

THE BOOK OF
DANIEL



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INTRODUCTION

Daniel lived at a time when the Babylonian Empire had conquered Jerusalem and taken him away into the seventy year captivity prophesied by Jeremiah (Jer. 25:13). Most believe he was an older teen upon his arrival in Babylon. While there, he displays great faith and trust in God who continues to bless him. Daniel rises to a place of great prominence in the Babylonian Empire, despite the attempts of jealous men to stop him. His contemporary, Ezekiel, mentions him three times as a man of righteousness, and twice compares him to Noah and Job (Ezek. 14:14, 20; 28:3).

Nine of the twelve chapters revolve around dreams and visions which Daniel interprets or receives. These prophetic visions have become the source of many false doctrines which are looking for their fulfillment in our future. In particular, chapters seven, nine and twelve have become the romping ground of premillennialists and Jehovah's Witnesses which rarely if ever find a fulfillment from Daniel in ancient times.

Daniel eleven contains (by some counts) more than one hundred specific prophecies of historical events and people that came true. Because of the great accuracy of this prophecy, some claim the book was not written by Daniel, but by someone many hundreds of years later at the time of the fulfillment of chapter eleven. Their lack of belief in God's knowledge is very evident. The use of Aramaic in this book has recently been discovered to have been used by the Imperial dynasty at the time Daniel would have been living. His inclusion of some Persian words are no surprise as he lived after the country was conquered by the Persians and ruled by Cyrus.

Many compare Daniel to the book of Revelation. The comparison is just in that both letters are written in an apocalyptic style, both are full of visions, and both have very difficult portions. However, Revelation is about the end of time and the judgment of God leading into

eternity. Daniel is about the nation of Israel and what would happen prior to the arrival of the Messiah through the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. God shows Daniel some very specific events and gives him specific times stating how many weeks and years until it would come to pass. From the large use of numbers and dates in Daniel, many false calculations have been given to determine the end of the world.

One of the main purposes then of our study in Daniel will be to examine some of these claims of fulfilled prophecies from Daniel, and to determine the truth of their fulfillment. We must be diligent to keep separate the literal from the figurative in this effort. You are encouraged to read the entire book in one sitting as it will help your perspective. If that seems daunting, then attempt it in two or three readings. Put the whole book in your mind within one week. Having the whole picture will aid in keeping things in context during our detailed study of one chapter. Most who are believers, are fairly familiar with the book of Daniel. It is then easy to forego reading it again, which is all the more reason to diligently examine it.

We teach a great portion of this book to our children as "bible stories," but they are recorded for you and me, for our learning. Study the book with me, let's discuss many important principles, and hopefully at the conclusion we will be better prepared to answer those who want to promote false doctrine from this great inspired book.

Recommended Reading:

- **A Commentary On Daniel** (by Homer Hailey) ISBN# 0-913814-52-0
- **Understanding Apocalyptic Literature: a guide to the book of Revelation** (by Mark Roberts) available from the Florida College Press.



Chapter 1

The King's Choice Food

The first two verses of chapter one place us in a historical setting that is very accurate. Jehoiakim is named as the king of Judah. That Judah is named indicates this is after the division of the nation into Israel and Judah. Jehoiakim (also called Eliakim) is known to have been one of the last kings of Judah. He was made king by the Egyptian Pharaoh Neco and served Egypt by exacting tribute from the Israelites (2 Kings 23:34-36). His reign lasted eleven years, but the book of Daniel begins in the third year of his reign.

“In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant for three years; then he turned and rebelled against him” (2 Kings 24:1). Babylon had defeated Egypt in the battle of Carchemish establishing Babylon as the world power, and ruler over Judah (Jer. 46:2). Daniel rightly points out the Lord gave Judah into his hand (1:2). This was the will of God operating in the nations. Because of the rebellion of Jehoiakim, Nebuchadnezzar “came to Jerusalem and besieged it” (1:1).

This is not the period in which Jerusalem is destroyed, for following Jehoikim's eleven year reign we find Jehoiachin (who reigned for three months), and Zedekiah (also called Mattaniah),

It was during the eighth year of Zedekiah's reign that the destruction of Jerusalem took place and he was carried into the Babylonian captivity (2 Kings 24:12).

The plunder of Jerusalem was taken to “the land of Shinar.” Shinar is mentioned in Genesis 11:1 as the location in which the tower of Babel was built. To the Israelite mind (and ours), this was a place where wickedness and opposition to God was expected. It is the ancient name for Babylon.

Daniel was a contemporary of both Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Jeremiah's work was done in Jerusalem (626-586 B.C.). Daniel lived in the capital city of Babylon (605-534 B.C.). Ezekiel was in Babylon with the Jewish exiles (592-570 B.C.).

It is believed Daniel and his friends were of the “royal families and nobles” (1:3) who would have had some diplomatic training in addition to languages and mathematics. Their “wisdom” and “knowledge” was desired (1:4) as they were to serve the king in Babylon. The Hebrew words for “wisdom” and “knoweldge” have overtones of religion and ethics. These had been trained in the ways of God,

despite the evil king in Judah.

One of the interesting things which occurs in chapter one is the renaming of Daniel and his friends. The following list demonstrates how the Hebrew names indicated loyalty to Jehovah, and the Babylonian names referenced Babylonian gods.

Daniel - God is my judge
Belteshazzar - Bel's prince

Hananiah - the Lord is gracious
Shadrach - inspired by the sun god

Mishael - who is what God is
(el referring to Jehovah)

Meshach - who is what the moon god is
(shak referring to goddess Sheshach)

Azariah - the Lord helps
Abednego - servant of the Lord

What makes this so interesting is that these young men did not consider these new names as something that defiled them. They were concerned about the food.

Throughout the chapter, we cannot but be impressed with how God blesses his faithful servants. He sees their situations and blesses them as they faithfully endure trials. This is seen to be one of the major themes in the book.

From The Text

1. Where did the treasures of the temple reside in Babylon?
2. What is stated as Nebuchadnezzar's plan for these young men (1:5-7)?
3. What test did Daniel propose?
4. What was the result from the test?
5. How long did these young men serve in Nebuchadnezzar's personal service (1:21)?

