

## Introduction: Part 6

### Recognizing Structure

- **The Importance of Structure**

When studying a passage within the Bible, it is helpful to look at the structure of the chapter within which 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**

In Daniel, different aspects of the book 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 more heavily 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 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 the basis for concluding that chapters 1 and 8-12 are predominantly focused on things of interest to the Jews (written in Hebrew) whereas chapters 2-7 are predominantly focused on things of interest to Gentiles (written in the *lingua franca* of Daniel's day, Aramaic).

#### 4. Presentation vs. Chronology

When reading through 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 run 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). The question naturally arises as to why the presentation order differs 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 within chapter 7, it may be that both chapters 7 and 8 were relocated beyond chapter 6 so as to maintain 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 primarily 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, functioning almost 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—including information which is alluded to from key passages of the NT. This detailed information forms the framework for the upcoming expansion of a portion of the 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 primarily in the first person. This important chapter has also been recognized as 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 was responsible for writing Daniel.
- **Structure and Authorial Intent**  
The design found within Daniel should be attributed to the Holy Spirit who superintended the work. Daniel did not carefully craft the content of the work. Instead, the dreams and visions were given by God—along with their interpretation—and Daniel mainly served as an amanuenses, 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	3 <sup>rd</sup> year of the reign of King Jehoiakim.	Daniel taken captive to Babylon.	Babylon	14
604	Dan. 2:1	2 <sup>nd</sup> year of King Nebuchadnezzar.	Nebuchadnezzar's vision of a great image of four metals.	Babylon	16
604-562	Dan. 3	-	Nebuchadnezzar's image of gold, the fiery furnace.	Babylon	16-58
604-562	Dan. 4:1-27	-	Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a great tree chopped down.	Babylon	16-58
604-562	Dan. 4:28-37	-	Nebuchadnezzar's humiliation as a beast.	Babylon	17-58
553	Dan. 7:1	1 <sup>st</sup> year of King Belshazzar.	Daniel's vision of the four beasts.	Babylon	67
551	Dan. 8:1	3 <sup>rd</sup> 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	1 <sup>st</sup> 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	1 <sup>st</sup> year of reign of Darius the Mede.	Daniel's intercession for Israel and Gabriel's answer of seventy sevens.	Medo-Persia	81
539	Dan. 1:21	1 <sup>st</sup> year of King Cyrus.	Cyrus subsequently issued the decree given allowing the Jews to return and rebuild.	Medo-Persia	81
539-537	Dan. 6:1-9, 10-23	-	Daniel in the lion's den.	Medo-Persia	81-83
537	Dan. 10:1	3 <sup>rd</sup> year of King Cyrus of Persia.	Daniel's vision by the Tigris river.	Medo-Persia	83

## Thematic Outline

- **Thematic Outline of Daniel**

**There are many different ways in which the book can be outlined. Each approach has advantages and disadvantages. Most often, commentators outline the book following the sequence of presentation (which differs from the chronological order of events). We have chosen to follow the chronological order of events because we feel it helps 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).**

### I. Fate of Israel during the Times of the Gentiles (Dan. 1:1-12:13).

#### A. 1<sup>st</sup> Gentile dominion (Babylon) over Israel (Dan. 1:1-5:31)

1. Jews obtain favor in 1<sup>st</sup> 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*<sup>[5.2.26]</sup> (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 1<sup>st</sup> 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. 1<sup>st</sup> 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) 1<sup>st</sup> Gentile dominion overthrown (Dan. 5:30).
- B. 2<sup>nd</sup> Gentile dominion (Medo-Persia) over Israel (Dan. 5:31-11:1)
  - 1. Jews obtain favor in 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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*<sup>[5.2.36]</sup> (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. 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 found in the chiasmic patterns found within the book. A chiasm in Scripture is an intentional arrangement of the structure of a book, passage, or verse in which 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 generally 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
<b>Chiasm</b>	A	B	C	C'	B'	A'
<b>Subject</b>	4 Metals (Future)	Nebuchadnezzar's Proclamation (Faith)	Nebuchadnezzar's Writing (Character)	Belshazzar's Writing (Character)	Darius' Proclamation (Faith)	4 Beasts (Future)
<b>Perspective</b>	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)
<b>Tension</b>	Wisemen vs. Daniel	Accusation of 3 youths	God vs. pride of Nebuchadnezzar	God vs. pride of Belshazzar	Accusation of Daniel	Beast vs. Saints
<b>Action</b>	Dream interpreted by Daniel	Refusal to worship man's image	Predicted, interpreted, fulfilled: Gentile king judged (Nebuchadnezzar)	Predicted, interpreted, fulfilled: Gentile king judged (Belshazzar)	Refusal to pray to man	Dream interpreted by Angel
<b>Rescue</b>	4 youths and wisemen (Jews and Gentiles)	3 youths (Jews)	Babylon (Nebuchadnezzar restored)	Israel	Daniel (a Jew)	Saints resurrected (Jews and Gentiles)