



Memorial Park

An Evangelical Presbyterian Church

Daniel

Introduction *

The Book of Daniel presents the following themes:

- Biblical meaning of history.
- The problems of believers living in a secular society that thinks God is unnecessary.
- The pressures of the world trying to squeeze believers into its mold.
- Victory without compromise.
- God's sovereignty over world powers.
- The endurance of God's kingdom.

These are contemporary issues for Christians living today, pressured by secular and materialistic societies.

Some Historical Background

Read II Kings 23:36 to 25:30

- Note II Kings 24:13-14. It is likely that Daniel was among the exiles referenced here when he was a teenager.
- Later, in Daniel 5, the Temple articles are mentioned again at the point where Darius of the Medes and Cyrus of the Persians conquered the Babylonians in 539 BC.
- Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC.

The People of God in a Pagan Society

Daniel 1:1-21

1. What was the purpose of teaching the Hebrew captives Babylonian culture and also giving them Babylonian names?
2. Generally, what were the Hebrew laws concerning diet, intermarriage, etc. with pagan cultures?
3. What would it mean to you to change your identity?
 - i. What clues do you see in the Hebrew and Babylonian names?
 - ii. What choices would you have?
 - iii. How would you feel?
4. How did Daniel think "outside the box" to be able to follow the Law of Moses and at the same time satisfy Ashpenaz?
 - i. What provision did the Lord make for Daniel in verse 1:9?
 - ii. What problem did Daniel overcome?
 - iii. What does Daniel's proposal to Ashpenaz indicate about him regarding:
 1. His faith in the Lord's way?
 2. His wisdom?
 3. His interpersonal skills?
5. What was the basis for Daniel's resolution "not to defile himself with the royal food and wine?" (1:8)
 - i. Put yourself in Daniel's place – How could this teenager rationalize accepting the king's table?
 - ii. What forces were active to resist this resolution?
 - iii. At what period of life are life-forming decisions usually made?
6. Who was in control of the situation with Daniel and his friends? (See 1:9, 15, 17, 19-20)
 - i. What was the source of Daniel's and his friends' ability to learn the Babylonian ways?
7. Why did Daniel and his friends have a willingness to learn? What influence on Babylonian were they able to make as a result of their success as students?

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8. What does their success indicate about:
 - i. God's faithfulness to them?
 - ii. God's plans for Israel?
 - iii. God's plans for Nebuchadnezzar?
9. What is the value in trusting God for small things? (See Luke 16:10)
10. What is holiness, and why is it important? (See John 14:15) What is the evidence of holiness in a person's life? How did Daniel demonstrate it?
11. How did Daniel and his friends demonstrate the principle Jesus gave in Matt 6:33?
12. What is the "Big Idea" of Daniel Chapter 1?

An Unreasonable King and a Man of Prayer

Daniel 2:1-24

1. Why did Nebuchadnezzar summon the wise men of Babylon?
 - a. What troubled him? Why?
2. When did this account take place? Note the following:
 - a. Considering Daniel Chapter 1:5, Daniel and the other Exiles were to receive 3 years of training, and then enter the king's service.
 - b. It is suggested that Daniel and the exiles were taken to Babylon in the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, according to II Kings 24:10-14.
 - c. How could you explain the discrepancy of time?
3. Note the reference to Aramaic in Dan 2:4. From here through chapter 7 the original text is in Aramaic. The remainder of Daniel was originally written in Hebrew. What could be the significance of this language change?
4. What unreasonable request did Nebuchadnezzar make to his wise men?
 - a. Why was he so unreasonable? What was he thinking?
 - b. What impasse did the wise men face?
 - c. What was the conclusion of the wise men of Babylon regarding Nebuchadnezzar's unreasonable request? How were they right, and how were they wrong?
 - d. What was Nebuchadnezzar's verdict for the wise men of Babylon?
5. What shows that Daniel and his "gang of four" were outside the loop during this crisis?
6. Considering Dan 2:14-18, what is noteworthy about Daniel and his approach to the problem?
 - a. Why did Daniel think he could determine Nebuchadnezzar's dream and the interpretation to it? What other OT story sounds similar to this one?
 - b. Where do wisdom and tact come from?
 - c. How was Daniel able to gain access to Nebuchadnezzar?
 - d. Why did Daniel approach the "gang of four"? What does his action indicate about his relationship with them? What is the benefit of this early illustration of koinonia?
 - e. Consider God's plan for Babylon, Israel, and Nebuchadnezzar. What was at stake in addition to the lives of Daniel, the "gang of four" and the Babylon wise men?
 - f. How do you deal with unreasonable people? What of Daniel's actions can we implement with such people?
7. How did God intervene and answer the prayers of Daniel and the "gang of four"?
8. How did Daniel respond to God's intervention?
9. How would you outline Daniel's prayer?
 - a. What attributes of God did Daniel reference in his praise?
 - b. What did Daniel acknowledge about what God does?
 - c. For what things did Daniel thank God? (See Col 2:2-3)
10. How does Daniel's prayer illustrate the sovereignty of God?