For Discussion

1. Why did Daniel seek permission that he might not defile himself (1:8)? Did he need this?
2. Compare God's blessings on Daniel and his friends (1:17-19) and that done for the other captives (1:6 indicates they were a part of the group).
3. "Deal with your servants according to what you see" (1:13). Does this indicate a trust in God?
4. How does 1:20 set the stage for jealousy from the Babylonians?

Applications

1. How do we "make up our mind" like Daniel did (1:8)? What does this mean?
2. Give three examples of how we are to "make up our mind" in serving God.
 - A.
 - B.
 - C.
3. Discuss how Daniel leads his friends in righteousness. Consider how we are to also lead our friends in righteousness.



Chapter 2

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream of a Statue

A brief mention is given in chapter one of Daniel understanding "all kinds of visions and dreams" (1:17). He was blessed beyond that of his friends who did not defile themselves. Much of the remainder of the book revolves around visions which Daniel receives and visions which Daniel interprets.

The ability to interpret visions and dreams seems to have been a common occupation among the heathen idol worshippers. Nebuchadnezzar had a good number of men filling that position as "magicians," "conjurers," and "sorcerers." A "magician" was a sacred scribe, skilled in the sacred writings, a class of Egyptian priests. Strong's defines it as: a horoscopist (as drawing magical lines or circles). A "sorcerer" ("astrologer" KJ) is from "an unused root (probably meaning to lisp, that is, practice enchantment); a conjurer" (Strong's). It is translated "conjurer" in the NAS. A "sorcerer" means "properly to whisper a spell, that is, to enchant or practise magic (Strong's). A fourth group is mentioned in 2:2 as being "the Chaldeans." Beyond the foreign "wise men," Nebuchadnezzar employed the local Chaldeans who also were

concerned to be of a priestly, magician class. They are the ones who spoke with the king in Aramaic (2:4-11). This is the class of people among whom Daniel is "ten times better" (1:20). For this reason the king grants Daniel a little time (2:16). He was the only one who indicated he would answer.

Though a decree had gone forth from the king to kill the wise men (2:15), Arioch sees fit to bring Daniel before the King. These were dangerous actions for the captain of the king's bodyguard. There was undoubtedly a relationship between he and Daniel who was in the king's "personal service" (1:19). Daniel is already receiving special treatment and is respected. Arioch is not reprimanded or punished for his disobedience in carrying out the decree.

The interpretation of the dream in this chapter is generally accepted by all as being of great empires that rose to world dominance. It is one of the few interpretations of dreams from Daniel about which people are agreed. Perhaps because Daniel's interpretation is so specific and literal.

question #3 on the following page, try to examine how each form of metal in the statue well represents each nation discussed. Also try to include some consideration of why the second kingdom would be "inferior" to the first (2:39). One of the most difficult parts of the interpretation is the feet of iron and clay. Give special attention to the interpretation about this. The majority of our discussion in class will be about the fulfillment of this dream, especially the establishment of the "kingdom which will never be destroyed" (2:44).

As we look back on history at the events Daniel is looking forward to, it is easy for us to see the fulfillment. Nevertheless, we should be impressed with God's revelation. We should be impressed with the amount of detail given to Daniel. The fulfillment of this prophecy is of great encouragement and bolsters our faith. Study it again (if you are familiar with it). Examine it in more depth. Be impressed with what God has done. This is an awesome revelation!

In answering "From the Text"

From The Text

1. What unreasonable demand did Nebuchadnezzar make of his court magicians?
2. What was Daniel's reaction to God's revelation (2:19-23)?
3. How was the statue dream interpreted?
 - A. Head of gold
 - B. Breasts and arms of silver
 - C. Belly and thighs of bronze
 - D. Legs of iron
 - E. Feet of iron and clay
 - F. Stone cut out of the mountain

For Discussion

1. God took what appeared to be a desperate situation and turned it into a blessing for Daniel (2:14, 18, 48). Discuss how trust in God will result in His blessings.
2. Prayer in a time of trial is plainly seen (2:17-18). Discuss how this demonstrates trust in God and helps us. Try to include some New Testament passages.

Applications

1. Daniel stayed cool under pressure and replied with "discretion and discernment" (2:14). Give two examples of when we should do the same.
 - A.
 - B.
2. 2:28-30 has Daniel giving credit of the interpretation to God. How should we similarly respond to religious questions?
3. Relate how we should include our friends in our blessings, as Daniel did (2:49).



Chapter 3

The Fiery Furnace

Like chapter one, chapter three stands apart from most of the book of Daniel in that there is no recorded prophecy. It is instead a narrative of events dealing with Daniel's friends. The end of chapter two has Daniel at "the king's court" while Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego administered the province of Babylon (the capital of the empire). Every indication is that Daniel was not present during the events in chapter three.

There is good bit relayed in this chapter that indicates Daniel and his friends were very familiar with the political organization of the Babylonian empire. Many positions of authority are listed in verses 2 and 3 which we are unable to precisely equate to a modern role. The indication is clear that all the governing authorities were included and involved in the dedication of the image.

The image created by Nebuchadnezzar was sixty cubits high and six cubits wide (3:1). That was 90 feet high and 9 feet wide. Its size was impressive. It was also a "golden image" (3:7). Not that the image was solid gold, for it would have been so heavy it could not have been easily moved or even erected. It is much more plausible to understand this was a wooden structure overlaid with gold, much like the "golden altar" in God's temple which was made of acacia wood and overlaid with gold (Ex.

30:1-3). It remained an impressive sight.

Some contend this great image was of Nebuchadnezzar and want to connect it back to the vision of a statue in chapter two. They contend Nebuchadnezzar built the statue, and since he had been told he was the head of gold, he made the statue of gold. This supposed connection to chapter two does not exist. 3:14 has Nebuchadnezzar asking why Daniel's friends would not bow down to his gods or the image he set up. The clear implication is that the golden image was of an idol. Nebuchadnezzar was not setting himself up as a god.

We see in this chapter an example of forced worship. While we enjoy the freedom of religion in our country, Nebuchadnezzar was forcing everyone to worship this image. The punishment was death. People were not given a choice. Sadly, we see all the other Jewish captives evidently bowing to the image along with the Babylonians.

This is a great story about trusting in God. It would have brought great encouragement to the readers as it still does today. These godly young men put all their confidence in God, even in defying the king and facing death.

