

# Daniel: Revealer of Secrets (Part 2)

By PAUL J. SCHARF

In the last installment, I introduced you to my friend from ancient Babylon, the prophet Daniel.

I commented on some of the overarching themes of his book in the attempt to demonstrate its significance, and further provide some structure that might aid additional study. But I also tried to remind us of Daniel's real, human experiences as a captive in Babylon—and the impression they should make on each one of us.

And that is where I want to pick up in this concluding installment—sharing specifically how the book has impacted my life and ministry.

In His infinite grace, the Lord has given me a wealth of opportunities to study and teach the book of Daniel. Surely the high point for me was in the fall of 1995, at Faith Baptist Theological Seminary in Ankeny, Iowa, where I was blessed to be part of a modular course on Daniel taught by Dr. John Whitcomb.<sup>i</sup>

That was only my second class with Dr. Whitcomb. He had written a commentary<sup>ii</sup> on Daniel which I had read when I preached through Daniel in the first small church I pastored. I took notes in that textbook, then had him autograph it.

Dr. Whitcomb was just past 70 years of age at the time—which sounded much older to me then than it does now! It seemed to me that Daniel must have been a lot like him. It has also occurred to me how prophecy scholars like Dr. Whitcomb and, another who I heard at Faith, Dr. John Walvoord, lived such long and fruitful lives—like Daniel and the Apostle John, their distant predecessors (Dan. 10:1; Rev. 1:1).

That class gave me a passion and a hunger to truly “understand” this book—as two of the gospels especially command us to do (Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14). It certainly has to be one of the most important academic opportunities that I've had in my life.

Contrast that with the fact that I was raised in confessional Lutheranism, and trained in amillennialism—and we studied the first six chapters of Daniel, but were discouraged from looking beyond them to the second half!

But that spirit has never resonated with me, and I can't see Daniel espousing it either (see Dan. 2:23; 7:16; 10:19; 12:8). Even as I see many from our dispensational circles moving ever closer to the Reformed camp, and toning down enthusiasm for something like a detailed exposition—based on literal interpretation—of the prophetic sections of Daniel, I continue to move in the opposite direction.

I teach a weekly Bible study group which has asked me to lead them through a verse-by-verse series on Daniel, so I am turning my notes on the book into a complete set of

multimedia slides for the first time. I am also reviewing a sampling of the wealth of resources out there that are freely available from some of our greatest teachers.

As I've begun this project, it struck me that I actually preached or taught through the book of Daniel in all four of my pastoral ministries. The last of these began the week following a church split. I was called in to speak, and I asked if the group wanted me to address the issues related to the split. I was told that had already been attempted, and was advised to speak on something else.

So, I went far away, in time and topic, to the historical background behind the book of Daniel. It was, perhaps, an unusual subject to choose, but it stuck with this congregation, which we came to know and love. I became the interim pastor and preached through the entire book.<sup>iii</sup>

I've had two other special experiences with the book of Daniel. Back in the fall semester of 2001, I was privileged to teach a class on it at Maranatha Baptist Bible College.<sup>iv</sup> In fact, that's what I was doing as the events of Sept. 11, 2001, unfolded. Later, I had the opportunity to edit the teaching curriculum on Daniel for Regular Baptist Press.<sup>v</sup>

So, those are the reasons that this ancient man Daniel seems like a personal friend to me—just as real as anyone I have ever known.

How has the book of Daniel impacted you? I would love to hear your story.

*Paul J. Scharf (M.A., M.Div., Faith Baptist Theological Seminary) is a church ministries representative for The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, based in Columbus, WI, and serving in the Midwest. For more information on his ministry, visit [sermonaudio.com/pscharf](http://sermonaudio.com/pscharf) or [foi.org/scharf](http://foi.org/scharf), or email [pscharf@foi.org](mailto:pscharf@foi.org).*

Scripture taken from the New King James Version®.

Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

---

<sup>i</sup> "Daniel" module; Oct. 30 to Nov. 3, 1995 (Ankeny, IA: Faith Baptist Theological Seminary).

<sup>ii</sup> *Daniel—Everyman's Bible Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985).

<sup>iii</sup> These sermons, recorded at Grace Bible Church in Portage, Wis., are available here: "Daniel: Revealer of Secrets;" Paul Scharf—Friends of Israel; <https://www.sermonaudio.com/search.asp?sourceonly=true&currSection=sermonsource&keyword=pscharf&subcatid=series&subsetitem=Daniel%3A+Revealer+of+Secrets>; Internet; accessed 22 September 2022.

<sup>iv</sup> Now Maranatha Baptist University, in Watertown, WI.

<sup>v</sup> *Our God Reigns* (Daniel). *Life Design Adult Bible Study Leader's Guide* Vol. 58, No. 4, with Alex Bauman (Schaumburg, IL: Regular Baptist Press, 2010).