

The Book Of Daniel



Sermon Outlines

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To God Be The Glory!

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The Book Of Daniel

Introduction

INTRODUCTION

1. One of the more fascinating books of the Bible is the book of Daniel...
 - a. The first six chapters contain accounts of faith that inspire both young and old
 - b. The last six chapters are filled with apocalyptic visions that challenge even the most advanced Bible students and scholars
2. It is a book that has often been attacked and abused...
 - a. Attacked by liberals who deny its inspiration
 - b. Abused by many who have taken its visions out of context to support all kinds of wild theories concerning the second coming of Christ
3. But when properly read and understood, the book of Daniel can...
 - a. Inspire us to greater faithfulness in our service to God
 - b. Strengthen our faith in the inspiration of the Bible

[In this lesson, we shall introduce the book and look at it as a whole, beginning with...]

I. DANIEL AND HIS TIMES

A. THE MAN...

1. The name “**Daniel**” means “**God is my judge**”
2. He was a person of deep and abiding faith
 - a. As a youth, he purposed not to defile himself - **Dan 1:8**
 - b. When old, he persisted in serving God despite threats against his life - **Dan 6:10**
3. God blessed Daniel because of his faith
 - a. He rose to great heights in the kingdoms of Babylon and Persia - **Dan 2:48; 6:1-3**
 - b. He served as a statesman, a counselor to kings, and a prophet of God
4. Daniel was contemporary with Jeremiah and Ezekiel
 - a. **Jeremiah** prophesied in Jerusalem before and during the Babylonian exile (626-528 B.C.)
 - b. **Ezekiel** prophesied in Babylon among the exiles (592-570 B.C.)
 - c. **Daniel** prophesied in the capital of Babylon (605-586 B.C.)
5. Nothing is known of his personal life outside of the book
 - a. He descended from one of Judah’s prominent families, if not from royal blood - **Dan 1:3**
 - b. At an early age (12-18) he was taken from his family to be trained in the courts of Babylon - **Dan 1:3-4**
 - c. Whether he ever married is uncertain

B. THE TIME IN WHICH HE LIVED...

1. Some key dates to remember
 - a. **612 B.C.** - Fall of Nineveh, capital of Assyria
 - 1) Assyria had ruled the world since the days of Tiglath-Pileser (845 B.C.)

- 2) Nabopolassar came to the throne in Babylon and rebelled against the Assyrians in 625 B.C.
- 3) Nebuchadnezzar, son of Nabopolassar, was the general who led the Babylonian army against Nineveh, defeating it in 612 B.C.
- b. **605 B.C. - Battle of Carchemish, establishing Babylonian domination**
 - 1) Pharaoh-Necho of Egypt came to fight the Babylonians at Carchemish
 - 2) Nebuchadnezzar defeated the Egyptians, chasing them south through Judah
 - 3) At Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar heard of his father's death; he returned to assume the throne in Babylon
 - 4) The **first group** of Jewish captives were taken, along with Daniel and his friends - **Dan 1:1-4**
- c. **597 B.C. - A second remnant taken to Babylon**
 - 1) Jehoiachin (Jeconiah, Coniah) followed the reign of his father, Jehoiakim
 - 2) He lasted just three months, when Nebuchadnezzar took him and 10,000 Jews to Babylon - **2 Kin 24:8-16**
 - 3) This **second group** of captives included Ezekiel - **Eze 1:1-3**
- d. **586 B.C. - Fall of Jerusalem and the temple destroyed**
 - 1) Zedekiah was installed as king in Jerusalem, but was weak and vacillating
 - 2) Eleven years later, Jerusalem was totally devastated by Babylonian forces - **2 Kin 25:1-10**
 - 3) A **third group** was taken into Babylonian captivity, but Jeremiah was among those who stayed behind - **2 Kin 25:11-12,22; Jer 39:11-14; 40:1-6**
- e. **536 B.C. - Babylon falls, and the first remnant returns to Jerusalem**
 - 1) Cyrus, king of Persia, sends the first remnant back under the leadership of Zerubbabel - **Ezra 1:1-5; 2:1-2**
 - 2) The foundation of the temple was soon started, but the temple was not completed until 516 B.C. - **Ezra 3:8-13; 6:14-16**
- f. **457 B.C. - A second remnant returns to Jerusalem**
 - 1) Ezra the priest returns with this group - **Ezra 7:1-8:36**
 - 2) He leads a much-needed revival - **Ezra 9:1-10:44**
- g. **444 B.C. - A third remnant returns to Jerusalem**
 - 1) This group is led by Nehemiah - **Neh 1:1-2:20**
 - 2) Under his leadership, the walls of Jerusalem are rebuilt - **Neh 3:1-7:73**
 - 3) Together with Ezra, they restore much of the religion - **Neh 8:1-13:31**
2. Daniel lived through much of these times (605-534 B.C.)
 - a. He was among the first group of captives taken to Babylon - **Dan 1:1-4**
 - b. He continued there over the entire 70 years of captivity - **Dan 1:21; 10:1; cf. Dan 9:1-2; Jer 25:11; 29:10**

[Daniel was certainly a remarkable man. His greatness was recognized by his contemporary, Ezekiel (**Ezek 14:14,20; 28:3**). Now let's take a brief look at...]

II. THE BOOK OF DANIEL

A. THE THEME...

1. **"God Rules In The Kingdoms Of Men"** - cf. **Dan 2:21; 4:17,25,32,34-35; 5:21**
2. In this book, we see the rule of God is...
 - a. Manifested in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius, and Cyrus, kings of the Babylonians, Medes, and Persians

- b. Foretold to occur in the days of the Persians, Greeks, and Romans
3. In this book, we learn that the rule of God would be especially manifested...
 - a. With the establishment of God's kingdom - **Dan 2:44**
 - b. With the vindication of the cause of His saints - **Dan 7:27**

B. A BRIEF OUTLINE...

1. **God's Providence In History - 1:1-6:28**
 - a. Daniel and his determination to be pure - **1:1-21**
 - b. Nebuchadnezzar's dream and Daniel's promotion - **2:1-49**
 - c. Faith in the face of fire by Daniel's friends - **3:1-30**
 - d. Nebuchadnezzar's second dream and temporary insanity - **4:1-37**
 - e. The writing on the wall and fall of Belshazzar - **5:1-31**
 - f. Darius and his den of lions - **6:1-28**
2. **God's Purpose In History - 7:1-12:13**
 - a. Daniel's dream of the four beasts - **7:1-28**
 - b. Daniel's dream of the ram and the goat - **8:1-27**
 - c. Daniel's prayer, and the vision of the seventy weeks - **9:1-27**
 - d. Daniel's vision of the time of the end - **10:1-12:13**

CONCLUSION

1. As with all of Scripture, the book of Daniel is profitable for our study - **2 Ti 3:16-17**
 - a. From Daniel and his three friends, we will learn the power of faith and commitment
 - b. By studying this book, we can better understand our Lord's references to it - cf. **Mk 1:14-15; Mt 24:15-16**
2. Despite some of its more difficult and challenging passages, we can benefit from them as well, as long as we interpret them...
 - a. In the context of the book itself
 - b. Consistent with all else the Bible may say on the subject
 - c. With the humility and openness that is incumbent upon all who would study and teach God's word - cf. **2 Ti 2:24-25**

In our next study, then, we will begin by taking a look at "**The Faith Of A Fifteen-Year-Old**"...

The Faith Of A Fifteen-Year-Old

Daniel 1:1-21

INTRODUCTION

1. The Old Testament is filled with examples worthy of our study and emulation...
 - a. Such as Joseph, with his stand for God in the house of Potiphar
 - b. Such as Joshua, a great man of faith and conviction in his service to God
2. Another example that ought to inspire us all is that of Daniel...
 - a. As a young man, his faith gave him the courage to remain true to his convictions
 - b. As an old man, his faith sustained him the threat of persecution

[We first read of Daniel and his great faith, in the first chapter of the book of Daniel...]

I. DANIEL'S FAITH AS A "FIFTEEN-YEAR-OLD"

A. IT WAS A BLEAK DAY IN THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL...

1. The beginning of Babylonian domination - **Dan 1:1-2**
 - a. In the third year of Jehoiakim (ca. 605 B.C.)
 - b. Jerusalem besieged by Nebuchadnezzar
 - c. Jehoiakim taken into captivity, and precious items taken from the temple
2. This was the first of three times that Nebuchadnezzar came against Jerusalem (605, 597, 586 B.C.)

B. DANIEL AND OTHERS SELECTED FOR SPECIAL TRAINING...

1. Young men taken to serve Nebuchadnezzar - **Dan 1:3-7**
 - a. They were truly the "cream of the crop" among the captives
 - 1) Good looking with no blemish
 - 2) Gifted with wisdom, knowledge, and ability to learn quickly
 - b. To serve in the king's palace, and be taught the language and literature of the Chaldeans (Babylonians)
 - 1) Given special provisions of the king's food and drink
 - 2) With three years of special training
 - c. Among those selected, four are named, and apparently renamed to honor Babylonian gods
 - 1) **Daniel** (God is my judge) - **Belteshazzar** (a servant of Bel)
 - 2) **Hananiah** (the Lord is gracious) - **Shadrach** (inspired by the sun god)
 - 3) **Mishael** (who is what God is?) - **Meshach** (who is what the moon god is?)
 - 4) **Azariah** (the Lord helps) - **Abed-Nego** (servant of Nebo)
2. How would these young men respond?
 - a. Would they submit to the temptations placed before them?
 - b. Would they give in, excusing themselves due to youth and inexperience?
-- How would you have reacted if you were in their place?

C. DANIEL MAKES A DECISION...

1. He "*purposed in his heart*" - **Dan 1:8**

- a. I.e., he made a commitment
- b. Something too rarely heard of today, in both young and old
2. His commitment was to *“not defile himself”* with the king’s food
 - a. Possibly unclean food according to Levitical restrictions
 - b. Or food used in idol worship which would cause one to be a participant with such worship - cf. **1 Co 10:20-22**

D. HOW DANIEL REMAINED TRUE TO HIS COMMITMENT...

1. He did it with **politeness** - **Dan 1:8b**
 - a. Note that “he requested”
 - b. He did not “demand”, but respected the authority of those over him
2. He did it with **God’s help** - **Dan 1:9**
 - a. God gave him favor in the eyes of the chief of eunuchs
 - b. Similar to how Joseph found favor in prison - cf. **Gen 39:21**
3. He did it through **persistence** - **Dan 1:10-11**
 - a. He did not give up after the refusal by the chief of the eunuchs
 - b. He tried something else, going to the steward directly over them
4. He did it through **willingness to test his faith** - **Dan 1:12-15**
 - a. He was confident that God’s way was the right way
 - b. He was willing to demonstrate the superiority of God’s way
 - c. So he asked the steward to give him and his three friends just water and vegetables for ten days

E. THE VALUE OF SUCH FAITH SEEN IN ITS RESULTS...

1. It affected the lives of others! - **Dan 1:15-16**
 - a. It had blessed the countenance of Daniel and his friends
 - b. It then blessed the rest of the young men under the care of the steward
2. God blessed Daniel and his three friends even more! - **Dan 1:17-20**
 - a. God gave them knowledge, skill, and wisdom, and to Daniel He gave understanding in visions and dreams
 - b. They became the best of the young men who had been trained, and served in the presence of Nebuchadnezzar
 - c. The king found them better than all his magicians and astrologers
3. Daniel continued in the court of Babylon nearly seventy years! - **Dan 1:21**
 - a. Even to the first year of Cyrus of Persia (539 B.C.)
 - b. Eventually becoming provincial ruler and chief administrator over all others - **Dan 2:48**

[What a wonderful example of faith and commitment, and of God's providence to care for His people! Now let's consider some...]

II. LESSONS AND APPLICATIONS FROM DANIEL’S FAITH

A. HOW TO SUCCEED IN KEEPING OUR COMMITMENT TO THE LORD...

1. **Be polite**
 - a. There is never any reason to be rude or arrogant
 - b. Impoliteness just aggravates a situation rather than helps it - cf. **Pro 15:1**
2. **Seek God’s help**
 - a. Without God, any effort is more likely to fall - cf. **Psa 127:1-2**
 - b. God seeks to help those who are loyal to Him - cf. **2 Chr 16:9**

3. **Be persistent**
 - a. Don't give up trying after meeting the first obstacle
 - b. Remember what Jesus taught about persistence:
 - 1) Those who keep on "asking, seeking, knocking" will receive, find, have doors opened to them - **Mt 7:7-11**
 - 2) The parable of the persistent widow - **Lk 18:1-8**
4. **Be willing to test your faith**
 - a. If not willing, how committed are you to trusting God?
 - b. Yet God often invited people to test His promises - cf. **Mal 3:10**
 - c. And so does Jesus - cf. **Jn 7:16-17; Mt 6:31-34**

B. SOME APPLICATIONS...

1. **School-age children**
 - a. Out from underneath their mother's apron for the first time
 - b. They will be faced with making decisions
-- Will they have the faith of Daniel?
2. **College-bound students**
 - a. Moving away from home for the first time
 - b. Leaving a spiritual environment at home, for one that is likely very worldly
-- Will they live and act with the same sort of commitment found in Daniel?
3. **Adults in the workplace**
 - a. Tempted to accept jobs which may require one compromise convictions
 - b. Called upon to lie for the boss, show loyalty to the company though illegal
-- Will they have "the faith of a fifteen-year-old"?
4. **Those with unbelieving spouses**
 - a. Having to serve God and raise their children in the ways of the Lord on their own
 - b. With little or no moral and religious support from their life mate
-- Will they have the "purpose of heart" that Daniel had?

CONCLUSION

1. Many other applications could be made, but what have we learned from "the faith of a fifteen-year-old" like Daniel...?
 - a. Even those who are young need to make a personal commitment to serve the Lord
 - b. One can be steadfast in their purpose to serve the Lord without arrogance
 - c. We should look to the Lord for help, and be willing to trust in His providence
 - d. God will bless and provide for those who put their trust in Him and His will
2. Daniel is not the only person to demonstrate such faith in his youth...
 - a. We made mention of Joseph earlier
 - b. We have other examples in the O.T., such as David and Josiah
 - c. And of course, let's not forget the example of Mary (the mother of Jesus), and that of Timothy

May the example of their dedication to the service of the Lord inspire us all to "purpose in our heart" not to defile ourselves by the things of the world!