They may have had in mind

the prophecy of Isaiah. In Isaiah chapter 42 God promised to send His servant, the Savior, into the world (42:1-9). Before this happened a judgment would be brought upon the people because of their sin (42:14-25). In the midst of these trials God made a promise: "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, nor will the flame burn you" (Is. 43:2). The Assyrian army was earlier referred to as an overflowing river (Is. 8:5-8) which Hezekiah dealt with. Daniel's friends may have seen the fiery furnace as a fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy that they would not be burned. Whether this be true or not, there was great faith to trust in God in the midst of a great trial.

We also are encouraged to stand for the God when everyone around us bows to iniquity and sin. He will protect us from the eternal fire and keep us safe from all harm. This chapter is an awesome example of God's might and love!

From The Text

1. What is implied within the command to bow to "all the peoples, nations and men of every language" (3:4)?
2. When charges are made against Daniel's friends, what was Nebuchadnezzar's reaction in 3:13? How is this seen again in 3:19?
3. What is Nebuchadnezzar's question in 3:15? What lesson did he need to learn?
4. What happened to the bindings when they were cast into the fire (3:23 and 25)?
5. Who was the fourth person in the furnace (3:25)?
6. How did the fire effect Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego? How did it effect the witnesses (3:27-28)?

For Discussion

1. It is one thing to defy the command in private, and something more to defy the king to his face. Discuss how confessing Christ before men is accomplished.
2. Despite the kindness shown to them in giving them a position in the capital, Daniel's friends respond "we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter" (3:16). Why not?
3. How does Nebuchadnezzar's decree (3:28-30) demonstrate what can happen when we stand for the truth?

Applications

1. How does the response in 3:17-18 encourage us to trust in God in our times of trials?
2. Discuss the difference in standing alone versus standing with two other friends. Relate this to the local congregation.
3. Relate two instances when you have experienced a need to stand for your faith when all those around you did not.



Chapter 4

The Vision of a Great Tree

With the conclusion of events in chapter four, in retrospect, we see more clearly some of the theme of this great book. God is teaching Nebuchadnezzar that He is the one, true God.

Though Nebuchadnezzar has made statements of belief at the end of chapters two and three, he still maintains his polytheistic views at the beginning of chapter four. "Daniel came before me, whose name is Belteshazzar according to the name of my god, and in whom is a spirit of the holy gods" (4:8). He sees Jehovah as the Most High God, but still one of many gods.

Chapters two through four reveal a spiritual journey of one man and his growing faith. After the interpretation of the dream in chapter two, "Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face and did homage to Daniel" (2:46), thus considering him to be from one of the gods. He then said "your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings" (2:47). His pagan concepts saw Jehovah as one who ruled amongst the gods.

In chapter three we see Nebuchadnezzar moving one step further in his praise indicating God was more powerful than himself for Jehovah delivered them (3:28). He still refers to

Jehovah as "their God" and not his own. God's dealings with Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego proved He was superior to the pagan gods. Therefore, nothing was to be said against Him (3:29). This was an advancement beyond his former beliefs.

Now in chapter four, Nebuchadnezzar's pride is defeated. After his period of madness, he proclaims God as the "Most High" and the one who "lives forever." He does according to His will on earth and in heaven. "No one can ward off His hand." "I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride" (4:34-37).

We are not shown if Nebuchadnezzar ever came to a monotheistic view of Jehovah, but we can definitely see the change in his concepts by these statements. Daniel played a significant role in his life, as did the dreams and miracles from God. From reading these chapters, we cannot miss that God is at work in the midst of a world empire. He alone is able to bring the king down and humble him.

We see in chapter four a second vision given to Nebuchadnezzar, that of a great tree. Some today want to examine prophecy and make pronouncements without considering the interpretations given in Scripture. Daniel's words must be heavily considered in understanding this vision, and it is understandable. It was for Nebuchadnezzar, and is for us.

Daniel says the great tree was Nebuchadnezzar (4:22). That the tree would be cut down may be understood in our modern phrase "he was cut down to size." It speaks of an humbling.

The book of Daniel has many interpretations and prophecies containing numbers. The "seven periods of time" (4:23, 25) is a first good example. Numbers are not always literal, but symbolic. It was unlikely that the phrase meant seven years, or seven weeks, or even seven days. Seven (to the Jews) was the number of perfection or completeness. The madness would be upon Nebuchadnezzar until his humility is accomplished, the divine purpose of the illness. We know this madness occurred twelve months later (4:29) and concludes with "at the end of that period" (4:34).

From The Text

1. What was the state of the Babylonian empire (4:4) and what frightened Nebuchadnezzar (4:5)?
2. What was Daniel's position in Babylon (4:8-9)?
3. Who shouted the decree to cut down the tree (4:13-14)?
4. What was the purpose of the sentence that Nebuchadnezzar's mind be changed to a beast (4:16)?
5. What was Daniel's reaction to hearing of the vision (4:19)?
6. Has all of the prophecy from this chapter been fulfilled?

For Discussion

1. What is the interpretation of each:
 - A. The Great tree
 - B. Why was the stump left? (4:36)
 - C. What was the band of iron and bronze (4:15)?
 - D. What is significant about the shift from "it" to "him" in 4:15 and 23?
 - E. When would the seven periods of time end (4:16, 25)?
2. What brought about the beginning of the madness for Nebuchadnezzar (4:28-33)?

Applications

1. In the midst of explaining the vision, we see Daniel's personal "advice" to Nebuchadnezzar (4:28). Discuss why we should state similar things when studying Scripture with others.
2. What is the result of humbling ourselves before God:
 - A. For Nebuchadnezzar
 - B. For us (give New Testament references)
3. Does Daniel exhibit humility in this chapter?



Chapter 5

The Handwriting on the Wall

Chapter five conveys a change of kings in verse one. “Belshazzar the king” was unknown to archeologists until the Nabonidus Cylinder was found in 1854. This Babylonian text has King Nabonidus offering a prayer for “Belshazzar the firstborn son, the offspring of my heart.” (Quote taken from Anderson & Edwards, *Through the British Museum With the Bible*, (Day One, 2004), p. 52). Another document (the Nabonidus Chronicle) indicates Belshazzar was co-regent with Nabonidus which explains why he could only promise Daniel the third place in the kingdom and not second (5:29).

