Daniel - Introduction, Part 6

COURSE COMMENTARY

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Recognizing Structure

- **The Importance of Structure**
  When studying a passage within the Bible, it is helpful to look at the structure of the chapter where the passage is found and also to examine how the chapter fits into the overall presentation of the book. This helps one understand the development and interrelationship of various topics within the book as a whole.

- **Clues to Structure**
  Different aspects of the book of Daniel could be used as the basis for analyzing its structure. (1) The type of narrative: whether the subject matter is primarily historical narrative or prophetic vision. (2) The voice of the author: whether the author speaks in the first person or third person. (3) The written language: whether the material is written in Hebrew or Aramaic. (4) The sequence of events: whether to follow the presentation order or chronological order of the events recorded.

Structural Attributes

1. **Narrative vs. Vision**
   Chapters 1-6 mainly concern historical narrative, whereas chapters 7-12 seem to focus on visions and their interpretation.

2. **First vs. Third Person**
   In the first six chapters, Daniel is generally spoken of in the third person. The point of view is less intimate, like that of an outside observer watching Daniel and the other characters on the stage of history. The first person pronoun 'I' is used generally of the kings (Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius the Mede) and is not explicitly associated with the narrator of the events. Beginning in chapter 7 and for the remainder of the book, the first person is generally used of Daniel. Here, the focus shifts to the visions and revelation given to Daniel and his personal observations and reactions.

3. **Hebrew vs. Aramaic**
   Daniel consists of three sections written in two different languages: (1) Daniel 1:1 - 2:4a in Hebrew; (2) Daniel 2:4b - 7:28 in Aramaic; and (3) Daniel 8:1 - 12:13 which reverts back to Hebrew. This distinction is frequently used as evidence that chapters 1 and 8-12 contain topics of interest to the Jews (written in Hebrew) whereas chapters 2-7 contain topics of interest to Gentiles (written in the *lingua franca* of Daniel's day, Aramaic).

4. **Presentation vs. Chronology**
   When reading through the book of Daniel, it becomes evident that the material is presented out of chronological order. If the chapters were to be arranged in chronological order while noting the primary language of their composition (H = Hebrew, A = Aramaic) they would read as follows: 1H, 2A, 3A, 4A, *7A, 8H,* 5A, 6A, 9H, 10H, 11H, 12H. In chronological order, chapters 7 (the first year of Belshazzar) and 8 (the third year of Belshazzar) would appear between chapters 4 (Nebuchadnezzar's reign) and 5 (the last year of Belshazzar). Why does the presentation order differ from the chronological order? From the perspective of language, the Hebrew of chapter 8 would have divided the Aramaic section if it were not relocated. Since chapter 8 expands upon information provided in chapter 7, it may be that both chapters 7 and 8 were relocated beyond chapter 6 to keep the Aramaic section undivided. Another factor may be the previously-mentioned distinction between historical narration vs. visions and their exposition. Chapters 7 and 8 both concern revelation given to Daniel. By positioning this material following chapter 6, the emphasis of the first part of the book on historical narration and the second part of the book on visions is maintained without fragmentation.

Different Perspectives but Unified

- **The Significance of Chapter 7**
  Chapter 7 plays a key role in the book of Daniel, functioning like a hinge between the two main sections of the work: (1) it repeats the kingdom sequence of the vision in chapter 2, but with much greater detail--information alluded to from key passages of the NT. This detailed information forms the framework for the upcoming expansion of a portion of the kingdom sequence in chapters 8 and 11-12; (2) it closes the Aramaic section of the book; (3) it opens the section of the book where the emphasis shifts from historical narrative in the third person to visions and revelation in the first person. This important chapter is key for the proper interpretation of prophecy.

- **The Unity of the Book**
  The close ties between chapters 2, 7, 8, 9, 11, and 12 (which we'll discuss when we talk about the Sequence of Kingdoms) provide strong evidence that a single author wrote Daniel.

- **Structure and Authorial Intent**
  The design found in the book of Daniel should be attributed to the Holy Spirit who superintended the work. Daniel did not craft the content of the work. Instead, the dreams and visions were given by God--with their interpretation--and Daniel served to record the information, much like John did when writing the Book of Revelation.