The Kingdom That Shall Never Be Destroyed

Daniel 2:1-49

INTRODUCTION

1. In **Dan 2**, we read about Nebuchadnezzar's dream and Daniel's interpretation...
 - a. Nebuchadnezzar challenges his magicians, sorcerers, et al, to tell him both the dream and its interpretation, and they are unable - **Dan 2:1-13**
 - b. God reveals the secret of the dream to Daniel in a night vision - **Dan 2:14-23**
 - c. Daniel approaches the king and explains that God has made known to him both the dream and its interpretation - **Dan 2:24-30**
 - d. Daniel then tells the dream, and gives the interpretation of it, to the amazement of Nebuchadnezzar - **Dan 2:31-49 (read)**
 - 1) The king had seen a great image
 - a) With head of gold
 - b) With chest and arms of silver
 - c) With belly and thighs of bronze
 - d) With legs of iron, and feet mixed with iron and clay
 - 2) The great image was destroyed by a small stone made without hands
 - a) The image representing the rise and fall of four world empires
 - b) The stone representing a kingdom that God would set up
 - 3) The king praises God, and exalts Daniel along with his three friends
2. There are certainly two key thoughts expressed in this chapter...
 - a. God is a revealer of secrets - **Dan 2:19,22,28-29,47**
 - b. God can make know the future and bring it pass - **Dan 2:28-29,21**
3. But of particular interest to us ought to be the "kingdom" in **verse 44**...
 - a. Which the God of heaven Himself shall set up
 - b. Which shall never be destroyed, but consume other kingdoms and stand forever
4. Several questions naturally come to mind concerning this "kingdom"...
 - a. When would God set it up?
 - b. Has it been set up as foretold?
 - c. If it has, and if it shall never be destroyed...
 - 1) Where is it now?
 - 2) What is the future of this kingdom?
 - 3) Can we be a part of this indestructible kingdom?

[In this lesson, we shall endeavor to provide the answers to such questions. Let's start with the first: When would this "kingdom" be set up...?]

I. THE PREPARATION FOR THE INDESTRUCTIBLE KINGDOM

A. "IN THE DAYS OF THESE KINGS..." (44)

1. Daniel describes the image as depicting four kingdoms which shall rise and fall
2. The first one is definitely **Babylon - Dan 2:37-38**

3. With Babylon as the starting point, world history confirms that the next three kingdoms would be:
 - a. The **Medo-Persian** empire, represented by the chest and arms of silver
 - b. The **Grecian** empire, represented by the belly and thighs of bronze
 - c. The **Roman empire**, represented by the legs of iron, with feet mixed with iron and clay
4. Thus one could look for the establishment of the “indestructible kingdom” in the days of the Roman empire

B. WHEN “THE TIME IS FULFILLED”...

1. Notice what John the Baptist began preaching during the days of the Roman empire (“*the kingdom of heaven is at hand*”) - **Mt 3:1-2**
2. Jesus proclaimed this also, adding “*the time is fulfilled*” - **Mk 1:14-15**
 - a. What “time” was fulfilled?
 - b. The time described by Daniel!

[So the “indestructible kingdom” was to be set up in the days of the Roman empire. During Roman empire both John and Jesus anticipated its establishment. This leads to our next question: Has it been set up as foretold?...]

II. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE INDESTRUCTIBLE KINGDOM

A. DURING JESUS’ EARTHLY MINISTRY, IT WAS “AT HAND”...

1. This is what both John and Jesus proclaimed - **Mt 3:1-2; Mk 1:14-15**
2. Yet after Jesus’ death, there were those who were still waiting for the kingdom - e.g., Joseph of Arimathea, **Lk 23:50-51**

B. BUT FOLLOWING THE ASCENSION OF JESUS...

1. He is far above all principality, power, might, dominion - **Ep 1:20-21**
2. All has been made subject to Him - **1 Pe 3:22**
3. He is ruler over the kings of the earth - **Re 1:5**
4. He rules the nations with a rod of iron - **Re 2:26-27**
- He truly has all authority in heaven and on earth! - cf. **Mt 28:18**

C. THIS SUPPORTS WHAT IS REVEALED LATER IN DANIEL...

1. Consider **Dan 7:13-14**
 - a. Where one like the Son of Man approaches the Ancient of Days (God)
 - b. And is given dominion, glory, and a kingdom which shall not be destroyed
2. Compare this with **Ac 1:9**
 - a. Daniel describes the ascension from a heavenly perspective
 - b. Whereas Luke describes it from an earthly perspective!

[It is clear, then, that the King (Jesus) has received a kingdom, that the indestructible kingdom was set up when He returned to heaven! But one might naturally ask: Where is it now? The answer is found when we consider...]

III. THE NATURE OF THE INDESTRUCTIBLE KINGDOM

A. THINGS TO REMEMBER ABOUT THIS KINGDOM...

1. It was described by Daniel as a “*stone cut...without hands which became a great*”

mountain and filled the whole earth” - Dan 2:34-35

- a. “without hands” suggests it is not your ordinary kingdom
- b. Also, it would start small and then grow larger
2. Compare this with what Jesus taught about the nature of His kingdom
 - a. His kingdom is not of this world - **Jn 18:36**; cf. **Ro 14:17**
 - b. It would start small, and grow to encompass the earth - **Mt 13:31-33**
- Thus this “indestructible kingdom” would start small, and would be spiritual in nature

B. THIS KINGDOM THEREFORE INVOLVES THOSE IN THE CHURCH...

1. The Christians at Colosse were in the kingdom - **Co 1:12-13**
2. Those at Thessalonica likewise - **1 Th 2:12**
3. Along with the seven churches in Asia - **Re 1:6,9**
4. Indeed, all Christians receive their part in this “indestructible kingdom” - **He 12:28**
 - a. Including us gathered here this day!
 - b. Fulfilling the statement that this kingdom would fill the whole earth!
 - c. For here we are, on the other side of the planet from Jerusalem, yet citizens of this kingdom foretold in Daniel!

[Whoever is willing to “**repent and believe in the gospel**” (**Mk 1:15**) can be a part of the kingdom Jesus established when He sat down at the right hand of God following His ascension to heaven. This leads us to yet another question: What is the future of this kingdom...?]

IV. THE FUTURE OF THIS INDESTRUCTIBLE KINGDOM

A. IT WILL LAST FOREVER...

1. As Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar - **Dan 2:44**
 - a. “which shall never be destroyed”
 - b. “it shall stand forever”
2. As the writer to the Hebrews stated: “a kingdom which cannot be shaken” - **He 12:28**
3. As the angel Gabriel spoke to Mary: “of His kingdom there will be no end” - **Lk 1:31-33**

B. AT CHRIST’S COMING, IT WILL BE DELIVERED TO THE FATHER...

1. As taught by Paul to the Corinthians - **1 Co 15:23-26**
 - a. When Christ comes, He shall deliver the kingdom to God the Father, having put an end to all rule, authority and power
 - b. Until then, Christ shall reign until all enemies are placed under His feet, the last enemy being death
2. As Jesus taught in the parable of the tares - **Mt 13:40-43**
 - a. At the end of the age, His angels will gather out of the kingdom those that offend and practice lawlessness
 - b. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father

CONCLUSION

1. And so this kingdom...
 - a. Foretold by Daniel, proclaimed by John the Baptist and Jesus Himself
 - b. Was begun in the days of the Roman empire, with Christ as its king and His disciples as its citizens

2. It is an indestructible kingdom...
 - a. That continues on, ever growing
 - b. With the hope of a glorious future in eternity

3. But let us not forget the last question raised in our introduction: **Can we be a part of this indestructible kingdom?**
 - a. Yes! For Jesus and His apostles tell us how
 - 1) We must be born again of water and the Spirit - **Jn 3:5; cf. Ti 3:5**
 - 2) An allusion to baptism, commanded of penitent believers - **Mt 28:19; Mk 16:16; Ac 2:38**
 - b. But beware, some in the kingdom may one day be cast out!
 - 1) As Jesus warned in the parable of the tares - **Mt 13:41-43**
 - 2) Telling us later of the necessity of an enduring faith - **Re 2:10**

Therefore, once we have been obedient to the gospel (cf. **Ro 6:17-18**) we must remain diligent in our faith, if we wish to experience the future glories of...

“The Kingdom Which Shall Never Be Destroyed!”

Faith In The Face Of Fire

Daniel 3:1-30

INTRODUCTION

1. In **Dan 1**, we were introduced to three companions of Daniel: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego...
 - a. Like Daniel, they were young men taken from Judah into captivity and trained to serve before the king - **Dan 1:6-7**
 - b. Like Daniel, they were blessed by God and impressed the king after their period of training - **Dan 1:17-20**
2. **Dan 3** reveals more about the character of these three young men...
 - a. In recounting an incident that has fascinated many, both young and old
 - b. Like **Dan 1**, it illustrates the power of a strong faith in those who are young

[This inspiring story, which I like to call “**Faith In The Face Of Fire**”, begins by describing...]

I. THEIR TRIAL

A. THE EVENTS LEADING UP TO IT...

1. Nebuchadnezzar’s image, and his command to worship it - **Dan 3:1-7**
2. The accusation against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego - **Dan 3:8-12**
3. The king’s threat of the fiery furnace - **Dan 3:13-15**

B. THE NATURE OF THEIR TRIAL...

1. To save their situation
 - a. They had been promoted over the affairs of Babylon - **Dan 3:12**
 - b. They would lose their position as well as their lives
2. To sacrifice their conscience
 - a. All they needed to do was to conform outwardly
 - b. Of course, that would have meant disobedience to God - **Exo 20:4-5**

C. WE MAY FACE SIMILAR TRIALS TODAY...

1. To save our situation, such as:
 - a. Our popularity at school, by doing things our peers or teacher do not see wrong
 - b. Our position at work, by doing that which our boss or company requires which may be illegal, unethical, or immoral
2. To sacrifice our conscience
 - a. It would be easy to conform outwardly, to “go along with the crowd”
 - b. But our conscience would condemn us, and so would God

[Likely we all have been tempted in some way like this. How did we react? How should we have reacted? How did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego react? Let’s consider...]

II. THEIR TESTIMONY

A. THEY DEMONSTRATED FAITH...

1. In the power of God - **Dan 3:16-17**
 - a. That God was able to deliver them from the fiery furnace
 - b. If it was His will
2. In the will of God - **Dan 3:18**
 - a. If it was God's will not to deliver it, so be it!
 - b. They would still not worship other gods, nor the gold image!

B. THEY DETERMINED TO SERVE GOD NO MATTER WHAT...

1. Like **Job** in the midst of his affliction - **Job 1:20-21; 13:15**
2. Like **Habakkuk** who would praise God even in suffering - **Hab 3:17-19**
3. Like **the apostles** who rejoiced to suffer in His name - **Ac 5:27-29**
4. Like **Polycarp** who offered this prayer as he was being burned at the stake:

“O Lord God Almighty, the Father of Thy beloved and blessed Son Jesus Christ, through whom we have received the knowledge of Thee, the God of angels and powers and of all creation and of the whole race of the righteous, who live in Thy presence;

“I bless Thee for that Thou hast granted me this day and hour, that I might receive a portion amongst the number of martyrs in the cup of Thy Christ unto resurrection of eternal life, both of soul and of body, in the incorruptibility of the Holy Spirit.

“May I be received among these in Thy presence this day, as a rich and acceptable sacrifice, as Thou didst prepare and reveal it beforehand, and hast accomplished it, Thou that art the faithful and true God.

“For this cause, yea and for all things, I praise Thee, I bless Thee, I glorify Thee, through the eternal and heavenly High-priest, Jesus Christ, Thy beloved Son, through whom with Him and the Holy Spirit be glory both now and for the ages to come. Amen.’

- From **The Martyrdom Of Polycarp**

[Such examples are truly “**Faith In The Face Of Fire**”! This is what it means to have faith, trust, and commitment to the Lord. What about our own personal trials at school or work? Have we been true to God, no matter the cost? Finally, consider...]

III. THEIR TRIUMPH**A. THE REST OF THE CHAPTER REVEALS...**

1. How they were saved in the fiery furnace - **Dan 3:19-25**
2. How Nebuchadnezzar was led to bless the true God - **Dan 3:26-39**

B. CONSIDER WHAT THEIR TRIALS BROUGHT THEM...

1. **A new sense of freedom!**
 - a. They entered bound, but were soon seen “loose, walking” - **Dan 3:23-25**
 - b. The very thing presumed to destroy them, enabled them to walk freely!
 - c. So our own trials can be used to set us truly free! - cf. **Ja 1:2-4; Ro 5:3-5**
2. **A new source of fellowship!**
 - a. Note: There was a **fourth** person in the fire! - **Dan 3:25**
 - b. The identity of this fourth person is not certain

- 1) Some think it was an angel
- 2) Others believe it was a Christophany (a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ)
- c. Whichever, it suggested a closer communion and fellowship with God!
- d. So our trials can bring us closer to God
 - 1) As explained by the author of Hebrews - **He 12:5-11**
 - 2) As promised by Jesus Himself - **Re 3:12,21; 7:13-17**
3. **A new opportunity for service!**
 - a. They were promoted to even higher positions! - **Dan 3:30**
 - b. Just as Joseph, who in his trials went:
 - 1) From slave to steward
 - 2) From prisoner to Pharaoh's second hand man!
 - c. So our faithfulness in trials will lead to greater things! - cf. **Mt 25:21; Re 2:25-27**

CONCLUSION

1. What a wonderful example of faith in these three young men!
 - a. Committed to serving God, no matter the consequence
 - b. Believing that God can bring deliverance, willing to accept death if He doesn't
 - c. Demonstrating that faith in the face of fire can lead to greater things
2. Let's not overlook perhaps the most important outcome of this incident: **glory to God!**
 - a. Note the praise rendered by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon - **Dan 3:28-29**
 - b. So our faith (and works) should be to the praise of God - cf. **Mt 5:16**
3. What kind of faith do we have? Is it like a....
 - a. **Spare tire**, used only in the case of an emergency?
 - b. **Wheelbarrow**, easily upset and must be pushed?
 - c. **Bus**, ridden only when it goes our way?

May our faith be like that of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, committed to serving the Lord and demonstrating **"Faith In The Face Of Fire"**!

