

The Interlocked Chiastic Structure of Daniel

<u>Chapters</u>	<u>Outline of Events and Themes</u>	<u>Language</u>	<u>Content/Date</u>
1	Prologue – God's kingdom versus Babylon <i>(Temple vessels captured; Daniel and friends tested and exalted)</i>	} Hebrew	} Stories <i>(Mostly 3rd– Person, in order from c. 605- 538 B.C.)</i>
2	A – Four earthly kingdoms and triumph of God's kingdom <i>(Nebuchadnezzar's dream: great image, stone/mountain)</i>	} Aramaic	
3	B – Daniel's friends persecuted but saved <i>(fiery furnace)</i>		
4	C – Nebuchadnezzar humbled before God <i>(insanity)</i>		
5	C' – Belshazzar humbled before God <i>(handwriting)</i>		
6	B' – Daniel persecuted but saved <i>(den of lions)</i>		
7	A' – Four earthly kingdoms and triumph of God's kingdom* <i>(Daniel's vision: beasts, Ancient of Days, Son of Man)</i>	} Hebrew	} Visions <i>(Mostly 1st– Person, in order from c. 553- 536 B.C.)</i>
8	D – Details on post-Babylonian kingdoms <i>(Ram and goat with little horn: Persia and Greece)</i>		
9	E – The end of the desolations of Jerusalem <i>(Daniel prays; told of 70 sevens and Anointed One)</i>		
10–12	D' – More details on post-Babylonian kingdoms <i>(Terrifying man, book of truth: Greece and beyond)</i> <i>(A"? – Final resurrection, 12:1-3)</i>		

* **The center of the book of Daniel is chapter 7**, with its vision of the human/divine Son of Man who is given God's kingdom and who rules over all other kingdoms. *Thematically*, the stories of chapters 2–6 prepare for chapter 7 by illustrating how God's kingdom triumphed over the earthly kingdoms of Daniel's day, while the visions of chapters 8–12 expand upon the vision of chapter 7, giving more details about coming earthly kingdoms and how God's people will triumph over them in the time of the end. *Structurally*, chapter 7's central role is emphasized by interlocking it with both halves of the book—tying it to the first half of the book through shared language (written in Aramaic) and the matching vision in chapter 2, and tying it to the second half of the book through shared content (visions). Chapter 7 acts both as a conclusion to the first half of the book (1-7) and also as an introduction to the second half of the book (7-12). *The Son of Man thus occupies center stage in Daniel's picture of the triumph of God's kingdom.*

Outline by Dwight Gingrich. Adapted from Andrew Steinmann (*Daniel*, Concordia Commentary, Concordia Publishing, 2008), David A. Dorsey (*The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis–Malachi*, Baker Books, 1999), and Peter J. Gentry (“Daniel's Seventy Weeks and the New Exodus,” *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology*, 14.1 [2010]: 26-44). **Please reproduce freely, but take credit if you make changes.**