The queen mentions Nebuchadnezzar as “your father, your father the king” (5:11). The mention of this relationship occurs six times in the chapter. The Babylonian documents indicate Nabonidus was the father of Belshazzar, and was not related to Nebuchadnezzar. In what way then is Nebuchadnezzar the father of Belshazzar? This is not clear from Scripture or archaeology. Two speculations that seem logical are: 1) he was adopted by Nebuchadnezzar, and 2) the former ruler was called “father.” This is not a problem which demands the book of Daniel be rejected as being inspired. Yet it is something scoffers will bring up which is why I’ve included it.

Daniel is now a good bit

older than he was in chapter four (indicated by the change of kings). He seems to have not been retained as a lead counselor. In fact his actions as interpreter of dreams appears to have been unknown by the new generation. It is the queen (9:10) who brings Daniel to the forefront. The language does not demand that she was the spouse of Belshazzar, and in fact indicates she could have been the queen mother, the widowed spouse of Nebuchadnezzar. If true, she would have been very aware of the actions of Daniel in the past, which makes sense in light of her glowing recommendation to Belshazzar. Regardless, his reputation persisted into Belshazzar’s reign.

The interpretation of the handwriting on the wall is very interesting and contains a double-sense in all three words. “Mene” literally means “to number”, not only “to count” but “to fix the limit.” So verse 26 says “God has numbered your kingdom and put an end to it.” That “Mene” is repeated is likely to emphasize God’s judgment.

“Tekel” in the side margin of my bible means “shekel” which is a verb meaning “to weigh”. So the interpretation (with it’s double-meaning) is “you have been weighed on the scales and found deficient.” Deficient, or “wanting”

(KJ), means “lacking, deficient in moral worth” (Young’s *Literal translation of the Holy Bible*, p.127). On God’s scale, he fell short of the demand for an acceptable ruler. Therefore, His kingdom would end.

“Uphasin,” again in my Bible’s side margin is a “half-shekel” from the verb “to divide”. Notice it is “uphasin” in verse 25 and “peres” in verse 29. This is not a mistake. “Upharsin” is the conjunction [U] ‘and’ plus the plural [pharsin] of peres. “Daniel used the word parsin or pharsin in its double sense, meaning “persians”; giving the empire to the Medes and Persians”. (Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel*, 235). So Daniel states, “your kingdom has been divided and given over to the Medes and Persians” (5:28).

It is significant that the fall of the Babylonian empire (the then current world power) is relayed in just 2 verses (5:30-31). There is a monument which quotes Cyrus saying he took the city without a fight. Darius (5:31) has not yet been identified in history, but some lean toward a Persian governor named Gaburu.

From The Text

1. What did Belshazzar worship (5:1-4)?
2. What was Belshazzar's reaction to seeing the handwriting?
3. Who was called to interpret the sign (5:5-9) and what was the result?
4. What in the text indicates Belshazzar did not know Daniel?
5. What was God's judgment on Belshazzar?

For Discussion

1. How does Belshazzar's attitude toward God differ from Nebuchadnezzar's? (5:2-3, 18-23)
2. What was Daniel's attitude about being made third in the kingdom (5:17)? How should we react to large promotions and great honors?

Applications

1. Describe Daniel's reputation (5:12). How did this enable him to be used by God? How does our reputation enable us to be used of God?
2. What does 5:21-22 tell us about what we should learn from history? Give other examples of this truth.
3. How long before God's judgment was carried out (5:30)? How does this "timing" relate to us?



Chapter 6

The Lion's Den

This chapter marks the end of a division in the book of Daniel. Different divisions have been proposed by men, but I believe chapters 1-6 and 7-12 are preferable. Daniel is written in Aramaic from 2:4 through 7:28 which causes some to see a division at the end of chapter 7. What truly is seen as a division is the subject matter. The first six chapters are about the history of Daniel and his friends (including his interpretation of other's dreams). Chapters 7-12 is almost entirely prophetic about Daniel's dreams. Sadly, most people stop at the end of chapter six and do not investigate the last half of the book, because it is harder to understand. It generally is not taught to children. We miss so much of the encouragement of the book by this habit.

At the beginning of chapter six, Darius the Mede is reigning, and he also chooses Daniel as one of three men in charge of the kingdom. Verse 3 relays the extraordinary plan of Darius to appoint Daniel in charge of the entire kingdom! When the other jealous counselors and satraps tried to find political corruption in Daniel, they could not (v.4). While Daniel's wisdom and loyalty had been proven, it is still remarkable that a slave is considered for such a prominent position. Daniel's success spans the change from the Babylonian Empire to the Medo-Persian

Empire, even unto the reign of Cyrus (v.28).

Politics and lying government officials are the cause of all of Daniel's troubles. They convince the king to pass an injunction which they planned to use to convict Daniel. They played up to the King's vanity, but their lie worked. To Daniel it had to have seemed as if everyone had turned against him, even the King. In this time of great trouble and trial, we still see him praying to God as was his habit, apparently willing to face whatever consequences might come. His trust in God never wavers and is the cause of his deliverance (v.23).

The vivid scene of Daniel in the lion's den is easily recalled. The Romans learned of animal torture from the Persians and adopted it in their arenas. There can be no doubt that the lions were kept hungry to ensure their consumption of the convicted. What a strange night with hungry lions who did not attack. Daniel says "God sent His angel and shut the lion's mouth." We don't know if Daniel saw the angel, or conversed with the angel, but Daniel was spared from the fate of the other counselors, proving the ferocity of the lions.

Darius' decree in verse 26 was in "all the dominion of my kingdom." Archaeologists have

well established that his kingdom only included Chaldea and perhaps two or three small provinces. He honors God as the "living God" and decreed men should honor Him. What is missing in this decree is a statement of belief that Jehovah is the only God. It seems then, to Darius, that Jehovah is a local deity or national deity who lived among the other gods.

This chapter is very straightforward and easily understood, like chapters 1, 3, 4, and 5. For this reason these "stories" are extensively taught to children, and they are memorable. But these were written for our understanding and benefit. We need to study these things deeper and examine Daniel's courage, faith, trust, and behavior. We need to see the good relationship which existed between Darius and Daniel, which was maliciously attacked (v.24). We must see the attitude of the world toward those who faithfully serve God. There is perhaps no better lesson in this chapter than what should be the proper attitude of the believer in the midst of a trial.

From The Text

1. Why did Darius plan to appoint Daniel over the entire kingdom (v.3)?
2. What was Daniel's attitude toward his work and king (v.4-5, 22)?
3. What was the lie of the counselors and satraps (v.7)?
4. Why was the king's seal placed on the stone, and was this a normal occurrence (v.17)?
5. "Daniel enjoyed success" (v.28). Why?