The Most High Rules In The Kingdom Of Men

Daniel 4:1-37

INTRODUCTION

1. In **Dan 2**, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had a dream...
 - a. Involving a large image with head of gold, chest and arms of silver, belly and thighs of bronze, legs of iron with feet of iron mixed with clay - **Dan 2:36-43**
 - 1) Representing four world empires
 - 2) I.e., Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome
 - b. In which the image was destroyed by a small stone made without hands - **Dan 2:44-45**
 - 1) Representing the establishment of a kingdom by the God of heaven
 - 2) A kingdom that would never be destroyed, and would consume the other kingdoms
 - Prompting the king to praise the God of Daniel - **Dan 2:47**

2. In **Dan 3**, Nebuchadnezzar made a large image of gold...
 - a. He required all to worship it, under threat of death - **Dan 3:4-6**
 - b. Three young men did not, yet survived the fiery furnace - **Dan 3:23-27**
 - Prompting the king to bless the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego - **Dan 3:28-29**

3. From **Dan 4**, it appears that Nebuchadnezzar had more to learn about God...
 - a. He knew that God was Lord of kings and a revealer of secrets - **Dan 2:47**
 - b. He knew that God can deliver His servants - **Dan 3:28-29**
 - But now it was time for him to learn that God, the Most High and King of heaven, rules in the kingdom of men, including his own!

[It was through a second dream and succeeding events that led Nebuchadnezzar to this conclusion. In his own words, the king of Babylon relates how it happened...]

I. THE DREAM, INTERPRETATION, AND FULFILLMENT

A. NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S FOREWORD...

1. Addressed to all who dwell on the earth - **Dan 4:1**
2. To declare the signs and wonders of the Most High God - **Dan 4:2-3a**
3. Proclaiming God's kingdom to be everlasting, His dominion from generation to generation - **Dan 4:3b**

B. NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM...

1. A dream which troubled him and made him afraid - **Dan 4:4-5**
2. His dissatisfaction with the wise men of Babylon - **Dan 4:6-7**
3. The dream is told to Daniel...
 - a. The king's confidence in Daniel - **Dan 4:8-9**
 - b. Elements of the dream - **Dan 4:10-17**
 - 1) A tree in the middle of the earth, its height reaching to the heavens
 - 2) The decree of a holy one, a "watcher", concerning the tree

- a) To be cut down, leaving only the stump and roots
- b) Bound with a band of iron and bronze
- c) Wet with the dew of heaven
- d) To graze with the beasts of the earth
- e) His heart changed from that of a man to an animal
- f) And let seven times (years?) pass over him
- 3) The purpose of the decree is for the living to know:
 - a) The Most High rules in the kingdom of men
 - b) Who gives it to whomever He will, and sets over it the lowest of men
- c. The king repeats his confidence in Daniel to interpret the dream - **Dan 4:18**

C. DANIEL'S INTERPRETATION...

1. Daniel is astonished and troubled by the dream - **Dan 4:19**
 - a. Yet the king reassures Daniel to tell the interpretation
 - b. Daniel wished the dream pertained to the king's enemies
2. Elements of Daniel's interpretation - **Dan 4:20-26**
 - a. The tree which became strong and tall represents Nebuchadnezzar
 - b. The king shall be driven from men, dwell among beasts and eat grass like oxen
 - 1) Seven times (years?) will pass over him
 - 2) Till he knew that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, giving it to whomever He chooses
 - c. The kingdom shall be returned to Nebuchadnezzar
 - 1) Indicated by the command to leave the stump and roots of the tree
 - 2) Once he comes to know that Heaven rules
3. Daniel's counsel for the king to be righteous and show mercy - **Dan 4:27**

D. THE DREAM'S FULFILLMENT...

1. It came to pass at the end of twelve months - **Dan 4:28-29**
2. As the king was boasting about his power and majesty - **Dan 4:30-32**
3. That very hour he was driven from men - **Dan 4:33**
 - a. He ate grass like oxen
 - b. His body was wet with the dew of heaven
 - c. His hair grew like eagle's feathers, his nails like birds' claws
4. And the end of the time, understanding returned to the king - **Dan 4:34-35**
 - a. Prompting him to bless and praise the Most High, who lives forever
 - b. Acknowledging His everlasting dominion and kingdom
 - c. Who does according to His will in the army of heaven and among inhabitants of the earth, and none can restrain or say "What have You done?"
5. Nebuchadnezzar restored - **Dan 4:36-37**
 - a. His reason, honor, and splendor returned, his counselor and nobles resorted to him
 - b. But now he praises and honors the King of heaven for His truth and justice, Who is able to humble those who walk in pride

E. THE MAIN POINT OF THE DREAM AND ITS FULFILLMENT...

1. Stated several times in this chapter
 - a. In the dream itself - **Dan 4:17**
 - b. By Daniel, in providing the interpretation - **Dan 4:25-26**
 - c. As spoken from Heaven when the dream came to pass - **Dan 4:32**
 - d. By Nebuchadnezzar when he returned to his senses - **Dan 4:34-35**

2. To learn that **“The Most High Rules In The Kingdom Of Men”**
 - a. Which Daniel acknowledged from Nebuchadnezzar’s first dream - **Dan 2:20-21**
 - b. And now does the king, from his second dream!

[The main point is simple enough, but do we acknowledge that it is still true? Do we appreciate that the Most High still rules in the kingdom of men, only now through His Son? Lest we forget, let’s review what the New Testament teaches about...]

II. THE RULE OF GOD IN THE KINGDOMS OF MEN

A. CHRIST NOW REIGNS AS SOVEREIGN...

1. As claimed before His ascension to heaven - **Mt 28:18**
2. As proclaimed after His ascension - **Re 2:26-27; 3:21**
3. As taught by His apostles - **Ep 1:20-22; 1 Co 15:24-28; 1 Pe 3:22**

[So He has the authority, but does He exercise it? Consider the next point...]

B. CHRIST NOW REIGNS IN THE KINGDOM OF MEN...

1. **As foretold by the prophets**
 - a. In **Psalms 2**, which speaks of:
 - 1) The attempt of the nations to reject Christ - **Psa 2:1-3**
 - 2) The coronation of Christ despite their efforts - **Psa 2:4-6**
 - 3) The exercise of Christ’s rule over the nations - **Psa 2:7-9**
 - 4) The importance of kings and judges serving the Lord - **Psa 2:10-12**
 -- **Ac 4:23-28** confirms that this passage refers to Jesus!
 - b. In **Psalms 110**, which tells of:
 - 1) The rule of Christ in the midst of His enemies - **Psa 110:1-2**
 - 2) The voluntary service of His people (the church), and the priestly service of their King - **Psa 110:3-4**
 - 3) The exercise of judgment among the nations - **Psa 110:5-7**
 -- **Ac 2:32-36** confirms that this passage refers to Jesus!
2. **As taught by the apostles**
 - a. Governing authorities exist as appointed by God, to serve as ministers of God - **Ro 13:1-4**
 - b. Why pray for kings and those in authority, that peace may prevail, unless God through Christ can do something about it? - cf. **1 Ti 2:1-2**
 - c. Jesus is the **“ruler over the kings of the earth”** - **Re 1:5**
 - 1) He exercised that rule in the destruction of Jerusalem, foretold in **Mt 24**
 - 2) He exercised that rule in destroying the beast of Revelation (the Roman empire) and all his forces - cf. **Re 17:14**
 -- Truly Jesus is **“King of kings, and Lord of lords”!** - cf. **Rev 19:16; 1 Ti 6:15**
3. **We may not always be able to see how it is so**
 - a. If Christ rules in the kingdom of men, why do evil men and evil empires exist?
 - b. This was a problem that perplexed Habakkuk...
 - 1) Who bewailed the wickedness in Israel - **Hab 1:2-4**
 - 2) Who was amazed that God would punish Israel by a nation more evil than it - **Hab 1:12-13**
 - 3) Who placed his trust in God, no matter the circumstances - **Hab 3:17-19**
 - c. It helps to understand the nature of Christ’s rule

- 1) He rules *“in the midst of His enemies”* - **Psa 110:2**
- 2) He must reign *“till He has put all enemies under His feet”* - **1 Co 15:25-26**
 - Until He comes again, Jesus exercises His authority over the nations in ways we may not always be able to comprehend

CONCLUSION

1. To know that *“the Most High rules”* must have been comforting to Daniel...
 - a. For at that time he and the nation of Israel were in captivity
 - b. Their temple was destroyed, the land plundered and filled with transplanted foreigners
 - c. Yet Daniel knew the prophecy of Jeremiah, that after seventy years they would return - cf. **Dan 9:1-2**
 - Knowing that God rules, even when wicked men seem to prevail, gave him hope
2. We can take comfort in knowing that *“the Most High rules”* today...
 - a. That He who rules in the kingdom of men is Jesus!
 - b. Who is our Savior, Priest, and Friend!
 - Therefore we can look forward to the future with hope, not apprehension
3. But this is true only if we give Jesus sovereign rule in our personal lives...
 - a. He must be “our” Lord, the King of “our” lives!
 - b. We must be “volunteers” in the day of His power - cf. **Psa 110:3**

Have we submitted in obedience to Him who is both Lord and Christ (cf. **Ac 2:36-38**)? Remember the admonition of the Psalmist...

“Serve the LORD with fear, And rejoice with trembling.”

“Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, And you perish in the way, When His wrath is kindled but a little.”

“Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.” (Psa 2:11-12)

Are you putting your trust in Jesus, the Son of God?

The Hand Writing On The Wall

Daniel 5:1-31

INTRODUCTION

1. So far in our study of the book of Daniel, we have seen...
 - a. The faith of young Daniel, who made the commitment not to defile himself - **Dan 1**
 - b. The first dream of Nebuchadnezzar, interpreted by Daniel - **Dan 2**
 - 1) Propheying the rise and fall of four world empires
 - 2) Foretelling the establishment of the kingdom of Christ
 - c. The faith of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego in the face of fire - **Dan 3**
 - d. The second dream of Nebuchadnezzar and its fulfillment, confirming that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men - **Dan 4**
2. We now come to the **Dan 5**, where we find an incident familiar to many...
 - a. The event is often called: **“The Hand Writing On The Wall”**
 - b. As with any Old Testament account, it was written for our admonition - cf. **1 Co 10:11**

[As we begin with the text, we first read of...]

I. BOOZE AND IDOLATRY IN A KING’S COURT (1-4)

A. BELSHAZZAR, THE KING...

1. The time is now about **539 B.C.**
 - a. **Nebuchadnezzar** had died in **562 B.C.**
 - b. He was succeeded by his son, **Evil-Merodach** - cf. **2 Kin 25:27**
 - 1) After two years he was assassinated by **Nergilissar**, his brother-in-law
 - 2) Who in turn died four years later (**556 B.C.**), leaving the throne to his infant son, **Labashi-Marduk**, who was soon deposed by a priestly revolution
 - c. **Nabonidus**, a former priest under Nebuchadnezzar, was made king in **556 B.C.**
 - 1) Who was interested more in scholarly and religious pursuits
 - 2) So he appointed his son Belshazzar as ruler of Babylon in his place
 - d. **Belshazzar** therefore became co-regent in **550 B.C.**
 - 1) He was “second” in command
 - 2) Which is why he offered Daniel only the “third” position - cf. **Dan 5:16,29**
 - 3) Nebuchadnezzar is called his “father” - **Dan 5:2,11,13,18,22**
 - a) Nabodonius (Belshazzar’s father) may have been Nebuchadnezzar’s son-in-law, and it was common to refer to one’s ancestor as “father”
 - b) Or “father” may be used figuratively
2. Belshazzar throws a big feast - **Dan 5:1-3**
 - a. Nebuchadnezzar had taken gold and silver vessels from the temple in Jerusalem - cf. **2 Chr 36:10**
 - b. Belshazzar adds insult to injury by using them in this feast

B. THEY PRAISED THE GODS OF GOLD AND SILVER...

1. The king and guests foolishly praised the creation rather than the Creator

2. Would we ever stoop so low?
 - a. Worship the gods of silver and gold?
 - b. Become guilty of idolatry?
3. We do if we succumb to the sin of covetousness! - **Ep 5:5; Co 3:5**
 - a. When we make mammon (material riches) our god - cf. **Mt 6:24**
 - b. When we make created things the prime focus of our time and interest

[As we continue in **Dan 5**, notice how quickly things change as we read of...]

II. PANIC AND HUMILIATION IN A KING'S COURT (5-9)

A. THE HAND WRITING ON THE WALL...

1. The fingers of a man's hands appear - **Dan 5:5a**
2. They write on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace - **Dan 5:5b**
3. Belshazzar sees the part of the hand that wrote - **Dan 5:5c**

B. THE QUAKING KING...

1. In the case of King Belshazzar...
 - a. One moment his heart is puffed up with pride
 - b. The next moment, his knees are knocking together - **Dan 5:6**
 - A vivid illustration of: *"Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall."* - **Pro 16:18**
3. All he saw was a man's hand...
 - a. What if he had seen the face of God?
 - b. If just a tiny manifestation of God's power had that effect, then what would be the effect of coming face to face with God?
4. What about the coming Judgment? Will we be able to stand?
 - a. Not if we are wicked - cf. **Psa 1:5**
 - b. But we can if we have pure hearts and holy hands - cf. **Psa 24:3-5**

C. THE HELPLESS ADVISORS...

1. Once again, a king appeals first to those unable to help - **Dan 5:7-9**
2. Just as Nebuchadnezzar did in **Dan 2,4**
3. People often do the same thing today in times of crisis
 - a. They go to the wrong place for help
 - 1) Looking to their own strength or wisdom
 - 2) Or that of other people
 - b. When they need to trust in God first - cf. **Pro 3:5-10; Mt 6:33**

[As we continue with the Biblical account, we read of...]

III. THE ARRIVAL OF GOD'S MAN (10-16)

A. THE ADVICE OF THE QUEEN...

1. The queen was likely the "queen mother", for the wives were already present - **Dan 5:10-12; cf. 5:2**
2. Note that the queen was not present at the banquet...
 - a. Could the one who knew where to turn in time of trouble, have also known that the banquet was no place for her to be?

- b. Those who party and “live it up” are usually those lost in despair when trouble strikes!