Chronology

- **Chronological Structure of the Book of Daniel**

Year (B.C.)	Passage	Chronological Indicator	Related Events	Israel Ruled By	Daniel's Age (Approx.)
606	Dan. 1:1	3rd year of the reign of King Jehoiakim	Daniel taken captive to Babylon	Babylon	14
603-602	Dan. 2:1	2nd year of King Nebuchadnezzar	Nebuchadnezzar's vision of a great image of four metals	Babylon	17-18
595-594	Dan. 3	-	Nebuchadnezzar's image of gold, the fiery furnace	Babylon	25-26
573-569	Dan. 4:1-27	-	Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a great tree chopped down	Babylon	47-51
573-569	Dan. 4:28-37	-	Nebuchadnezzar's humiliation as a beast	Babylon	47-51
553	Dan. 7:1	1st year of King Belshazzar	Daniel's vision of the four beasts	Babylon	67
551	Dan. 8:1	3rd year of reign of King Belshazzar	Daniel's vision of a ram and a goat	Babylon	69
539	Dan. 5:1	Last year of King Belshazzar	Abuse of temple vessels at party, handwriting on the wall	Babylon	81
539	Dan. 5:31	1st year of Darius the Mede	Fall of Babylon to Medo-Persia, Darius strengthened by Angelic messenger (Dan. 11:1)	Medo-Persia	81
539	Dan. 9:1-2	1st year of reign of Darius the Mede	Daniel's intercession for Israel and Gabriel's answer of seventy sevens	Medo-Persia	81
539-	Dan.	-	Daniel in the lion's den	Medo-	81-84

536	6:1-9, 10-23			Persia	
536	Dan. 1:21	1st year of King Cyrus	Cyrus issued the decree allowing the Jews to return and rebuild	Medo-Persia	84
534	Dan. 10:1; 11; 12	3rd year of King Cyrus of Persia	Daniel's vision by the Tigris river	Medo-Persia	86

Thematic Outline

- Thematic Outline of Daniel
  There are many different ways the book can be outlined. Each approach has advantages and disadvantages. Most often, commentators outline the book following the sequence of presentation. We have chosen to follow the chronological order of events to emphasize related themes among the sequence of Gentile kingdoms described in the historical events and within the visions

I. Fate of Israel during the Times of the Gentiles (Dan. 1:1-12:13).
   A. 1st Gentile dominion (Babylon) over Israel (Dan. 1:1-5:31)
     1. Jews obtain favor in 1st Gentile dominion: Daniel and friends trained to serve during captivity of Judah (Dan. 1:1-21).
     2. Times of the Gentiles from man's perspective (glorious): Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 2:1-48).
       a) Nebuchadnezzar's dream of an image composed of four metals (Dan. 2:1-23).
       b) Daniel interprets the dream (Dan. 2:24-45).
       c) Gentile confession of God's glory: Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 2:46-48).
     3. Gentile rejection of God's revelation (Dan. 3:1-4:3).
       a) An eternal Babylonian kingdom: an image entirely of gold (Dan. 3:1-2).
       b) Divine honor claimed by man: Nebuchadnezzar's image as object of worship (Dan. 3:3-7).
       c) Supernatural preservation of Jews amidst 1st Gentile dominion: furnace (Dan. 3:8-27).
       d) Gentile Confession of God's Glory: Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 3:28-4:3).
     4. Revelation of character of Gentile rule: Nebuchadnezzar turned into a beast (Dan. 4:4-37).
       a) Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a great tree chopped down (Dan. 4:4-18).
       b) Daniel interprets the dream (Dan. 4:19-27).
       c) God's judgment of pride: Nebuchadnezzar shown to be a beast (Dan. 4:28-33).
       d) Gentile confession of God's glory: Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4:34-37).
     5. Times of the Gentiles from God's perspective (beastly): Belshazzar (Dan. 7:1-8:27).
       a) Daniel's vision of four beasts (Dan. 7:1-28).
         (1) The vision of beasts (Dan. 7:1-15).
         (2) An angel interprets the vision (Dan. 7:16-27).
         (3) Daniel's reaction to the vision and its interpretation (Dan. 7:28).
       b) Daniel's vision of a ram and a goat (Dan. 8:1-27).
         (1) The vision of a ram and a goat (Dan. 8:1-14).
         (2) An angel interprets the vision (Dan. 8:15-26).
         (3) Daniel's reaction to the vision and its interpretation (Dan. 8:27).
     6. 1st Gentile dominion (Babylon) judged: Belshazzar (Dan. 5:26-30).
       a) Desecration of God's holy vessels: Belshazzar's feast (Dan. 5:1-4).
       b) God's judgment of pride: handwriting on the wall (Dan. 5:5-6).
       c) Gentile astrologers and wise men unable to understand the revelation (Dan. 5:7-8).
       d) Daniel interprets the message (Dan. 5:9-29).
       e) 1st Gentile dominion overthrown (Dan. 5:30).
   B. 2nd Gentile dominion (Medo-Persia) over Israel (Dan. 5:31-11:1)
     1. Jews obtain favor in 2nd Gentile dominion: Daniel promoted to governorship (Dan. 5:31-6:3).
     2. Divine honor claimed by man: Darius as object of prayer (Dan. 6:4-17).
     3. Supernatural preservation of Jews amidst 2nd Gentile dominion: lion's den (Dan. 6:18-24).
     4. Gentile confession of God's glory: Darius (Dan. 6:25-28).
     5. Restoration of Israel follows times of the Gentiles: Seventy Sevens (Dan. 9:1-27).
       a) Daniel's intercession for the Jews and Jerusalem (Dan. 9:1-19).
       b) Gabriel's message of the seventy sevens (Dan. 9:20-27).
   C. Remaining Gentile dominion over Israel until the end of the age: Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome,