For Discussion

1. How do ungodly people today look for some ground of accusation against us in regard to the law of God (v.5)? (see also v.11-13)
2. Describe the relationship of Darius and Daniel.
3. How did the miracle of the lion's den change Darius' attitude toward God?

Applications

1. Discuss how Daniel's trust (v.23) serves as our example and motivates us to obedience.
2. While Daniel had enemies, vengeance was left to God. Provide passages that teach this principle, and discuss what this means about our behavior.
3. Discuss how a life of faith impacts others in our life who are not godly (as in the example of Daniel toward Darius). Provide scriptural evidence to support.



Chapter 7

The Vision of the Four Beasts

Chapter 7 begins a section of Scripture that MANY have twisted and added to in order to derive some truly strange and ungodly concepts. My goal in this article is to set forth a few of the ideas which men have devised from this reading, and in our questions and class period we will discuss the truth of what is revealed. Remember, God interprets the vision for Daniel (v.15-27), yet still men disagree with Scripture.

It cannot be missed that there are MANY similarities between Daniel 7 and Revelation 13. Both chapters have beasts rising up out of the sea (7:3,13:1). Daniel sees a lion with wings (7:4), a bear (7:5), a four headed leopard (7:7), and a beast with 10 horns (7:7). John sees a 10 horned beast like a leopard, feet of a bear and mouth of a lion (13:2). Most believe both chapters are teaching the same truths, and I agree; however, many come to Daniel 7 and Revelation 13 with preconceived ideas from premillennialism which are added to both texts.

As a consequence, many who examine Daniel 7 view it as a prophecy of the end times when Christ returns. The kingdoms represented by the beasts (7:17, 23) have been said to represent current and future nations. The

“lion” represents (supposedly) America, the United Kingdom and other allied countries. The “bear” (supposedly) represents Russia and its confederates. The three ribs in the bears mouth are said to represent the three times Russia will invade Israel. The “leopard” (supposedly) represents a confederation of four muslim states (the four heads of the beast) that will rule over Israel. The terrible beast with iron teeth is (supposedly) a representation of a revived Roman Empire. (source: www.thesecondcomingofchrist.org/chapter7.html)

This is but one explanation by many who look to Daniel 7 as prophecies which have not yet been fulfilled.

The terrifying beast has 10 horns, and a smaller horn comes up and removes three other horns. This little horn has “eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great boasts” (7:8). Premillennialists usually agree the little horn is the antichrist. They again (supposedly) connect this to teachings in Revelation. Much is said in their explanation of Daniel 7 about the tribulation, battle of Armageddon, and more. None of those things are mentioned or found in Daniel 7, but are brought to the chapter as they view the chapter through

colored lenses. They desire to see the chapter as teaching these things.

In regard to the little horn (a king), he “will wear down the saints” and they “will be given into his hand for “a time, times, and half a time” (7:25). Much has been written about this last phrase as a calculation of time (supposedly) indicating how long the antichrist will rule before being cast into the pit (images from Revelation). Most generally understand the time frame as 3.5 years (“a time” being equal to one year). This figure agrees with the “42 months” of Revelation 13:5. There are 4 other occurrences of this equal length in Revelation: 42 months (11:2), 1260 days (11:3, 12:6), and times, times, and half a time (12:14). There is a specific prophecy being revealed, but as we will see, it has already been fulfilled and is not about the antichrist.

Daniel was blessed of God to be given visions, which have been written down for us. Men were expected to be able to understand these things. Keeping in mind the Apocalyptic nature of the writing (being very figurative), we can know what God has revealed, and our faith will be greatly enhanced!

From The Text

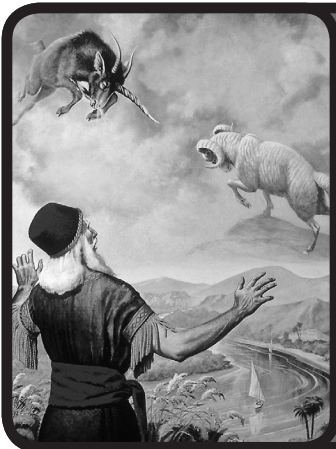
1. What does the "sea" represent (7:2-3)?
(see also Is. 57:20; Rev. 21:1)
2. What do the beasts represent (7:17)?
3. What do the 10 horns represent (7:24)?
4. What does the little horn represent (7:24)?
5. What will the little horn do to the saints (7:21, 25)?
6. What will be God's judgment on the little horn (7:26)?

For Discussion

1. Compare the four beasts in Daniel 7 with the image of the statue in Daniel 2. Include in the comparison Daniel 7:13-14, 17-18.
2. What historical figure is represented by the little horn?
3. How is God portrayed in this vision toward those who do evil? How does this disagree with the world's view of a loving God who would not harm others?

Applications

1. What care must we take when examining a passage like Daniel 7?
2. Are we right to compare this with Revelation 13?
3. The testing of God is seen in verse 25 in that the saints will be given into the hands of the little horn for a little while. Why does God allow this? (provide other passages)
4. Verse 27 indicates all the dominions will serve and obey the Highest One in an everlasting kingdom. Explain the true meaning, and indicate how some view this falsely as a kingdom on earth ruled by Christ from Jerusalem.



Chapter 8

The Vision of the Ram and Goat

As I have already indicated in previous lessons, the book of Daniel has become a romping ground for those who believe in Premillennialism. They bring to the book concepts that are not found in the book. They see in the prophecies to Daniel a fulfillment that has not yet happened which will supposedly happen at the end of time. They point to 8:17 and 19 as a proof of their belief: "the vision pertains to the time of the end." The difficulty is that this language does not necessitate the end of time. It could refer to the end of God's patience, the end of a nation, or the end of a king's rule. The context is what dictates the understanding, not preconceived ideas inserted into the text.