B. DANIEL BEFORE THE OFFENDER...

1. Twice the king says “I have heard of you” - **Dan 5:13-16**
 - a. It sounds as though the king knew him only by reputation
 - b. He evidently had not made much effort to know Daniel prior to this event
2. People in the world are not much different
 - a. They make little effort to get to know the people of God
 - b. But in times of sickness, trials, and death, where do they turn? To the church, of course-- The time to get to know God’s people is before, not after!

[Next comes...]

IV. THE INDICTMENT (17-24)

A. DANIEL REJECTS THE KING’S REWARD...

1. At this point the character of Daniel really shines - **Dan 5:17**
2. Unlike many, who teach only if given gifts (or “love offerings”)
3. Daniel gladly tells the true for free

B. DANIEL RECOUNTS A LESSON FROM HISTORY...

1. The lesson from Nebuchadnezzar’s second dream is recounted - **Dan 5:18-21**
2. We would do well to learn from history
 - a. Those who ignore history, are doomed to repeat it
 - b. This is especially true with inspired history!

C. DANIEL REBUKES THE KING...

1. Belshazzar did not learn from his father’s experience - **Dan 5:22-24**
 - a. He exalted himself, when he should have glorified God
 - b. This handwriting on the wall was sent
2. When will people learn from history?
 - a. Should we not learn from the pride of Pharaoh in the book of Exodus?
 - b. Should we not learn from the murmuring of the Israelites in the wilderness?-- Indeed, inspired history was written for our learning! - **Ro 15:4; 1 Co 10:11**

[Belshazzar failed to benefit from his knowledge of God’s dealings with mankind, and so upon him was to come...]

V. THE SENTENCE AND EXECUTION (25-31)

A. THE HAND WRITING ON THE WALL EXPLAINED...

1. What was meant by: *“Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin”* - **Dan 5:25-28**
 - a. **Mene** - God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it
 - b. **Tekel** - You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting
 - c. **Peres (Upharsin)** - Your kingdom has been divided, given to the Medes and Persians
2. From the **Believer’s Study Bible**:
 - a. The term mene (Aram.) could be the monetary “mina,” or a participle meaning “numbered.” Its repetition produces the sense “thoroughly numbered.” God had set limits on Belshazzar’s kingdom.

- b. The term tekell (Aram.) could be a monetary unit corresponding to the Hebrew shekel, or a participle meaning “weighed.”
- c. The final word upharsin (Aram.) could also be a monetary unit, a half-mina or half-shekel, or a plural participle from the verb paras, “divide,” meaning “and divided.”
- d. The message of Daniel’s interpretation is that Belshazzar’s kingdom had been numbered for destruction. The king himself is weighed and found wanting. The kingdom was to be taken away and given to the Medes and the Persians.

B. A THIRD OF NOTHING...

1. Belshazzar is true to his promise - **Dan 5:29**
2. But as we will soon see, what he gave Daniel was a “third of nothing”

C. “THIS NIGHT YOUR SOUL WILL BE REQUIRED OF YOU...”

1. How quickly the proud and boastful can fall, despite power and wealth - **Dan 5:30-31**
 - a. Herodotus indicates that Babylon fell as a consequence of the diverting of the waters of the Euphrates, allowing the enemy to enter under the city walls
 - b. Other sources explain it as the result of treason and subterfuge from within, resulting in the opening of the gates to the conquering armies
2. This is reminiscent of Jesus’ story of the rich fool - **Lk 12:15-21**
 - a. Boasting one day
 - b. Dead the next

CONCLUSION

1. The announcement of doom in this story was provoked in part because...
 - a. The king misused and abused some pieces of metal
 - b. These pieces of metal were **God’s** pieces of metal-- For such disregard of what belonged to God, a kingdom would be buried!
2. Remember that we are the temple of God today - **1 Co 3:16-17**
 - a. If God did not view lightly the misuse of His vessels then...
 - b. Will He be casual about the impenitent abuse of His church today?-- Just as He destroyed the one who defiled His temple of old, so He will destroy those who defile His temple (i.e., the church) today!

Let’s not wait for “**The Hand Writing On The Wall**” to tell us it is too late, that judgment has been passed and the sentence is final. Let’s instead heed “**The Hand That Wrote On The Ground**” (i.e., Jesus, **Jn 8:6,8**), while there is still time for mercy and forgiveness!

Daniel In The Lions' Den

Daniel 6:1-28

INTRODUCTION

1. The faith of Daniel has been an inspiration to many young people...
 - a. Due to his faith as a young man, when only 15-17 years old
 - b. In which he purposed in his heart not to defile himself - cf. **Dan 1:8**
2. Daniel should also be an inspiration to elderly people...
 - a. As an example of service and commitment in our "golden years"
 - b. For we can also read of his faith as old man, perhaps in his mid-eighties

[The account of the elder Daniel's faith is found in **Dan 6:1-28**, involving an incident commonly referred to as "**Daniel In The Lion's Den**". The story is certainly worthy of our careful consideration, and so we begin our study by reading verse one in which...]

I. THE TRAP IS SET (1-9)

A. DANIEL IS SUCCESSFUL...

1. He is appointed one of three governors over the kingdom - **Dan 6:1-2**
 - a. The kingdom may be Babylon (Chaldea), recently conquered by the Medo-Persian empire - **Dan 5:30-31**
 - b. The identity of Darius the Mede is uncertain, possibly a man known as Gubara appointed by Cyrus of Persia to rule Chaldea
2. Daniel "*distinguished*" himself above the others - **Dan 6:3**
 - a. His success was due to his "*excellent spirit*", not cunning or political maneuvering
 - b. Proving one can be successful in business and politics without compromising character
 - c. Darius contemplates setting Daniel over the whole realm

B. DANIEL IS ENVIED...

1. His success leads to envy by others - **Dan 6:4**
 - a. Even the most godly men can have their enemies (e.g., David, Christ)
 - b. Enemies by virtue of jealousy
2. His noble character is attested to by his enemies - **Dan 6:4**
 - a. They could make no charge against him, finding no fault or error in him
 - b. Because he was "*faithful*" (i.e., trustworthy, dependable)
3. His enemies determine there is only one way to defeat him - **Dan 6:5**
 - a. To find some conflict between the law of God and that of the land
 - b. Which they then set out to do

C. DANIEL IS TARGETED...

1. The king is approached by Daniel's enemies - **Dan 6:6**
2. They propose a royal statute, a firm decree - **Dan 6:7**
 - a. That no petition can be made of any god or man for thirty days, except the king
 - b. Under punishment of being cast into the den of lions
3. The king is encouraged to establish the decree - **Dan 6:8-9**

- a. Which according to the law of the Medes and Persians, cannot be altered
- b. King Darius signs the decree

[Daniel's faith in God had brought him success up to this point. But now the exercise of his faith could cause him to lose it all! What would we have done in his place? As we continue to read, we see what Daniel did...]

II. THE TRAP IS SPRUNG (10-17)

A. DANIEL CONTINUES TO PRAY...

1. Knowing full well that the decree had been signed - **Dan 6:10**
2. Practicing a custom common among the Jews - **Dan 6:10**
 - a. Praying three times a day - cf. **Psa 55:17**
 - b. Praying toward Jerusalem - cf. **1 Kin 8:27-30**
 - c. Praying on his knees (a common posture for prayer) - cf. **1 Kin 8:54**
 - d. Praying with thankfulness to God, even in times of trouble - cf. **Ph 4:6**
3. His own custom since "*early days*" - **Dan 6:10**
 - a. Though great and powerful, fervent prayer was not beneath him
 - b. Though aged, he had not grown weary of prayer

B. DANIEL IS CAUGHT...

1. His enemies catch Daniel praying - **Dan 6:11**
2. His enemies report Daniel to the king - **Dan 6:12-13**
 - a. Reminding Darius of the unalterable decree
 - b. Accusing Daniel of disregarding the king and his decree
3. The king is forced to abide by his own decree - **Dan 6:14-15**
 - a. Displeased with himself, the king tries to deliver Daniel
 - b. Daniel's enemies pressure the king to abide by his decree

C. DANIEL IS THROWN INTO THE LIONS' DEN...

1. Yet the king is hopeful - **Dan 6:16**
 - a. That Daniel's God will deliver him
 - b. Whom Daniel had served "continually"
 - Would he have had such hope if Daniel was sporadic in his service to God?
2. The den is closed with a stone and sealed - **Dan 6:17**
 - a. Sealed with the signet ring of the king and his lords
 - b. Ensuring that the purpose concerning Daniel would not be changed

[It appears Daniel's enemies have won. He is in the lions' den and it is sealed. Yet could any "seal" by man ever keep God from accomplishing His plans (don't forget the "sealed" tomb! - cf. **Mt 27:62-66**)? And so we read how...]

III. THE TRAP IS SPOILED (18-28)

A. DARIUS IS WORRIED...

1. His night is restless - **Dan 6:18**
 - a. He spends the night fasting, and without musicians
 - b. He can't sleep
2. His concern for Daniel is evident - **Dan 6:19-20**

- a. Rising early in the morning, going in haste to the den
- b. Crying to Daniel with a lamenting voice
- c. Wondering if God has delivered Daniel
 - 1) A servant of the living God
 - 2) Who serves God continually

B. DANIEL IS DELIVERED...

1. Daniel answers the king - **Dan 6:21-22**
 - a. With respect to the king (“O king, live forever!”)
 - 1) Despite what the king had done to him
 - 2) An example of blessing those who persecute you
 - b. With word of God’s great deliverance
 - 1) Saved by an angel of God - cf. **Dan 3:28**
 - 2) Who shut the lions’ mouths
 - c. With affirmation of his innocence
 - 1) Innocent before God
 - 2) Guilty of no wrong before the king
 2. Darius removes Daniel from the den - **Dan 6:23**
 - a. The king being exceedingly glad
 - b. Daniel with no injury found on him
- Daniel is delivered from the lions, because he believed in His God (i.e., saved by faith!)

C. THE CONSPIRATORS ARE EXECUTED...

1. Cast into the same trap intended for Daniel, along with their families - **Dan 6:24**
2. As often happens, those who set the trap get caught in it!
 - a. Cf. Haman, hung on the gallows he built for Mordecai - **Est 7:10**
 - b. As contemplated by David, warned by Solomon - **Psa 7:14-16; Pro 1:10-19**

D. GOD IS EXALTED...

1. Darius makes a decree that the God of Daniel be feared - **Dan 6:25-27**
 - a. He is the living God, and steadfast forever
 - b. His kingdom is indestructible, and His dominion everlasting
2. Another pagan king comes to realize Who is really in control!
 - a. As did Nebuchadnezzar - **Dan 4:34-35**
 - b. As did Belshazzar, only too late - **Dan 5:26-28**

E. DANIEL PROSPERS...

1. In the reign of Darius, who ruled Chaldea - **Dan 6:28**
2. In the reign of Cyrus of Persia (who also ruled over Darius) - cf. **Dan 1:21**

CONCLUSION

1. What were the noble qualities of this aged saint? He was a man...
 - a. With an excellent spirit - **Dan 6:3**
 - b. Without fault in his business dealings - **Dan 6:4**
 - c. Faithful to those over him - **Dan 6:4**
 - d. Committed to prayer throughout his life - **Dan 6:10**
 - e. Willing to obey God rather than man - **Dan 6:10**
- Putting it simply, he was a man who *“believed in his God”!* - **Dan 6:23**

2. **“Daniel In The Lions’ Den”** is a story that has thrilled many children...
 - a. But its lessons are not just for children
 - b. Daniel is a role model for adults as well
 - 1) For politicians
 - 2) For everyone involved in administrative affairs
 - 3) For all Christians, especially older ones

May we all learn from the example of Daniel, who exemplified what it means to seek first the will of God (cf. **Mt 6:33**), and to obey God rather than man (cf. **Ac 5:29**)!

The Vision Of The Four Beasts

Daniel 7:1-28

INTRODUCTION

1. The book of Daniel naturally divides itself into two parts...
 - a. In our introductory lesson, we described these parts as:
 - 1) God's providence in history - **Dan 1:1-6:28**
 - 2) God's purpose in history - **Dan 7:1-12:13**
 - b. Wiersbe describes these two parts as:
 - 1) The personal history of Daniel - **Dan 1:1-6:28**
 - 2) The prophetic history of Daniel - **Dan 7:1-12:13**
2. The second half of the book contains four visions seen by Daniel...
 - a. The vision of the four beasts - **Dan 7:1-28**
 - b. The vision of the ram and the goat - **Dan 8:1-27**
 - c. The vision of the seventy weeks - **Dan 9:1-27**
 - d. The vision of the time of the end - **Dan 10:1-12:13**

-- In which God reveals to Daniel many things about His purpose and plan in history, regarding the nation of Israel and the everlasting kingdom to come

[In this lesson we shall consider "The Vision Of The Four Beasts", found in **Dan 7:1-28**. We begin by noting...]