Antichrist (Dan. 10:1-12:13).
    1. Daniel's vision of the glorious man (Dan. 10:1-9).
    2. Daniel's reaction to the vision and ministry to by angels (Dan. 10:10-20).
    3. Angel explains scriptural truth concerning the times until the end of the age (Dan. 10:21-12:13).
        a) The remaining kings of Medo-Persia (Dan. 10:21-11:2).
        b) The king of Greece and four successor kings (Dan. 11:3-4).
        c) The kings of the North and South: Seleucids and Ptolemies (Dan. Dan._11:5 11:5-20).
        d) Antiochus IV Epiphanes (Dan. 11:21-35).
        e) Last Gentile dominion: Antichrist (Dan. 11:36-45).
            (1) Divine honor claimed by man: Worship of Antichrist and his image (Dan. 11:36-39).
            (2) Last Gentile dominion judged (Dan. 11:40-45)
        f) Supernatural preservation of the Jews amidst last Gentile dominion: the tribulation (Dan. 12:1-3).
        g) The end of the age (Dan. 12:4-13).

Chiasm

- Example of Chiasm
  Another evidence of the unity (and supernatural design) of the book is the chiastic patterns found in the book. A chiasm in Scripture is an intentional arrangement of the structure of a book, passage, or verse where contrasting or matching elements are paired through the use of literary parallelism. As an illustration, consider Genesis 9:6.

      A Whoever sheds
        B the blood
          C of man
          C' by man shall
        B' his blood
      A' be shed.

  The parallel or contrasting elements of a chiasm are labeled in a way which clarifies their correspondence (i.e., A-A', B-B', C-C'). The purpose of chiasm is to draw the reader's attention to the relationship between the parallel or contrasting elements which, upon meditation, provide additional insight into the passage.

Chiasm in Daniel

- Chiastic Structure of Daniel
  The chiastic structure of Daniel reflects a concentric organization based on parallel relationships:

Aspect	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Chapter 4	Chapter 5	Chapter 6	Chapter 7
Chiasm	A	B	C	C'	B'	A'
Subject	4 Metals (Future)	Nebuchadnezzar's Proclamation (Faith)	Nebuchadnezzar's Writing (Character)	Belshazzar's Writing (Character)	Darius' Proclamation (Faith)	4 Beasts (Future)
Perspective	1 Test a Daniel vs. Wisemen	2 Trial b Furnace	3 Testimony c Dream (now past)	1 Test a' Daniel vs. Wisemen	2 Trial b' Lions	3 Testimony c' Dream (yet future)
Tension	Wisemen vs. Daniel	Accusation of 3 youths	God vs. pride of Nebuchadnezzar	God vs. pride of Belshazzar	Accusation of Daniel	Beast vs. Saints
Action	Dream interpreted by Daniel	Refusal to worship man's image	Predicted, interpreted, fulfilled: Gentile	Predicted, interpreted, fulfilled: Gentile king	Refusal to pray to man	Dream interpreted by Angel

			king judged (Nebuchadnezzar)	judged (Belshazzar)		
Rescue	4 youths and wisemen (Jews and Gentiles)	3 youths (Jews)	Babylon (Nebuchadnezzar restored)	Israel	Daniel (a Jew)	Saints resurrected (Jews and Gentiles)