Thankfully, chapter eight's vision includes an interpretation by Gabriel. Yet even with God's revelation of the vision, some today insist on seeing things which the text does not indicate. Here is an explanation by one who sees this passage as prophecy which has not yet been fulfilled: The ram and goat represent the nations of Media, Persia, and Greece (v20-21). The names are symbolic. Modern Iran is Persia... Current "Media" is the approximate area of Iraq and Syria... The single goat would indicate the larger "reign" of

these two powers... that "reign" is the influence of Islam. The ram thus represents the fundamentalist power of Islam in a life-or-death struggle with the goat, representing Greece... Greece represents what today we call "Western civilization." Notice that this goat comes from the "west." (v. 5) Thus we have pictured here, in cartoon, or vision form, the struggle between Islam and Western civilization's Christianity. Here the word translated "first" means "foremost", not necessarily first in terms of order. Who is the foremost, the "first", nation of modern Western civilization? It is certainly the United States of America, the wealthiest country in the history of the world. Thus we have pictured here in Daniel 8 a vision of the clash of civilizations East and West, Islamic and Christian. (Source: <http://bibleprophecy.net/dan8-us.htm>)

Because of an understanding such as this from Daniel, many point to modern events in the middle east and claim we are seeing the fulfillment of these prophecies. They interpret the heavenly interpretation and get an incorrect understanding of the message. This leads to the rise of all sorts of unscriptural teachings which must be guarded against. Sadly, many

who espouse such things have found a greater audience through cable television. This chapter and the next few are vividly portrayed with charts and videos that captivate the imagination.

The only aspect of the vision which is not interpreted by Gabriel, is the 2300 days that would occur before the holy place would be properly restored. As with all the dates and numbers in Daniel, many have abused them to calculate all sorts of things, including the day of Christ's return. Some view this as 2300 years. With such a calculation, some claim 1844 was when the restoration would occur. When it did not, the claim was that men had failed to observe the sabbath. This was the beginning of the Seventh Day Adventist denomination.

Unlike the vision of the statue in chapter 2 which went on to describe the unending kingdom that destroyed even the Roman empire, the vision of chapter 8 does not go that far. It is a vision that stops and focuses on the Greeks. This period of time will be examined in even closer detail in chapter 11. Read the text carefully, and examine the history of the world taught in prophecy.

From The Text

1. We know from Daniel 2:37 the first kingdom was the Babylonians. Who does God identify as the second and third kingdoms (8:20-21)?
2. What does the goat's large horn represent (8:5, 21)?
3. What happened to the large horn (8:8, 22)?
4. What does the small horn represent (8:9, 23)?
5. What will this "little horn" do (8:10-12, 24-25)?

For Discussion

1. What is "the place of His sanctuary" (8:11) and "holy place" (8:13) which would be thrown down by the "little horn"?
2. What is meant by "the host" (8:10-13, 24-25)?
3. What is meant by the "2300 days" (8:14), "the time of the end" (8:17), and "the final period of the indignation" (8:19)?

Applications

1. Does 8:26 pertain to our future? Why or why not?
2. Consider the conversation between the holy ones (8:13-14) and the statement in 8:24 "when the transgressors have run their course". What is revealed about God's allowing tribulation and God's complete control? How does this help us in our life?
3. What benefit do we gain by examining the fulfillment of prophecy such as is revealed in this chapter?



Chapter 9

Daniel's Prayer

As a consequence of the vision in chapter 8, Daniel searched the word of the Lord and recognized the end of the 70 year prophecy of Jeremiah was nearing completion (9:2). So he sought God by prayer, and his great prayer on behalf of the people is the bulk of chapter 9.

His prayer is about the sin of the people since they have been in the Babylonian captivity and their lack of seeking God's way. This is an amazing revelation considering how God allowed the nation to be devastated. Many of the people had continued in their sin and failed to turn to God. Much is also learned about God's ways and His dealings with men in the affirmations of Daniel. This portion of the text has many great applications for us.

However, the vast number of people who turn to chapter 9 focus on the prophecy of the 70 weeks found in verses 24-27. Many pages of explanation have been offered for these few verses, and those explanations are quite varied. An example: The last week represents the last 7 years, the time of the Tribulation period... None of the 70th week of Daniel is in the past. All seven years of it is future, even though the Great Tribulation (Rev.13:5) and the flight of the Woman of Revelation 12 and the trampling of Jerusalem

is just the latter 3.5 years of the 7 years. The first half of the 70th week is most assuredly not past history. It is up ahead. The harlot will ride during the first half of the final seven years of this age. Details from Daniel and details from Revelation and other scriptures provide pieces of the puzzle. They all fit together. This then gives us a clear picture of the events of the end-time. (Source: <http://endtimepilgrim.org/70wks1.htm>)

Once again, we see an error of bringing preconceived ideas to the text and forcing contexts which are not found in the text. There is nothing in Daniel about the anti-christ or the tribulation as understood by premillennialists. These concepts must be forced onto Daniel 9:27.

Daniel's prayer was that God would hear (9:18) and forgive (9:19). Daniel prayed that God would "listen and take action" (9:19), even that He would "not delay" (9:19). The response given by Gabriel in 9:24-27 indicates that God has heard Daniel's prayer, He is responding and taking action. This was intended to be a word of comfort to Daniel that he might understand (9:23).

If the 70th week is about events in our future, that would have been of little comfort to Daniel who was concerned about

the people of God, the Israelites. The explanation must be in our history while yet in Daniel's future. Most everyone agrees all the 69 other weeks are speaking of historical events leading up to the time of the Messiah (as indicated in 9:26), but then they want to see a huge shift, even a gap of thousands of years in their explanation of the 70th week.

The time of the weeks is generally accepted as being years, but are they literal or figurative? That is the great difficulty of these few verses. If taken in the context of the other visions given to Daniel it appears to be about what will happen to the Israelites, and not about what will happen to all of mankind. Remember, Daniel had just studied the word of God concerning Jeremiah's prophecy of the 70 years of captivity (9:2). I do not think it is an accident that "70 weeks" (or years, as the Hebrew can mean either weeks or years) is described by Gabriel. Also remember the explanation of the prophecy is a decree "for your people" (9:24). For these reasons it cannot refer to all mankind.

From The Text

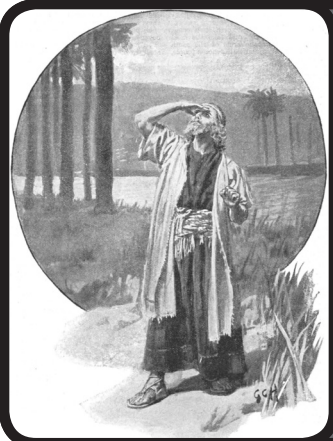
1. What prophecy of Jeremiah did Daniel read about (9:2)?
2. What positive things does Daniel say about God (9:4, 7, 12, 14, 15)?
3. Why did God's calamity come upon the Israelites (9:5, 7-9, 14-15)?
4. What curse is meant that was poured out on them (9:11)?
5. What does he indicate has been the attitude of the Israelites after Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians (9:5, 13)?