I. THE VISION DESCRIBED (1-14)

A. DATE OF THE VISION...

1. Received by Daniel in the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon - **Dan 7:1**
2. This would be about **550 B.C.**, when Belshazzar became co-regent with his father Nabonidus

B. DETAILS OF THE VISION...

1. Part One: The four beasts from the sea - Dan 7:2-8
 - a. The four winds of heaven stirring up the Great Sea (Mediterranean)
 - 1) The "sea" may symbolize the mass of humanity - cf. **Isa 17:12; Re 17:15**
 - 2) The "four winds of heaven" may be forces God uses to control and even destroy - cf. **Jer 49:36; 51:1** (Harkrider)
 - b. Four great beasts coming up out of the sea
 - 1) **The lion with eagle's wings**
 - a) Whose wings were plucked off
 - b) Made to stand on two feet like a man
 - c) A man's heart given to it

-- The lion represents **Babylon**; the wings possibly symbolizing the co-regency of Nabonidus and Belshazzar, a kingdom shown to be remarkably fragile - cf. **Dan 5:1-31** (Believers' Study Bible)
 - 2) **The bear with ribs in its mouth**
 - a) Raised up on one side

- b) Three ribs in its mouth between its teeth
 - c) Told to “Arise, devour much flesh!”
 - The bear represents the **Medo-Persian** empire; that it raises on one side may reflect the Persian dominance, the three ribs in its mouth may illustrate its victories over Egypt, Syria, and Babylon (BSI)
 - 3) **The winged, multi-headed leopard**
 - a) With four wings and four heads
 - b) To whom dominion was given
 - The leopard represents the **Greek** empire of Alexander the Great; the wings may symbolize its rapid conquest, the four heads prophetic of its division by four generals after Alexander’s death (BSB)
 - 4) **The dreadful and terrible beast**
 - a) Exceedingly strong, with huge teeth
 - b) Devouring, breaking in pieces, trampling residue with its feet
 - c) Different from all the beasts before it
 - 1/ Unlike the other three, it is not compared with any animal
 - 2/ But if it is the beast of Revelation, note that it was a conglomeration of a lion, bear and leopard - cf. **Re 13:1-2**
 - d) With ten horns; another little horn coming up among them...
 - 1/ Before whom three of the first horns were plucked from their roots
 - 2/ In which were the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompously
 - This beast represents the **Roman** empire; the ten horns and little horn may represent emperors or kings who ruled during events involving the establishment of God’s kingdom (see below) - cf. **Dan 2:44**
2. Part Two: An awesome judgment - Dan 7:9-12
- a. Thrones were put in place, and the Ancient of Days was seated
 - 1) His garment was white as snow, His hair like pure wool
 - 2) His throne a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire, a fiery stream issued from before Him
 - 3) A million ministered to Him, a hundred million stood before Him
 - 4) The court (judgment) was seated, and books were opened
 - b. The judgment of the four beasts
 - 1) The great and terrible beast
 - a) The one with the sound of pompous words from the little horn
 - b) It was slain, its body destroyed, and given to the burning flame
 - 2) The rests of the beasts
 - a) They had their dominion taken away
 - b) Their lives were prolonged for a season and a time
3. Part Three: The coronation of the Son of Man - Dan 7:13-14
- a. Daniel sees one like the Son of Man
 - 1) Coming with the clouds of heaven
 - 2) Brought near to the Ancient of Days
 - b. To Him was given dominion, glory, and a kingdom
 - 1) That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him
 - 2) His dominion is an everlasting dominion
 - 3) His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed - cf. **Dan 2:44**

[The parallels between this vision and Nebuchadnezzar’s dream (**Dan 2**) should be carefully noted. Both involve the rise and fall of four kingdoms, and a kingdom which would never be destroyed. In

Daniel's three-part vision, the conflict to come between the fourth kingdom and the establishment of the everlasting kingdom is foretold as we see...]

II. THE VISION INTERPRETED

A. EFFECT ON DANIEL...

1. Grieved in his spirit - **Dan 7:15**
2. Troubled by the visions he saw

B. EXPLANATION TO DANIEL...

1. An overall summary of the vision - **Dan 7:16-18**
 - a. Provided by one of those who stood by (an angel?)
 - b. The four beasts represent four kings (kingdoms, cf. **7:23**)
 - c. Yet the saints of the Most High shall receive and possess the everlasting kingdom
2. Daniel's desire to know more - **Dan 7:19-20**
 - a. About the fourth beast, exceedingly dreadful
 - b. About the ten horns on it head
 - c. About the little horn
 - 1) Before which three horns fell
 - 2) Which had eyes and a mouth speaking pompous words
 - 3) Whose appearance was greater than his fellows
3. What Daniel then saw - **Dan 7:21-22**
 - a. The little horn making war against the saints, prevailing against them
 - b. Until the Ancient of Days came
 - 1) With judgment in favor of the saints of the Most High
 - 2) And it was time for the saints to possess the kingdom
4. What Daniel then heard - **Dan 7:23-27**
 - a. Concerning **the fourth beast**
 - 1) It shall be a fourth kingdom on the earth
 - 2) It shall devour the whole earth, trample it, and break it in pieces
 - The **Roman** empire, which came to rule the Mediterranean world
 - b. Concerning **the ten horns**
 - 1) They are ten kings to arise from this fourth kingdom
 - 2) After whom another shall arise
 - These may be emperors who ruled during the first century A.D. when the everlasting kingdom (i.e., the church) was being established, or the ten kings alluded to in **Rev 17:12-13**; then again, the number ten may only be symbolic, reflecting their complete or full number, and not ten specific kings
 - c. Concerning **the little horn**
 - 1) He shall be different from the first kings
 - 2) He shall subdue three kings
 - 3) He shall speak pompous words against the Most High
 - 4) He shall persecute the saints of the Most High
 - 5) He shall intend to change times and law
 - 6) Into whose hands the saints shall be given for a time, times and half a time
 - 1/ Perhaps 3 1/2 years (1 year, 2 years, 1/2 year), 42 months - cf. **Re 13:5**; also **11:2,3**
 - 2/ A broken, short period of time involving persecution (Harkrider)
 - This is likely the persecuting emperor of Rome (e.g., Domitian), described as the

beast from the sea in Revelation - cf. **Re 13:1-2,5-7**

d. Concerning **the judgment**

- 1) The dominion of the little horn shall be taken away, consumed and destroyed
 - 2) Then the kingdom (of heaven?), and the dominion and greatness of the kingdoms under heaven shall be given to the saints of the Most High
 - 3) This kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and dominions shall serve Him
- As depicted in Revelation, the conflict between the Roman empire and the church would end with the ultimate victory of the people of God (who even though martyred, would reign with Christ) - cf. **Re 17:14; 19:19-20; 20:4**

C. EPILOGUE BY DANIEL...

1. His thoughts greatly troubled him, and his countenance changed - **Dan 7:28**
2. But he kept the matter in his heart - **Dan 7:28**
 - a. A good course of action whenever we are unsure about the meaning of a particular Scripture, especially that which is prophetic
 - b. As we continue to read and study, what we learn later may help enlighten the unclear Scripture we have kept in our heart

CONCLUSION

1. **“The Vision Of The Four Beasts”** is certainly interesting and challenging...
 - a. It expands upon the vision seen by Nebuchadnezzar in **Dan 2**
 - b. It introduces the conflict described in the vision seen by John in **Re 13-20**
2. I understand these visions to depict the establishment of *“the everlasting kingdom”*...
 - a. To occur during the days of the Roman empire - **Dan 2:44; Lk 1:30-33; Mk 1:14-15**
 - b. Which began when Jesus ascended to heaven - **Dan 7:13-14; Ac 1:9; 2:36; Ep 1:20-23; 1 Pe 3:22; Re 1:5,9**
 - c. Which experienced great persecution at the outset - **Dan 7:25; Re 1:9; 2:10; 17:14**
3. But the saints who persevered in those days, even to the point of death, continue to reign with Christ in heaven (i.e., they “possess the kingdom”) - **Dan 7:18; 2 Ti 4:17-18; Re 20:4**

The ultimate victory of the church over the Roman empire came to pass as foretold to both Daniel and John. May this fulfillment encourage us to remain faithful until the time when Jesus returns to *“deliver the kingdom to God the Father”*! - cf. **1 Co 15:23-26**

The Vision Of The Ram And The Goat

Daniel 8:1-27

INTRODUCTION

1. In previous chapters we have seen visions describing four kingdoms...
 - a. The vision of Nebuchadnezzar - **Dan 2**
 - b. The vision of Daniel - **Dan 7**
 - These kingdoms were the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Greek, the Roman
2. In **Dan 8**, Daniel relates another vision...
 - a. Commonly called “**The Vision Of The Ram And The Goat**”
 - b. In which two kingdoms are described

[As we shall see, the two kingdoms as the same as two of the four kingdoms in earlier visions. But just as the vision in **Dan 7** related more information about the fourth kingdom, so now the vision in **Dan 8** provides some information about the second and third kingdoms...]

I. THE VISION DESCRIBED (1-14)

A. DATE OF THE VISION...

1. Received by Daniel in the third year of Belshazzar king of Babylon - **Dan 8:1**
2. This would be about **552 B.C.**, two years later than the vision in **Dan 7**

B. DETAILS OF THE VISION...

1. In the vision, Daniel saw himself in Shushan (Susa) - **Dan 8:2**
 - a. In the province of Elam (western Persia, modern day Iran)
 - b. The winter capital of the Persian kings
 - c. He was by the river Ulai
2. He saw a two-horned ram - **Dan 8:3-4**
 - a. Standing beside the river
 - b. The horns were high, with one higher than the other which came up last
 - c. The ram was pushing westward, northward, and southward
 - 1) No beast could withstand him
 - 2) None could deliver from his hand
 - 3) He did according to his will and became great
3. He saw a one-horned male goat - **Dan 8:5**
 - a. Coming suddenly from the west
 - b. Across the surface of the whole earth, not touching the ground
 - c. With a notable horn between his eyes
4. He saw the goat defeat the ram - **Dan 8:6-7**
 - a. With furious power the goat attacked the ram and broke his two horns
 - b. The ram was unable to withstand the goat, and was trampled
5. The goat become great, but when he became strong... - **Dan 8:8**
 - a. The large horn was broken
 - b. In its place four notable ones came up toward the four winds of heaven
6. He saw a little horn come out of the four with great power - **Dan 8:9-12**

- a. Which grew exceedingly great
 - 1) Toward the south and east
 - 2) Toward the Glorious Land
 - b. Which grew up to the host of heaven
 - 1) Casting down and trampling to the ground some of the host
 - 2) Exalting himself as high as the Prince of host
 - c. By this powerful horn...
 - 1) The daily sacrifices were taken away
 - 2) The place of His (God's) sanctuary was cast down
 - 3) An army was given him to oppose the daily sacrifices (because of transgression)
 - He did all this and prospered
7. Daniel then heard a conversation between two holy ones - **Dan 8:13-14**
- a. One asking: *"How long will the vision be, concerning..."*
 - 1) *"the daily sacrifices and the transgression of desolation"*
 - 2) *"the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled under foot?"*
 - b. The reply given to Daniel:
 - 1) *"For two thousand three hundred days"*
 - 2) *"Then the sanctuary shall be cleansed"*

[With the details before us, we are now ready to consider the explanation provided Daniel...]

II. THE VISION INTERPRETED

A. GABRIEL ASSIGNED TO EXPLAIN THE VISION...

1. Daniel was seeking to understand the meaning - **Dan 8:15-16**
 - a. When there stood before him one having the appearance of a man
 - b. When a man's voice from the banks of the Ulai charged Gabriel to make Daniel understand the vision
2. Gabriel speaks to Daniel - **Dan 8:17-19**
 - a. He approaches Daniel
 - 1) Prompting Daniel to fall on his face in fear
 - 2) Telling him that *"the vision refers to the time of the end"*
 - b. He stands Daniel on his feet
 - 1) For Daniel had fallen into a deep sleep with his face to the ground
 - 2) To tell him *"what shall happen in the latter time of the indignation; for at the appointed time the end shall be"*

B. GABRIEL EXPLAINS THE VISION...

1. The two-horned ram - **Dan 8:20**
 - a. Depicts the kings of **Media** and **Persia**
 - b. The larger horn may represent Persia's greater influence - cf. **Dan 8:3**
 - c. The expansion of the Medo-Persian empire illustrated by the ram pushing westward, northward, and southward - cf. **Dan 8:4**
2. The one-horned male goat - **Dan 8:21**
 - a. Depicts the kingdom of **Greece**; note that it came from the west - cf. **Dan 8:5**
 - b. The large horn representing it's first king (Alexander the Great)
 - c. The speed of the goat aptly reflects Alexander's conquests - cf. **Dan 8:5**
 - d. Alexander defeated the Persians in three decisive battles - cf. **Dan 8:6-7**
 - 1) At Granicus (334 B.C.)

- 2) At Issus (333 B.C.)
- 3) At Gaugamela (331 B.C.)
3. The broken horn and four horns that arose in its place - **Dan 8:22**
 - a. Alexander died at 33 years of age
 - b. His empire was divided between his four generals - cf. **Dan 8:8**
 - 1) Ptolemy (Egypt)
 - 2) Seleucus I (Syria)
 - 3) Cassander (Macedonia and Greece)
 - 4) Lysimachus (Thrace and Asia Minor)
4. The little horn that became exceedingly great - **Dan 8:23-25**
 - a. Some time later a king shall arise
 - 1) When transgressors have reached their fullness (when Israel has fallen back into sin)
 - 2) With mighty power, but not by his own
 - 3) Who shall destroy fearfully, prosper and thrive
 - 4) Who shall destroy the mighty and also the holy people
 - 5) Through cunning he shall cause deceit to prosper
 - 6) He shall magnify himself, and destroy many in their prosperity
 - 7) He shall even rise against the Prince of princes (i.e., God Himself)
 - 8) But he shall be broken without human hand (God shall destroy him)
 - b. This is most likely **Antiochus Epiphanes**, ruler of Syria (**175-163 B.C.**)
 - 1) Who imposed Greek culture and deities upon his subjects
 - 2) Who when he conquered Jerusalem:
 - a) Set up an image in the temple
 - b) Offered swine flesh upon the altar
 - c) Encouraged Greek soldiers to commit fornication in the temple
 - d) Forbade circumcision, keeping the Sabbath, possessing a copy of the Scriptures (Harkrider)
5. The vision of the evenings and mornings - **Dan 8:26**
 - a. The number of days the sacrifices will cease, and the temple desolated
 - b. Maybe a literal period (a little over six years) corresponding to the actual period of time the abomination by Antiochus Epiphanes occurred (**171-165 B.C.**)
 - c. Daniel instructed to seal up the vision
 - 1) For it was to occur **“many days in the future”**
 - 2) I.e., almost four hundred years later

C. EFFECT ON DANIEL...

1. He fainted and was sick for days - **Dan 8:27**
2. Though he afterward arose and went about the king’s business, he was astonished by the vision (but no one understood it) - **Dan 8:27**

CONCLUSION

1. This vision is probably the easiest to understand of the four visions that Daniel saw...
 - a. The identity of the ram and goat are clearly given
 - b. History confirms what is described in this vision
 - 1) The conflict between Medo-Persia and Greece
 - 2) The division of the Grecian empire following Alexander’s death
 - 3) The rise of Antiochus Epiphanes and his desecration of the temple in Jerusalem

2. The purpose of the vision was to prepare the people of Daniel for what was to come...
 - a. In *“the time of the end”*
 - b. In *“the latter time of the indignation”*
 - I.e., the persecution that would come upon Israel toward the end of the OT period (Young)

The remarkable accuracy of this vision have led some to date the book of Daniel after the events of Antiochus Epiphanes. But its accuracy poses no problem for those who accept the inspiration of the Scriptures, and should remind us of God’s power to fulfill His Word:

“Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me,

“Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,’

“Calling a bird of prey from the east, the man who executes My counsel, from a far country. Indeed I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it; I will also do it.”

