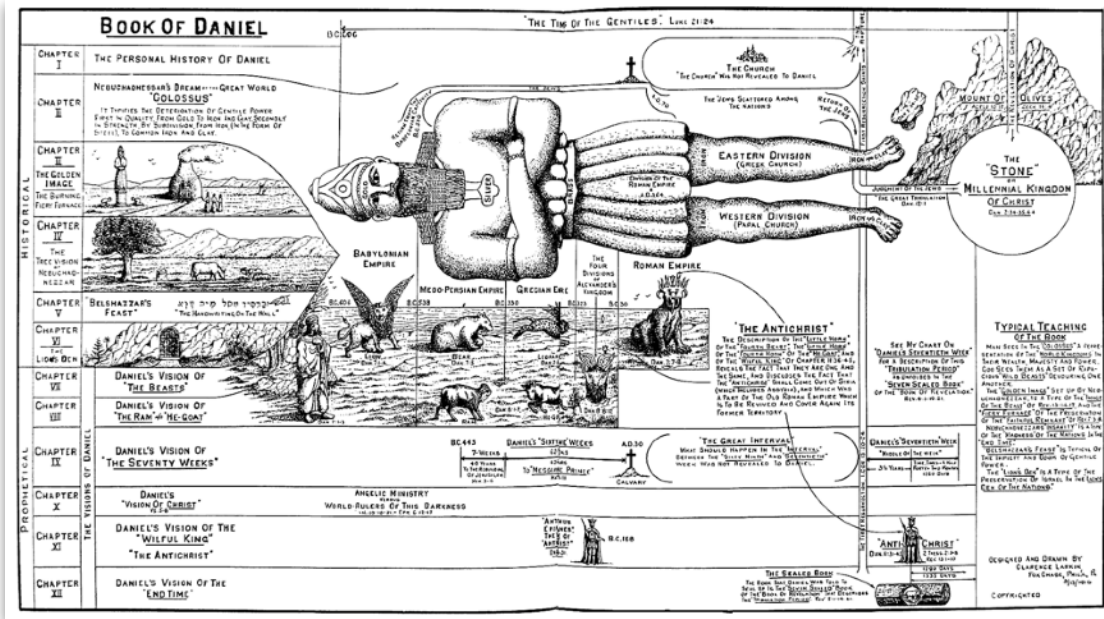
7. Outline.

Daniel at a Glance						
Ch.	Segment		Chapter Theme	Year	Ruler	Daniel's Age
1	Hebrew	Daniel's Story	Daniel's Resolve	605 bc	Nebuchadnezzar	15
2	Aramaic	Prophetic Plan for the Gentiles	Dream of the Frightening Image	603 bc	Nebuchadnezzar	17
3			Burning Fiery Furnace	586 bc?	Nebuchadnezzar	34?
4			Nebuchadnezzar's Gospel Tract	562 bc?	Nebuchadnezzar	58?
5			Writing on the Wall	539 bc	Belshazzar	81
6			Daniel in the Lions' Den	538 bc	Darius	82
7			Vision of the Four Beasts	553 bc	Belshazzar	67
8	Hebrew	Prophetic Plan for Israel	Vision of the Ram and Goat	551 bc	Belshazzar	69
9			Daniel's Confession and Seventy Sevens	539 bc	Darius	81
10			Great Conflict in the Latter Days	537 bc	Cyrus	83
11			Kings of the South and North			
12			The Time of the End			

8. Themes.

- a. God's sovereignty over men and nations.
 - (1) God is *El Elyon*, the Most High God, who does according to his desire among all the inhabitants of the earth.
 - (2) **Da 2:20-21** 20 Daniel answered and said: Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might. 21 He changes times and seasons. He removes kings and sets up kings.