For Discussion

1. Why does Daniel include "we have not listened to Your servants the prophets" (9:6, 10)?
2. What was the purpose of Gabriel's message? What was intended that Daniel understand? (9:20-23)
3. What can we understand (from history) that was foretold to Daniel in 9:24-27?

Applications

1. What is revealed about Daniel's attitude and concern for his people? How should we similarly pray for "our people"?
2. The motivation for Daniel's prayer was the terrible vision of destruction given in chapter 8. How does this compare with 2 Peter 3:10-15?
3. How does Daniel represent the good attitude we should have upon realization of sin in our life?
4. How long should we pray (9:21)? What is indicated about the intensity of prayer?



Chapter 10

Daniel Feared the Vision

The chapter opens by stating it was in the third year of Cyrus' reign (which was 536 B.C.). The remnant would have already returned to Jerusalem, but Daniel appears to have stayed in Babylon. At this time Daniel may have been as much as 90 years old, having been a statesman most of his life. It is at this time he is shown a vision of a great conflict (v.1, NAS) or warfare (KJ). The assertion at the beginning of the chapter is that he understood the message and the vision.

Daniel had been mourning for three weeks. The reason for this is not given. However, understanding the previous visions Daniel had been given, it is not hard to understand his great concern for the nation of Israel. He knew of the coming rise and fall of nations. He knew about the restoration of Jerusalem, even in a time of distress (9:25). He knew of the timing of the coming of the Messiah. He was shown their future which was full of wars and desolations (9:26-27). Knowing the remnant had returned to Jerusalem (at the conclusion of the 70 years of Jeremiah, 9:2), it is easy to consider his great concern about the difficult and terrible events that were soon to come.

Verses 5 and 6 tell us a glorious person brought this message and vision to him. The description is of the most wonderful heavenly being to bring a message to Daniel. The similarities to the apostle John's description of the Christ must be compared (Rev. 1:13-16; 19:12). There are a few concerns with identifying this person as the Son of God, not the least of which are the differences between Daniel's vision and John's. Additionally, Michael came to help

Daniel (v.13), who is called the prince (v.21). But angels helping the Christ is not uncommon (Matt. 4:11; Luke 22:43; Matt. 26:53). Some view this person as an angel with a golden girdle (Rev. 15:6).

Verse 13 gives us a glimpse into the heavenly understanding. He had been withstood by the prince of Persia for 21 days (the same length of time Daniel had been fasting, v.3). He was going to fight this prince (v.20) and then the prince of Greece would come. Daniel already knew the Greek empire was going to overtake the Persians (chapter 2), but now he is shown how the heavenly beings are involved in the affairs of nations. God's will is being accomplished toward His people the Israelites through these nations. This spiritual battle is on-going for Paul said our struggle is "against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12). The heavenly forces which bring about God's will are the very one's speaking to Daniel.

Daniel was a beloved servant of God. He is called "man of high esteem" by the heavenly being (v.11,19, 9:23). Throughout the book, men have praised Daniel and he has retained his high position in the government. While despised by his peers (out of jealousy), the leaders held him in high esteem. For most men this would have been very satisfying. How much greater that God holds him in high esteem! No greater thing could be said of a man by God. All the more reason why we should carefully learn all we can

about Daniel.

It is uncertain if the one who resembled a human (v.16) is the same as the heavenly person in verse 5-6. The text does not indicate one way or the other. Knowing this does not effect our understanding of the text and is not a point which should trouble us.

The vision which begins in chapter 10 with the visitation of the heavenly beings is merely the prelude to the detailed vision in chapters 11 and 12. The future events are relayed as facts, and are exact in every detail. So set was this future, the heavenly being says he was going to tell Daniel "what is inscribed in the writing of truth" (v.21). From the beginning God had a plan to bring the Messiah into the world in order to provide a means of salvation to sinful man. All the details of that plan were known from the beginning. The events relayed to Daniel were a mere portion of God's plan. Yet in this glimpse of the future we see with stunning clarity the reality of God's knowledge and power.

There remains several more interesting points in chapter 10 which we will discuss in the questions which follow.

From The Text

1. What happened to Daniel has a consequence of being in the presence of the heavenly being?
 - A. 10:8-9
 - B. 10:15-17
2. How did Daniel regain strength?
3. Why had the heavenly person come to Daniel (v.12)?
4. What was the purpose of the vision (v.14)?
5. Why was Daniel asked "do you understand why I came to you" (v.20)?

For Discussion

1. Why did the men with Daniel run away (v.7)? How might this relate to seeing God in the judgement?
2. When are "the latter days" (v.14) when these things will take place?
3. Should the coming vision be understood about things leading up to the end of time or things leading up to the Messiah (see 9:24-27)? (Is this a continuance or more detailed view of the same visions he has already been given?)

Applications

1. What is our source of spiritual strength? (provide references)
2. Why should we also not fear God (v.12)?
3. What should we gain from understanding the vision about to be revealed to Daniel?



Chapter 11

Conflicts to Come

Chapter 11 is the most detailed prophecy found in Scripture. Because of the extreme accuracy of the prophecy in relation to now historical events, some proclaim it was added to the book of Daniel at some point later after these events. I reject this completely since chapter 10 beautifully prepares the reader for the vision, and is in such complete agreement with the other three visions about this same period of time.

Up to this point, Daniel had not been given specific information about the nation of Israel or what would become of Jerusalem. He appears to have been curious of these things and was praying to God about them (10:12). God's answer is astoundingly deep and extremely detailed.

Many use the statements in this chapter to describe current events and events yet in our future. This is to ignore the historical accuracy relayed in the vision. Some want to point to double-meanings in the vision in an effort to include history's clear fulfillment of the vision. All these modern efforts of interpretation of the vision fail to consider the reason why the vision was given in the first place. "I have come to give you an understanding of what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision pertains to the days yet future" (10:14). Daniel 2 tells of the coming empires leading to the

establishment of the kingdom of God by Jesus. This understanding is repeated in the vision of the four beasts in chapter 7, which are 4 kings (7:17). Daniel 8 also presents details about the kings of Media, Persia and Greece (8:20-21). Daniel 9:24-27 has clearly been fulfilled regarding the coming of the Messiah. Why do people insist this vision in chapter 11 now leaps ahead more than 2000 years? It does not fit the context of the book.