- Isa 46:9-11

Daniel's Penitential Prayer

Daniel 9:1-19

INTRODUCTION

1. As we continue our survey of the book of Daniel, we come to a remarkable chapter...
 - a. In which we find a beautiful prayer expressed by Daniel - **Dan 9:1-19**
 - b. In which we find an amazing revelation regarding "seventy sevens" - **Dan 9:20-27**
2. Without question, the latter part of the chapter is difficult...
 - a. Edward J. Young describes it as "**one of the most difficult in all the OT, and the interpretations which have been offered are almost legion.**"
 - b. H. C. Leupold wrote "**This is one of the grandest prophetic passages; and yet, if there was ever an exegetical crux, this is it.**"
3. In light of its difficulty...
 - a. We should certainly approach this passage with humility, and not dogmatically
 - b. We should be careful not to draw conclusions that would contradict clear teachings of Scripture
4. But before we consider the actual vision of the seventy weeks, let's take the time to consider the prayer offered by Daniel...
 - a. A beautiful example of confessing sin and seeking forgiveness
 - b. Akin to the prayer of David in **Psa 51**

[A wonderful blessing we enjoy as Christians is the cleansing blood of Jesus as we confess our sins (**1 Jn 1:9**). Daniel's prayer in this chapter provides insight into the art of confessing sin...]

I. THE SETTING OF THE PRAYER

A. THE DATE OF THE PRAYER...

1. In the first year of Darius, son of Ahasuerus - **Dan 9:1**
 - a. Of the lineage of the Medes
 - b. Made king over the Chaldeans (Babylonians) - **Dan 5:31; 6:1-28**
2. The time is now about **538 B.C.**

B. THE REASON FOR THE PRAYER...

1. Daniel knew the prophecy of Jeremiah, regarding 70 years of Babylonian captivity - **Dan 9:2; cf. Jer 25:9-12; 29:10**
2. The 70 years of Jerusalem began in 606 B.C., with the captivity of Daniel and the first devastation of Jerusalem - **2 Chr 36:5-7; Dan 1:1-6**
- So with this first year of the Medo-Persian empire (With Darius the Mede over the Chaldeans, but with Cyrus the Persian over all), the prophecy of Jeremiah was about to be completed - **2 Chr 36:21-23; Ezr 1:1-4**

C. THE PREPARATION FOR THE PRAYER...

1. Daniel set his face toward the Lord God - **Dan 9:3**
 - a. To make request by prayer and supplications

- b. This may have included facing toward Jerusalem - cf. **Dan 6:10-11**
- 2. With fasting, sackcloth, and ashes
 - a. Physical preparations which illustrated his humility and contrition
 - b. Similar to the practice of others - e.g., **Neh 9:1-2; Jon 3:5-9**

[With the Word of God fresh on his mind, his heart humbled by his own sins and those of his people, even his physical body humbled into submission, Daniel begins his penitential prayer...]

II. THE CONTENT OF THE PRAYER

A. DANIEL'S CONFESSION...

1. Addressing the Lord his God - **Dan 9:4**
 - a. As great and awesome
 - b. Who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who:
 - 1) Love Him
 - 2) Keep His commandments - cf. **Psa 103:17-18; Jn 14:15**
2. Confessing in behalf of his people - **Dan 9:5-6**
 - a. Of sinning and committing iniquity
 - b. Of doing wickedly and rebelling
 - c. Of departing from His precepts and judgments
 - d. Of failing to heed His servants the prophets, who spoke to their kings, princes, fathers, and all the people - cf. **2 Chr 36:15-21**
3. Contrasting their shame with God's righteousness - **Dan 9:7-9**
 - a. To Judah, Israel, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem belong shame of face
 - 1) Those both near and far off in countries where God had driven them
 - 2) To them, their kings, princes, and fathers
 - 3) Because of their unfaithfulness against God, their sin and rebellion - **Ezr 9:6-7**
 - b. To God belongs righteousness
 - 1) To Him belongs mercy and forgiveness
 - 2) Even though they had rebelled against Him - **Ezr 9:8-9**
4. Reviewing their sin, and the fulfillment of God's warnings - **Dan 9:10-14**
 - a. The nature of their sin - cf. **Neh 9:13-30**
 - 1) They have not obeyed the voice of the Lord
 - 2) They have not walked in His laws set before by His prophets
 - 3) They transgressed His law, and departed so as not to obey His voice
 - 4) They had not prayed that they might turn from their iniquities and understand His truth
 - b. The fulfillment of God's warnings - cf. **Lev 26:14-39; Deu 28:15-68**
 - 1) The curse and oath written in the Law of Moses has been poured out
 - 2) He has confirmed His words spoken against them by bringing a great disaster upon them
 - 3) Especially the disaster which has come upon Jerusalem
5. Summarizing their sin - **Dan 9:15**
 - a. To Him who delivered them from Egyptian bondage with a mighty hand

B. DANIEL'S PETITION...

1. His passionate plea for God to:
 - a. Turn away His anger and fury - **Dan 9:16**
 - 1) From His city Jerusalem, His holy mountain

- 2) Because of their sins and iniquities
- 3) For which they have become a reproach
- b. Hear his prayer and supplications - **Dan 9:17a**
- c. Cause His face to shine on His sanctuary, which is desolate - **Dan 9:17b**
- d. See their desolation, and the desolation of the city called by His name - **Dan 9:18**
- e. Hear, forgive, act and not delay! - **Dan 9:19**
2. His passionate plea based, not because of their righteous deeds, but upon:
 - 1) God's righteousness, and for His sake - **Dan 9:16-17**
 - 2) God's great mercies, and for His city and His people called by His name - **Dan 9:18-19**

CONCLUSION

1. Like the penitential prayer of David in **Psa 51**, this prayer of Daniel is a classic example of how to confess our sins and seek God's forgiveness...
 - a. To seek forgiveness on the basis of God's loving kindness and mercy, not one's own righteousness - cf. **Psa 51:1-2**
 - b. To acknowledge one's sins before God - cf. **Psa 51:3-4**
 - As we confess our sins (cf. **1 Jn 1:9**), remember the example of godly men like David and Daniel!
2. Daniel's noble character is seen in how he identified himself with his people in their sins...
 - a. Even though he had been faithful to God throughout his life - **Dan 6:10**
 - b. For such reasons he was "greatly beloved" by God - **Dan 9:23; 10:11,19**

May the example of Daniel's life and faith inspire us in our own walk with God, for we too have been blessed to be "greatly beloved":

"Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!" - 1 Jn 3:1a

Are we trusting in the love and mercy of God for the forgiveness of sins, and not our own righteousness?

The Vision Of The Seventy Weeks

Daniel 9:20-27

INTRODUCTION

1. We come now to one of the most difficult passages of the Old Testament...
 - a. Commonly called **“The Vision Of The Seventy Weeks” - Dan 9:20-27**
 - b. Edward J. Young describes it as **“one of the most difficult in all the OT, and the interpretations which have been offered are almost legion.”**
 - c. Stuart says that **“it would require a volume of considerable magnitude even to give a history of the ever-varying and contradictory opinions”** that have been offered
2. With such a difficult passage before us, we should ...
 - a. Approach it with humility, and not dogmatically
 - b. Not draw conclusions that would contradict clear teachings of Scripture

[We begin our study with **verse 20**, in which Daniel first describes...]

I. THE ARRIVAL OF GABRIEL

A. AT THE TIME OF EVENING OFFERING...

1. Even as Daniel was confessing his sin and the sin of his people, and making supplication for the holy mountain of God (i.e., Jerusalem) - **Dan 9:20-21**
2. This was the same person seen in the vision at the beginning - cf. **Dan 8:16**

B. TO GIVE DANIEL SKILL TO UNDERSTAND...

1. Commanded to do so even at the beginning of Daniel’s prayer - **Dan 9:22-23**
2. For Daniel was “greatly beloved” - cf. **Dan 10:11,19**

[And so Gabriel, who provided explanation to Daniel regarding the vision of the ram and the goat (**Dan 8:16**), now proceeds to give details concerning...]

II. THE VISION OF THE SEVENTY WEEKS

A. A GENERAL STATEMENT OF WHAT IS TO OCCUR...

1. 70 “weeks” are determined for Daniel’s people (Israel) and his holy city (Jerusalem) - **Dan 9:24**
 - a. The word “weeks” in Hebrew is actually “sevens” (i.e., 70 “sevens”)
 - b. Most agree it likely refers to “weeks”, but weeks of what?
 - 1) Weeks of days?
 - a) Then it would be 490 days
 - b) Few believe this to be the case, and so most all figuratize this passage to some extent
 - 2) Weeks of years (i.e., each day representing a year)?
 - a) Then it would be 490 years
 - b) But the Jews used a lunar calendar (360 days/yr), so it would be 483 years according to our calendar)

- c) Many suggest this to be the answer, but it is not without difficulty
- 3) Of some nonspecific period of time?
 - a) Then it may just refer to seventy complete periods of time
 - b) And each week may not be equivalent in time (i.e., one “week” may be longer than other “weeks”)
- 2. This period of time will be for the fulfillment of six things, each apparently related to the work of the coming Messiah (i.e., Jesus):
 - a. To finish the transgression
 - 1) The marginal reading has “restrain” for “finish”
 - 2) The idea is that Messiah would provide a restraining power and influence which would check the progress of sin (Barnes) - cf. **Ac 3:25-26**
 - b. To make an end of sins
 - 1) The marginal reading has “to seal up” for “make an end”
 - 2) The idea is that sins will be sealed up, or closed, or hidden, so that they will not be seen, or will not develop themselves (Barnes) - cf. **Ac 3:19**
 - c. To make reconciliation for iniquity
 - 1) Literally, to cover iniquity
 - 2) How this would be done is not stated here, but cf. **Isa 53:5-6,10-12**
 - **Note:** The first three things relate to our Lord’s work of dealing with the problem of sin, how sin would “restrained”, “sealed up”, and “covered over”
 - d. To bring in everlasting righteousness
 - 1) Literally, to cause to come
 - 2) To provide a way by which a man could become righteous and holy - cf. **Ro 3:21-26; 2 Co 5:21**
 - e. To seal up the vision and the prophecy
 - 1) To complete, to finish, meaning the prophecies would be fulfilled (Barnes)
 - 2) Young suggests that it is referring to OT prophecies, especially those related to the work of the Messiah making an end of sin - cf. **Lk 24:44-47**
 - f. To anoint the Most Holy
 - 1) Barnes opines that the Most Holy refers to the temple in Jerusalem
 - 2) And that the anointing of the temple refers to the presence of the Messiah in the temple - cf. **Mal 3:1-2; Mt 12:6**
 - 3) Especially regarding the presence of the Lord in the temple during His final week - cf. **Mt 21:1-16**
 - 4) Some believe it may refer to the baptism of Jesus when the Spirit came upon Him in the form of a dove - **Mt 3:16-17**

B. A SPECIFIC DESCRIPTION OF HOW THIS WOULD OCCUR...

- 1. **There shall be 7 weeks and 62 weeks - Dan 9:25**
 - a. Beginning with the command to restore and build Jerusalem, until Messiah the prince (the street and the wall shall be built, even in troublesome times)
 - b. At least three possible decrees may serve as the “*terminus pro quo*” (starting point) of the 70 “weeks”
 - 1) The decree of Cyrus (539-538 BC) - cf. **Ezr 1:1-4**
 - a) To rebuild the temple (and the city, cf. **Isa 44:26-28; 45:13**)
 - b) If one starts here, then the 70 weeks could not be 490 literal years, for that would place the end of the 70 weeks around 55 B.C. (much too early)
 - c) The appeal of using this decree as the starting point:
 - 1] It is the most well-known decree regarding the restoration of Israel

- 2] It was given about the time Daniel received his vision of the 70 weeks
- This decree is preferred by many who do not hold to a literal 490 years (Young, Harkrider, McGuiggan)
- 2) The decree of Artaxerxes (457 BC) - cf. **Ezr 7:13-14**
 - a) For Ezra to restore the Law and its worship
 - b) Starting here, 490 Julian years would end the 70 weeks around 33 A.D.
 - c) But 490 lunar years end the 70 weeks around 26 A.D. (seven years too early)
 - This decree is preferred by some amillennialists who hold to a literal 490 years, but not lunar years (Haley's Bible Handbook)
 - 3) The second decree of Artaxerxes (445-444 BC) - cf. **Neh 2:1-8**
 - a) For Nehemiah to build the city
 - b) Starting here, 490 lunar years end the 70 weeks around 38 A.D.
 - c) This would place the start of the 70th week near the beginning of Jesus' public ministry (ca. about 30 A.D.)
 - d) There are problems with the first 7 weeks ending around 396 B.C., which some contend is too late for the restoration of the city
 - Premillennialists prefer to start with this decree, but so do some amillennialists such as Albert Barnes
- c. Each starting date has its problems, but I lean towards Barnes' choice of the decree of Artaxerxes in **445 B.C.** as the *terminus a quo* for this prophecy
- 1) The 7 and 62 "weeks" is the period of time from the decree until "Messiah the Prince"
 - 2) Barnes has this period ending with the baptism of Jesus and the beginning of His public ministry
2. **After the 62 weeks, events will occur - Dan 9:26-27**
- a. Messiah will be cut off, but not for Himself
 - 1) This refers to the death of Christ
 - 2) Whose death occurs midway during the 70th week (see below)
 - b. People of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary
 - 1) The end of it shall be with a flood; until the end of the war, desolations are determined
 - a) The people are generally accepted to be the Romans, who destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70
 - b) The "prince" is thought to be either Titus, the Roman general, or perhaps referring to Jesus Himself (with the Roman army as the instrument of God's judgment upon Jerusalem)
 - 2) Many contend that the destruction must fall within the 70th week
 - a) However, Young and Barnes argue that such is not necessarily required
 - b) The desolation to befall Jerusalem may be the consequence of events during the 70th week, and not fall within the period of the 70th week
 - c. For 1 week, he shall confirm a covenant with many
 - 1) "He" refers to Jesus (Barnes)
 - 2) "Confirm a covenant" describes the work done by Jesus and His apostles in Israel, before and immediately after His death (Barnes)
 - a) His earthly ministry lasted about 3 and half years
 - b) The gospel was preached only to Jews for 3-4 years after Pentecost
 - d. In the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering
 - 1) This refers to Jesus who was cut off, but not for Himself (Barnes)
 - 2) Through His death, He brought the need for sacrifices to an end - **He 10:12-18**

- e. The abomination and desolation to come - Dan 9:27
 - 1) Alluding to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70
 - 2) Jesus referred to this in **Mt 24:15**
 - 3) Again, this desolation may be the consequence of what occurred in the 70th week, even though it occurred after the 70th week
 - 4) But if required to occur during the 70th week, then the 70th week must extend beyond A.D. 70 (Harkrider, McGuiggan)

CONCLUSION

1. Such a brief look at this difficult passage will naturally raise many questions, which is beyond the scope of our study
2. For more detailed study, one might consider the following commentaries which provide several alternative views...
 - a. Commentary on Daniel, Albert Barnes (whose exegesis I mostly followed)
 - b. The Prophecy of Daniel, Edward J. Young
 - c. Commentary on Revelation, Robert F. Harkrider
 - d. The Book Of Daniel, Jim McGuiggan
 - e. Exposition Of Daniel, H. C. Leupold-- Each of these examine the passage from the amillennial perspective, which finds no place for the “gap theory” favored by dispensational premillennialists

While the passage is admittedly difficult, let's not lose sight of the wonderful promises concerning the Messiah's work related to sin and righteousness, and that Jesus through His death has truly brought an end to the consequences of sin and thereby introduced everlasting righteousness!