- (3) **Da 4:3** 3 His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion endures from generation to generation.
 - (4) **Da 4:25** 25 You shall be made to eat grass like an ox, and you shall be wet with the dew of heaven, and seven periods of time shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will.
 - (5) Daniel shows how God's sovereignty really works. It shows not Calvinistic sovereignty but biblical sovereignty. God rules and reigns as the all-powerful king who may intervene in his kingdom at any time. However, he is not a micromanaging dictator of everything that happens in his kingdom. He directs the general course of events and sometimes intervenes in specific situations, but he does not directly cause or direct everything that happens. God rules over men and nations as a gentlemen. The general contours of history are revealed in Daniel, but our individual parts in the story is in many ways up to us. It is wise for us to make decisions in accordance with God's revealed programme for history.
- b. God's ability to reveal.
- (1) **Da 2:21-22** 21 He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. 22 He reveals deep and hidden things. He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him.
 - (2) **Da 4:2-3** 2 It has seemed good to me [Nebuchadnezzar] to show the signs and wonders that the Most High God has done for me. 3 How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders!
- c. God's organised plan for history (Da 2, 7, 8, 9:25-26, 10-12).
- (1) **Da 9:24-27** 24 Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place. 25 Know therefore and understand that from the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks. Then for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time. 26 And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one [Jesus] shall be cut off and shall have nothing. And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war. Desolations are decreed. 27 And he [the prince who is to come, the antichrist] shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week (3 1/2 years) he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator.



d. Messiah and his kingdom

- (1) **Da 2:44-45** 44 And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever, 45 just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold.
- (2) **Da 3:24-25** 24 Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up in haste. He declared to his counsellors, Did we not cast three men bound into the fire? They answered and said to the king, True, O king. 25 He answered and said, But I see four men unbound, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt. And the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods.
- (3) **Da 7:13-14** 13 I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. 14 And to him was given dominion, glory, and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.
- (4) **Da 9:25-26** 25 Know therefore and understand that from the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks. Then for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time. 26 And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing.
- (5) **Da 10:5-9** 5 I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, a man clothed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. 6 His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude. 7 And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision, but a great trembling fell upon them, and they fled to hide themselves. 8 So I was left alone and saw this great vision, and no strength was left in me. My radiant appearance was fearfully changed, and I retained no strength. 9 Then I heard the sound of his words, and as I heard the sound of his words, I fell on my face in deep sleep with my face to the ground.

e. Rewards of patient endurance.

- (1) **Da 1:8** 8 But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's food, or with the wine that he drank. Therefore he asked the chief of the eunuchs to allow him not to defile himself.
- (2) **Da 3:16-18** 16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. 17 If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. 18 But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.
- (3) **Da 4:27** 27 Therefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you: break off your sins by practicing righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed, that there may perhaps be a lengthening of your prosperity.

- (4) **Da 6:10** 10 When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously.
- (5) **Da 12:2-3** 2 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. 3 And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above, and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.
- (6) **Da 12:13** 13 But go your way till the end. And you shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days.

9. Importance.

- a. It is impossible to exaggerate the role of Daniel in the study of the end times.
- b. We learn from Daniel how to interpret prophecy in later books, especially Revelation, that is, in a literal, grammatical, historical way. Because the events of the first 69 weeks (Da 11:1-35) have been fulfilled literally in the past, we know the events of the 70th week (Da 11:36-12:3) will be literally fulfilled in the future. Prophecies are to be interpreted literally, not allegorically, even when images, symbols, and types are used. *Daniel* is prophetic, apocalyptic, and historical. So is *Revelation*.
- c. Israel in Babylon is like the church in the world. We are to live now like Daniel did then.

10. Tips to Reading Daniel

- a. Interpret Daniel in a literal, grammatical, historical way. Daniel's imagery *always* relates to something in our real space-time-matter universe.
- b. Lots of things happen in world history that are not foretold in the Bible. Daniel, and indeed the entire Bible, focuses on what will happen with respect to Israel and her land. Keep your focus on Israel.
- c. Watch for progressive revelation, beginning in Da 2 and continuing in Da 7-12. It's like building a storage system in your garage that is later filled with tools.
- d. Distinguish between prophecies that have been fulfilled (e.g., ones that relate to Cyrus, Alexander the Great, or Antiochus Epiphanes) and those that haven't (e.g., ones that relate to Messiah or the antichrist).

11. Lessons for Life.

- a. God is in charge and he's got a plan for the future, despite what it may look like today.
- b. His service to the Babylonian and Persian governments shows believers can serve with distinction, honour, and integrity even in a government antithetical to Christianity.
- c. Like Daniel, we are not simply to continue in private devotion to God, but to maintain a public witness in a pluralistic society that is increasingly antagonistic to our faith.
- d. **Je 29:4-14** 4 "Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: 5 Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. 6 Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. 7 But seek the welfare of the city

where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. 8 For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams that they dream, 9 for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, declares the Lord. 10 “For thus says the Lord: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. 11 For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. 12 Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. 13 You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. 14 I will be found by you, declares the Lord, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the Lord, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.

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