A good knowledge of history is required to see the fulfillment of the vision. There are many records from this time and academics are agreed on the sequence and timing of events relayed in the prophecy. Because of the rise of archaeology in the last 150-200 years, we can have great confidence in our understanding of this period, which in turn bolsters our faith in seeing the specifics of the vision.

Briefly, then, history tells us after the Persian empire, the Greeks came to power and that empire was mighty under the reign of Alexander the Great. When he died, his kingdom was divided into four kingdoms ruled by his generals. After a few battles, these empires were absorbed into two main empires, the Ptolemaic and Seleucid. Toward the end of this period the new Roman empire was on the rise

and beginning to dominate. These events had great impact on the nation of Israel as they had little military power. These strong rulers even led to one who desecrates the temple, does away with the regular sacrifice and set up the abomination of desolation (11:31). Those events were very important in Jewish history. As a result of this desecration the Maccabean revolt arose amongst the Jews against the then dominate Roman empire. It led to the restoration of the temple, but did not shrug off the Roman occupation.

The visions of chapter 11 begin at the time of Daniel and describe in amazing detail the rise and fall of kings and nations up to a time just before the Maccabean revolt (166 B.C.). Much of this prophecy is about what we call the Intertestamental years (a period of about 400 years between the writing of Malachi and John the Baptist).

If you have internet access, a good timeline of these historical events can be viewed at: www.bible-history.com/rome/RomeTimeline__Biblical_History.htm The specific dates to examine are 550-164 BC. In answering the following questions, if you are uncertain of historical figures, I would encourage you to fill them in during the class period's discussion and presentation.

From The Text

1. Which verse describes the rise of Alexander the Great?
2. Historically, who is the first King of the South (v.5) and the first King of the North (v.6)?
3. What language is used to describe the land of Israel (v.16, 20, 41, 45)? Why this use?
4. What general attitude toward God is displayed by all of these kings that will arise?
5. What will happen to God's people (v.14-16, 32-35)?

For Discussion

1. Who is described in verse 31 and what was done that so upset the Jews? (see also Dan. 9:27; Matt. 24:15)
2. Is the "end time" (v.40) a description of the second coming of Christ?

Applications

1. What is the importance of this great prophecy to us? How do we benefit from understanding it?
2. When a friend points to Daniel 11 to speak of the second coming of Christ, how can we defend this is not about the second coming or current events?
3. From verses 32-33, describe how we today also need to be those who have insight.



Chapter 12

The Time of the End

A lot of people struggle to understand Daniel 12. Mainly because they seek to identify and explain portions of the chapter which are not explained by inspiration. As a result, men have provided various answers that contradict. Additionally, most who attempt to explain chapter 12 also bring to the chapter some false understandings from Revelation. The contention is to make this chapter agree with Revelation since they both seem to be depicting the same thing.

This means as we discuss the book of Daniel with our friends, and chapter 12 specifically, many will want to discuss the Anti-Christ, the Rapture, Armageddon, and the Return of Christ, none of which is mentioned in the text. They are all brought to the text from false doctrines regarding a premillennial belief of the end of time.

Much is made out of the three number references in this chapter: 1) "time, times and half a time" (v.7), 2) 1290 days (v.11), and 3) 1335 days (v.12). The number of explanations, and the differences in those explanations of these three references are truly staggering. Many calculate from these numbers to determine not only when things did occur in history, but when they will occur in the future (which is what the vision of Daniel is about). These fail to understand how the

prophecies have already come true, or (as some teach) they have come true but have a double-fulfillment in the time when Christ will return.

Perhaps the best explanation about these three numbers is to quote Scripture, which says nothing. There is NO inspired explanation of these, so any attempt is speculation and not confirmed fact. We will do best to leave them as an unknowable aspect of the vision.

Another great difficulty or disagreement about this chapter is the timing of when these things will take place. Two views are generally held: 1) at the time of the Roman destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70), or 2) at the end of time when Christ returns. If we keep this chapter in the context of all the visions which Daniel received, it makes more sense that this is about the Roman Empire, the fourth empire of the vision of the statue in chapter 2. None of the other visions extend past this period. Beyond that, this vision is an explanation to Daniel to give him an "understanding of what will happen to your people in the latter days" (10:14). The destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 ended the nation of Israel. It is an explanation of chapter 12 that aligns well with the end of chapter 11.

Verse 1 states "and at that time, your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued." What book? Will it only be faithful Jews who are included, or all the faithful? Malachi helps in saying, "those who feared the Lord spoke to one another, and the Lord gave attention and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the Lord and esteem His name. They will be mine...I will spare them" (Mal. 3:16-17). In the day of God's calamity, those whose names are written in the book will be delivered. Jesus taught this same principle when He said, "rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven" (Luke 10:20). Paul mentions some "whose names are in the book of life" (Phil. 4:3). John's revelation has many instances regarding this book (Rev. 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12; 20:15; 21:27). This is yet another similarity between the books of Daniel and Revelation.

Daniel was blessed by God to receive the visions of this book. We are blessed to receive them and be able to see their fulfillment in history. God is at work among the nations and His will is always accomplished. As Daniel said, "righteousness belongs to You, O Lord" (9:7) "who keeps His covenant" (9:4) and loves "those who love Him and keep His commandments" (9:4).

From The Text

1. Who is in view during the vision (v.1)?
2. Define “conceal” (NAS) or “shut up” (KJ) (v.4).
3. When is “the end of time” (v.4, 9)?
4. Where else do we read of this man dressed in linen (v.6)?
5. What will those with insight understand (v.10)?
6. What time reference is given? (Explain verses 11-12)

For Discussion

1. Who are those who have insight that will shine brightly (v.3)? (Compare with Matt. 5:14; Phil. 2:15-16.)
2. What event is being discussed in verse 7?

Applications

1. Point to the language of this chapter that indicates it is not speaking of the second coming of Christ.
2. In brief, give an overview of all four of the visions in Daniel. What are they about?
3. How does an understanding of Daniel help us understand John's Revelation?