The Vision Of The Time Of The End - I

Daniel 10:1-11:1

INTRODUCTION

1. As mentioned in previous lessons, the second half of Daniel contains four visions...
 - a. The vision of the four beasts - **Dan 7:1-28**
 - b. The vision of the ram and the goat - **Dan 8:1-27**
 - c. The vision of the seventy weeks - **Dan 9:1-27**
 - d. The vision of the time of the end - **Dan 10:1-12:13**-- In which God reveals to Daniel many things about His purpose and plan in history, regarding the nation of Israel and the everlasting kingdom to come

2. In the tenth chapter, therefore, we find the beginning of the final vision recorded by Daniel...
 - a. A vision that pertains to what will affect Daniel's people (i.e., Israel) - **Dan 10:14**
 - b. Describing what will occur "in the latter days, for the vision refers to many days yet to come" - **Dan 10:14**
 - c. Its words were to be closed and sealed "till the time of the end" - **Dan 12:9**-- For such reasons this vision has been called "**The Vision Of The Time Of The End**"

3. But what is meant by the expression "*the time of the end*"?
 - a. Is it the end of time as we think of it, when Christ returns?
 - b. Or does it refer to the end of God's dealings with Israel as His covenant nation?

[As we seek to address this and other questions raised in this difficult portion of Scripture, we first notice...]

I. THE APPEARANCE OF A GLORIOUS MAN

A. THE DATE AND SETTING OF THE VISION...

1. It occurred in the third year of Cyrus king of Persia, on the 24th day of the first month (ca. **535 B.C.**) - **Dan 10:1,4**
2. Daniel had been in mourning (fasting) for three weeks - **Dan 10:2,3**
3. He was beside the Tigris river - **Dan 10:4**

B. THE DESCRIPTION OF THE GLORIOUS MAN...

1. Daniel saw a certain man - **Dan 10:5-6**
 - a. Clothed in linen, whose waist was girded with gold of Uphaz
 - b. With a body like beryl
 - c. His face like lightning, his eyes like torches of fire
 - d. His arms and feet like burnished bronze in color
 - e. His words like the voice of a multitude
2. Only Daniel saw the vision - **Dan 10:7**
 - a. The men with him did not
 - b. They fled with great terror to hide themselves
3. The impact on Daniel - **Dan 10:8-9**
 - a. Without strength, his vigor turned to frailty (he was probably in his nineties!)

- b. When he heard the sounds of the man's words, Daniel was in a deep sleep with his face to the ground

[The similarity between this "*certain man*" and John's vision of the Son of Man (cf. **Re 1:12-17**) have led many to wonder if this was a **Christophany** (an appearance of the pre-incarnate Christ); but he may have been only an angel. As we continue, we next read of...]

II. THE CONVERSATION WITH THE GLORIOUS MAN

A. THE MAN'S INITIAL WORDS TO DANIEL...

1. A hand touches Daniel, causing him to tremble - **Dan 10:10**
2. The man addresses Daniel - **Dan 10:11**
 - a. Calling him "*man greatly beloved*" - cf. **Dan 9:23; 10:19**
 - b. For Daniel to understand, and to stand up
 - c. For the man has been sent to Daniel
 - Daniel stands up, but trembling
3. The man comforts Daniel - **Dan 10:12**
 - a. Telling him not to fear
 - b. That he has come because of Daniel's humility, and desire to understand
4. The man explains the reason for the delay - **Dan 10:13**
 - a. The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood him twenty-one days (the same time during which Daniel had been in mourning - cf. **Dan 10:2-3**)
 - 1) Spiritual warfare seems to have been taking place (cf. **Re 12:7; Ep 6:12**)
 - 2) The "prince" (angel?) of the kingdom of Persia had been withstanding him - cf. **Dan 11:1**
 - b. But Michael came to help him who had been left alone with the kings of Persia
 - 1) Michael is described as "*one of the chief princes*"
 - 2) Later he is called "*your prince*" and "*the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people*" - **Dan 10:21; 12:1**
 - 3) Jude calls him "*the archangel*", who contended with the devil over the body of Moses - **Ju 9**
 - Michael appears to have served as the guardian of the nation of Israel
5. But now the man has come make Daniel understand - **Dan 10:14**
 - a. What will happen to his people (Israel)
 - b. What will occur "*in the latter days*", "*many days yet to come*"
 - From what follows, the expression "latter days" appears to refer to the time leading up to the coming of the Messiah and into the Messianic period (Harkrider) - cf. **Dan 2:28; Ac 2:16-17**

B. DANIEL IS STRENGTHENED...

1. Daniel is initially speechless - **Dan 10:15-17**
 - a. With his face turned to the ground
 - b. But one with "the likeness of the sons of men" touched his lips (some think this may have been **Gabriel**, who had helped Daniel before - **Dan 8:16**)
 - c. Daniel can now speak, but is overwhelmed with sorrow and without strength
2. Daniel is strengthened - **Dan 10:18-19**
 - a. By the touch of the one having the likeness of a man
 - b. By the words bestowing love, peace and courage
 - c. Ready now to hear what he has to say

C. THE MAN RESUMES HIS WORDS WITH DANIEL...

1. Though he must soon return - **Dan 10:20**
 - a. To fight with the prince (angel?) of Persia
 - b. To deal with the prince (angel?) of Greece yet to come
2. Yet he will tell Daniel what is noted in the Scripture of Truth - **Dan 10:21-11:1**
 - a. Adding that only Michael helps him against them (the angelic princes of Persia and Greece) - cf. **Dan 10:13**
 - b. Adding that he had confirmed and strengthened him (Michael?) in the first year of Darius the Mede

CONCLUSION

1. At this point (**Dan 11:2**), “**The Vision Of The Time Of The End**” begins in earnest...
 - a. Describing what will happen “*in the latter days*”
 - b. Referring to what will occur “*many days yet to come*”
 - Which we shall examine when we resume our study in the next lesson
2. In these introductory remarks of the vision, we find a glimpse of the spiritual warfare that was going on “behind the scenes”...
 - a. With angelic forces withstanding each other - **Dan 10:13a,20**
 - b. With angelic forces helping each other - **Dan 10:13b,21; 11:1**
 - c. With Michael introduced to Daniel as:
 - 1) “*one of the chief princes*” - **Dan 10:13**
 - 2) “*your prince*” - **Dan 10:21**
 - 3) “*the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people*” - **Dan 12:1**

While there is little we truly know about this “spiritual warfare”, and to what extent it may be going on today, perhaps our study will encourage us to take more seriously Paul’s words:

“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.” - Ep 6:12-13

What are we doing to take up the armor of God, that we might be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might (cf. **Ep 6:10-18**)?

The Vision Of The Time Of The End - II

Daniel 11:2-35

INTRODUCTION

1. In the tenth chapter, we saw the beginning of the final vision recorded by Daniel...
 - a. A vision that pertains to what will affect Daniel's people (i.e., Israel) - **Dan 10:14**
 - b. Describing what will occur "in the latter days, for the vision refers to many days yet to come" - **Dan 10:14**
 - c. Its words were to be closed and sealed "till the time of the end" - **Dan 12:9**
 - For such reasons this vision has been called "**The Vision Of The Time Of The End**"

2. In the introductory remarks of the vision, we are given a glimpse of the spiritual warfare that was going on "behind the scenes"...
 - a. With angelic forces withstanding each other - **Dan 10:13a,20**
 - b. With angelic forces helping each other - **Dan 10:13b,21; 11:1**
 - c. With Michael introduced to Daniel as:
 - 1) "*one of the chief princes*" - **Dan 10:13**
 - 2) "*your prince*" - **Dan 10:21**
 - 3) "*the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people*" - **Dan 12:1**

[Beginning with **Dan 11:2**, "**The Vision Of The Time Of The End**" begins in earnest. The "glorious man" proceeds to tell Daniel what will happen "*in the latter days*" (**Dan 10:14**), beginning with...]

I. THE PERSIAN-GREEK CONFLICT

A. FOUR PERSIAN KINGS WILL ARISE...

1. Three more kings will arise in Persia, and then a fourth - **Dan 11:2**
 - a. The fourth shall be far richer than them all
 - b. By his strength and riches, the fourth shall stir up all against Greece
2. As confirmed by history, these kings who followed **Cyrus (Dan 10:1)** were:
 - a. **Cambyses**
 - b. **Smerdis**
 - c. **Darius Hystaspis (Darius the Great)**
 - d. **Xerxes** (called **Ahasuerus** in the book of Esther - **Est 1:1**)

B. A MIGHTY GREEK KING SHALL RISE AND FALL...

1. A mighty king shall arise - **Dan 11:3**
 - a. He shall rule with great dominion
 - b. He shall do according to his will
 - This was **Alexander the Great**
2. His kingdom shall be broken and divided into four pieces - **Dan 11:4**
 - a. This was also prophesied in **Dan 8:21-22**
 - b. The kingdom will not be given to his posterity, nor will the dominion be as great
 - c. As confirmed by history, Alexander's empire was eventually divided between his four generals after he died in **323 B.C.**:
 - 1) **Seleucus I** - who began the Seleucid (Syrian) empire, from Turkey to India

- 2) **Cassander** - who took over Macedonia (Greece)
- 3) **Lysimachus** - who took Thracia (between Greece and Turkey)
- 4) **Ptolemy I** - who ruled over Egypt

[At this point, the “glorious man” begins to describe an extended conflict between “*the kings of the North*” and “*the kings of the South*” which will have a big impact upon the people of Daniel (i.e., Israel)...]

II. THE EGYPTIAN-SYRIAN CONFLICT

A. THE CONFLICT WILL BEGIN...

1. The “king of the South” will gain in strength - **Dan 11:5a**
 - a. This king is **Ptolemy I**
 - b. Who ruled Egypt (**306-284 B.C.**)
 2. As well as “one of his princes”, who will gain power over the other - **Dan 11:5b**
 - a. This is thought to refer to one of Alexander’s princes (generals)
 - b. In which case it is **Seleucus I**, who ruled Syria (**312-280 B.C.**)
- Caught in the middle between Syria and Egypt, Israel will bear the brunt of much of the conflict between these two empires

B. THERE WILL BE A FAILED ALLIANCE...

1. The “daughter of the South” will go to the “king of the North” - **Dan 11:6a**
 - a. The event occurred in the reigns of **Ptolemy Philadelphus (284-246 B.C.)** and **Antiochus Theus (261-246 B.C.)**
 - b. **Berenice**, daughter of Ptolemy Philadelphus was given to Antiochus, upon the condition that Antiochus divorce his wife **Laodice**
 - c. Hoping to make peace between Egypt and Syria
2. But the “daughter of the South” will not retain her authority - **Dan 11:6b**
 - a. Two years after the marriage, Berenice’s father (Ptolemy Philadelphus) died
 - b. Antiochus put her away and restored his first wife Laodice
 - c. Laodice killed Antiochus, and Berenice fled, but was later put to death along with her children and attendants

C. THE SOUTH WILL RISE IN ANGER...

1. A “branch of her roots” will come with an army - **Dan 11:7**
 - a. This was Berenice’s brother, **Ptolemy Euregetes (246-221 B.C.)**
 - b. Who failing to save his sister, attacked Syria to avenge her death
2. The avenger (Ptolemy Euregetes) will succeed - **Dan 11:8**
 - a. Euregetes took their gods, princes, and precious articles to Egypt
 - b. Euregetes ruled longer than the next Seleucid king, **Seleucid Callinicus (246-226 B.C.)**

D. THE CONFLICT WILL ACCELERATE...

1. The “king of the North” (Seleucid Callinicus) will try to invade the kingdom of the South - **Dan 11:9-10**
 - a. He does not succeed, though his sons (Seleucid Ceraunus and Antiochus the Great) shall stir up strife
 - b. One son in particular, **Antiochus the Great (225-187 B.C.)**, does succeed in overwhelming Egypt (actually, regain Syrian land taken by Egypt)

2. The “king of the South” will respond in rage - **Dan 11:11-13**
 - a. This king of Egypt is **Ptolemy Philopator (221-204 B.C.)**
 - b. Angry that Antiochus the Great regained control of Syrian territory, he gathered a great army and defeated Antiochus at Raphia
 - c. His victory was short-lived, for Antiochus returned with a better-equipped army in **203 B.C.**
3. Others will contribute to the war against the South - **Dan 11:14**
 - a. This included Philip, king of Macedon, who aligned with Antiochus
 - b. Also some violent Jews, prompted by what they perceived as the fulfillment of the vision, but they shall fall
4. The “king of the North” shall prevail against the South, but then fall - **Dan 11:15-19**
 - a. Again, this is Antiochus the Great
 - 1) The forces of the South were not able to resist him
 - 2) He stood in the “Glorious Land” (Israel) with destruction in his power
 - b. He tried to strengthen his kingdom by giving his daughter in marriage
 - 1) His daughter Cleopatra, given to **Ptolemy Epiphanes (204-180 B.C.)**
 - 2) But she came to favor the purposes of her husband rather than her father
 - c. Antiochus then turned his attention to the coast lands (Mediterranean)
 - 1) Making war with the Romans
 - 2) But was defeated by Scipio Asiaticus, a Roman military leader
 - d. Defeated by the Romans, Antiochus the Great returned home and died soon after

[At this point our attention is focused on one leader of the Seleucid (Syrian) empire, who would have a powerful impact upon the people of Daniel, **Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164 B.C.)**...]

III. THE RISE OF ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES

A. TO BE PRECEDED BY A TAX COLLECTOR...

1. One who will impose taxes on the “glorious kingdom” (Israel?) - **Dan 11:20**
 - a. This is **Seleucus Philopator (187-175 B.C.)**
 - b. Oldest son of Antiochus, and his immediate successor
2. Whose reign will be short-lived
 - a. Compared to his father, who reigned thirty-seven years
 - b. Who died, not in battle, but was poisoned

B. THEN WILL COME A VILE MAN WITH NO HONOR...

1. Held in contempt, the people will not give him honor - **Dan 11:21**
 - a. His official name was Antiochus “Epiphanes” (the Illustrious)
 - b. His people referred to him as Antiochus “Epimanes” (the Insane)
2. He shall take the kingdom peaceably, but with intrigue - **Dan 11:21-24**
 - a. This may be referring to his dealings with the Egyptians (or perhaps Israel)
 - b. After making a league with them, he will act deceitfully and become strong with a small number of people
 - c. Through peaceful means he will plunder the riches places of the province
3. He will provoke the “king of the South” - **Dan 11:25-28**
 - a. Two times Antiochus invaded Egypt
 - b. The Egyptian king, Ptolemy Physcon, sought to oppose him, but was betrayed by his own people
 - c. Both kings were deceitful liars, but their plotting was subject to the times and manner

appointed by God

- d. On his return home, Antiochus passed through Israel, and was moved against the holy covenant (the institutions of the Law of Moses)

C. HE WILL BRING BLASPHEMIES AGAINST ISRAEL...

1. Once again Antiochus Epiphanes will head toward the South - **Dan 11:29-30a**
 - a. This was his third invasion
 - b. But he was not as successful as before
 - c. For Roman ships from Cyprus (Kittim) threatened reprisal
2. Frustrated, he will take out his rage against “the holy covenant” - **Dan 11:30b-32a**
 - a. By showing regard for those who forsake the holy covenant
 - b. By defiling the sanctuary fortress (i.e., the temple)
 - c. By taking away the daily sacrifices
 - d. By placing there “the abomination of desolation”
 - e. By flattering those who do wickedly against the covenant
3. In the years **169-167 B.C.**, Antiochus Epiphanes:
 - a. Took the city of Jerusalem and plundered the temple
 - b. Commanded the Jews to worship the Greek idol which he set up in the temple
 - c. Put an end to daily sacrifices and polluted the altar by offering swine flesh on it
 - d. Forbid circumcision, the observance of the Sabbath, and possession of a copy of the law

D. THOSE WHO KNOW GOD WILL RESIST VALIANTLY...

1. They shall be strong - **Dan 11:32b-33a**
 - a. Carrying out great exploits
 - b. Instructing many
 2. When they fall, they shall receive aid - **Dan 11:33b-34**
 - a. For many days they shall fall by sword, flame, captivity and plunder
 - b. They will receive a little help, even from many through intrigue
 4. When those of understanding fall, it will be to refine them - **Dan 11:35**
 - a. To purge them, and make them white
 - b. Until “the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time.”
- The events described here were fulfilled during the Maccabean period, which began in **168 B.C.** with the revolt of Mattathias (an elderly priest) and his five sons

CONCLUSION

1. Up to this point, there is little controversy over the content of the vision...
 - a. It describes the conflict between the Persians and the Greeks, followed by the conflict between the Syrians and the Egyptians
 - b. The latter described in detail, because Israel was caught in the middle
 - c. Israel in particular would suffer the blasphemies of one Syrian king, Antiochus Epiphanes
2. From **Dan 11:36** on, there is quite a diversity of opinions...
 - a. Some believe Antiochus Epiphanes is still the subject
 - b. Others suggest that a Roman emperor is being described
 - c. Still others believe it refers to someone yet to come

We shall examine the remaining portion of this chapter and the final chapter in our next study...

The Vision Of The Time Of The End - III

Daniel 11:36-12:13

INTRODUCTION

1. We have been studying the final vision recorded in the book of Daniel...
 - a. Depicting what will affect Daniel's people (i.e., Israel) - **Dan 10:14**
 - b. Describing events "in the latter days, for the vision refers to many days yet to come" - **Dan 10:14**
 - c. Its words were closed and sealed "till the time of the end" - **Dan 12:9**
 - For such reasons this vision has been called "**The Vision Of The Time Of The End**"
2. In the introductory remarks of the vision, there is a glimpse of spiritual warfare...
 - a. Angelic forces withstanding each other - **Dan 10:13a,20**
 - b. Angelic forces helping each other - **Dan 10:13b,21; 11:1**
 - Such forces affecting the nations of Persia and Greece
3. As the vision unfolds, a series of future conflicts involving nations is described...
 - a. Between the Persians and the Greeks - **Dan 11:2-4**
 - b. Between kings of the South (Egypt) and kings of the North (Syria) - **Dan 11:5-35**
 - 1) In this conflict, Israel would be caught in the middle
 - 2) Israel would suffer extreme blasphemies by one Syrian king (Antiochus Epiphanes)
4. Beginning with **Dan 11:36**, there is a large diversity of opinion...
 - a. Regarding the identity of the king described in **Dan 11:36-45**
 - b. The time in which events described in **Dan 11:36-12:13** would be fulfilled

[As with any difficult portion of Scripture, especially one involving prophecy, dogmatism should be avoided. In this study, our final one in this series of lessons on the Book of Daniel, I shall offer what I believe is a plausible explanation of the text...]

I. THE IDENTITY OF THE KING AND HIS TIMES

A. THREE DIFFERENT VIEWS...

1. The king is Antiochus Epiphanes of Syria
 - a. The vile and blasphemous ruler described in **Dan 11:21-35**
 - b. The time of his persecution would therefore be 169-167 B.C.
 - c. The time of the Maccabean revolt
 - This view is espoused by Albert Barnes in his commentary
2. The king represents the Roman emperors
 - a. Who persecuted the Christians in the early years of the church
 - b. The time of this persecution would therefore be 60-313 A.D.
 - This view is proposed by Robert Harkrider in his workbook
3. The king represents the Antichrist
 - a. A future ruler still to come
 - b. The time of this persecution would be shortly before the return of Christ
 - This view is held by premillennialists, but also by some amillennialists (e.g., Edward

Young)

B. ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES SEEMS A LIKELY CHOICE...

1. The allusion in previous verses is undoubtedly to Antiochus Epiphanes
2. There is no indication in the prophetic narrative of any change; notice...
 - a. “Then the king shall do...” - **Dan 11:36**
 - b. “At the time of the end the king of South shall attack him...” - **Dan 11:40**
 - c. “At that time Michael...” - **Dan 12:1**
 - d. “And at that time your people shall be delivered...” - **Dan 12:1**
3. A sudden transition, with no given indication, is not in accordance with what is usually found in prophetic writings (Barnes)
4. The word “king” is never applied to Antichrist (if there in fact be “the Antichrist”, as the Bible speaks of many antichrists - **1 Jn 2:18,22; 4:3; 2 Jn 7**)
5. The description that follows can easily be applied to the person and times of Antiochus Epiphanes

[This is not imply there is no difficulty with applying this passage to Antiochus Epiphanes and his times, but I believe it possesses fewer difficulties than alternative views. Now let’s consider what is described to come...]

II. THE EVENTS AT “THE TIME OF THE END”

A. THE BLASPHEMY OF THIS KING...

1. He shall magnify himself above every god - **Dan 11:36-37**
 - a. Speaking blasphemies against the God of gods
 - b. Prospering till the wrath that has been determined is done (suggesting that this was allowed by God as part of divine judgment against Israel) - cf. **Dan 11:35**; as with the case of Assyria and Israel, **Isa 10:5-12**
 - c. He shall not regard the god of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor any god
 2. He shall honor a god of fortresses - **Dan 11:38-39**
 - a. A god which his fathers did not know (some suggest the Roman god Mars, or Jupiter)
 - b. He shall act the strongest fortresses with this foreign god, rule over many and divide the land for gain
- In his commentary, Albert Barnes explains how this could apply to Antiochus

B. THE CONQUESTS AND END OF THIS KING...

1. The king of the South (Egypt) shall attack him - **Dan 11:40**
 - a. Note that this will occur “at the time of the end”
 - b. This may help pinpoint the meaning of the “latter days” of **Dan 10:14**
2. The king of the North (Antiochus Epiphanes) would respond and overwhelm the countries - **Dan 11:40-43**
 - a. Entering the “Glorious Land” (Israel)
 - b. Overthrowing many, while Edom, Moab and Ammon will escape
 - c. Egypt will not escape, even Libyans and Ethiopians will submit
3. He shall come to his end - **Dan 11:44-45**
 - a. News from the east and north will trouble him (from Persia)
 - b. He shall proceed to destroy and annihilate many, planting his tents between the seas and the glorious holy mountain (Mt. Zion, Jerusalem?)
 - c. Yet he shall come to his end, no one helping him (Antiochus died in 163 B.C. of a

terrible disease)

-- Again, Barnes relates in detail how these events could refer to Antiochus

C. THE ULTIMATE VICTORY OF DANIEL'S PEOPLE...

1. To occur "at that time" - **Dan 12:1**
 - a. To be assisted by "Michael...the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people" - cf. **Dan 10:13,21**
 - b. In a time of a trouble not seen before
 - c. Deliverance of Daniel's people "at that time"
 - 1) I.e., the time just previously described
 - 2) I.e., the time of the conflict involving Antiochus Epiphanes
2. Many who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake - **Dan 12:2**
 - a. Some to everlasting life
 - b. Some to shame and everlasting contempt

-- Note that this is not likely the physical resurrection of the dead, for then "all" (not "many") shall be raised - **Jn 5:28,29**
3. Those who will shine at this time - **Dan 12:3**
 - a. The wise will shine like the brightness of the firmament
 - b. Those who turn many to righteousness will shine like the stars forever and ever

-- Using the figure of the resurrection, this may depict the Maccabean revolt when the Jews came out of caves and mountain hideouts to resist Antiochus - cf. **Dan 11:33-35**

D. FINAL INSTRUCTIONS AND ANSWERS GIVEN TO DANIEL...

1. Shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end - **Dan 12:4**
 - a. Perhaps what is meant is to stop writing, and secure what he has written
 - b. Compare this with **Dan 8:17,19,26**
 - 1) Both visions (**Dan 8,10-12**) were to be sealed up
 - 2) Both pertained to many days in the future
 - 3) Yet both visions began to be fulfilled within 200-400 years
 - c. Contrast this with **Rev 22:10**
 - 1) The vision of the Revelation was not to be sealed, for the time was at hand
 - 2) How then the explanation of some that the events of Revelation have yet to begin, nearly 2000 years later?
2. Two final questions answered
 - a. One question overheard by Daniel - **Dan 12:5-7**
 - 1) Daniel saw two others, one on each side of a river bank
 - 2) One asked the man clothed in linen (cf. **Dan 10:5-6**) above the river: *"How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be?"*
 - 3) The answer: *"...a time, times, and half a time; and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished."*
 - a) The "time, times, and half a time" (3 and a half years, 42 months, 1260 days) is commonly used to describe a definite, marked, period of tribulation - cf. **Dan 7:25; Re 11:2,3; 12:6,13-14; 13:5**
 - b) When the persecution has accomplished its purpose, then the things described will take place
 - b. The question asked by Daniel - **Dan 12:8-13**
 - 1) Not understanding, Daniel asks: *"...what shall be the end of these things?"*
 - 2) Daniel is first told:

- a) To go, for the words are closed and sealed till the time of the end
 - b) That many shall be purified, and the wise shall understand - cf. **Dan 11:33-35**
 - c) That the wicked shall do wickedly, and not understand - cf. **Dan 11:32**
 - d) That there will be a period of “1290 days” beginning from:
 - 1/ The time the daily sacrifice is taken away - cf. **Dan 11:31**
 - 2/ The abomination of desolation is set up - cf. **Dan 11:31**
 - e) Those who wait and come to “1335 days” will be blessed
 - Whether literal or figurative, these numbered days appear to apply to the period of the Antiochian persecution (ca. 168 B.C.)
- 3) Daniel is then told:
- a) To go his way till the end
 - b) For he shall rest and arise to his inheritance at the end of the days
 - This “end” or “end of the days” may refer to the actual resurrection on the day of Judgment, not “the time of the end” spoken of throughout this vision

CONCLUSION

1. We have seen that “**The Vision Of The Time Of The End**” (**Dan 10:1-12:13**) describes events that would...
 - a. Affect Daniel’s people (i.e., Israel) - **Dan 10:14**
 - b. Take place “in the latter days, for the vision refers to many days yet to come” - **Dan 10:14**
 - c. Occur in “the time of the end” - **Dan 11:35,40; 12:4,9**
2. From the context, “*the time of the end*” likely refers to the closing days of God’s dealings with Israel as His covenant nation; in other words...
 - a. The inter-testamental period between the days of Malachi and Matthew
 - b. The period of time involving the Greek-Persian and Egyptian-Syrian conflicts
 - Which is how the phrase is used in “**The Vision Of The Ram and The Goat**” that depicts many of the same events - cf. **Dan 8:1-27** (esp. 17,26)
3. As we close our study of the Book of Daniel, we have found it to be a book that...
 - a. Strengthens faith in God and His Word through its fulfilled prophecies
 - 1) Prophecies describing the rise and fall of world empires - **Dan 2,4-5**
 - 2) Prophecies foretelling the establishment of God’s everlasting kingdom - **Dan 2,7,9**
 - 3) Prophecies depicting the events to befall the people of Israel - **Dan 8,9,10-12**
 - b. Inspires faithfulness to God through its examples of dedicated service
 - 1) The faith and dedication of Daniel - **Dan 1,6**
 - 2) The faith and dedication of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego - **Dan 3**

While there is certainly much in this book that challenges our understanding, may we never neglect to mine its spiritual treasures preserved for the people of God! - **Ro 12:4**