11. How does Daniel's prayer illustrate the things he experienced?
12. What does God's intervention indicate about:
 - a. God's faithfulness to Daniel and the "gang of four"?
 - b. God's plans for Israel?
 - c. God's plans for Babylon?
 - d. God's plans for Nebuchadnezzar?
13. How is Daniel's prayer a model for us?
14. Who was in control of the situation with Daniel and the "gang of four"?
15. What is the "Big Idea" of Daniel 2:1-24?

The God of History and the Rock of Ages

Daniel 2:24-49

1. Describe the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream.
 - a. Describe its appearance.
 - b. What materials composed the statue?
 - c. What did each of the materials represent?
 - d. Compare the relative wealth of each of the materials.
 - e. Compare the relative strength of each of the materials.
2. History indicates the following:
 - a. Consider the Biblical history of Babylon in Gen 10:8-12 and 11:1-9.
 - b. According to www.Wikipedia.org Babylon was glorious, the largest city in the world at the time of Nebuchadnezzar, with one of the ancient wonders of the world – the Hanging Gardens. Babylon is also noted for the early use of asphalt in construction.
 - c. The Babylonian Empire extended all over the Middle East region.
 - d. Nebuchadnezzar ruled from 604 to 561 BC.
 - e. Babylon fell to the Persians in 539 BC. (Dan 5) The Persian Empire extended from 558 to 330 BC. It was stronger, but less glorious than Babylon.
 - f. The Greeks were stronger yet under Alexander the Great, and conquered Persia at Babylon in 331 BC.
 - g. Rome was stronger yet, conquering most the known ancient world.
3. The Republic existed between 510 and 27 BC.
4. The empire lasted from 27 BC until it assimilated Etruscans and Greeks and was divided with the western capital at Milan in 239 AD, and with the eastern capital at Constantinople in 330 AD.
5. What do you observe about the dream's interpretation?
 - a. How has history agreed with Nebuchadnezzar's dream and the interpretation of it given to Daniel?
 - b. What in the dream's interpretation has been fulfilled, and what has not?
6. What is significant about God's power to foretell the future as He did in Nebuchadnezzar's dream?
 - a. What attributes of God were demonstrated by Nebuchadnezzar's dream?
 - b. What else is confirmed by fulfilled prophecy? (See Isaiah 41:21-24)
7. What importance did the dream's interpretation place on Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon?
 - a. According to the dream's interpretation what had God done for Nebuchadnezzar? (Dan 2:36-38)
 - b. What do you suppose Nebuchadnezzar thought about the source of his power?
8. Nebuchadnezzar means "Oh god Nabu, preserve/defend my firstborn son". Nabu is the Babylonian deity of wisdom, and son of the god Marduk. In an inscription, Nebuchadnezzar styles himself as Nabu's "beloved" and "favourite".
9. Compare the meaning of "Nebuchadnezzar" and Dan 2:36-38. How could this contrast affect Nebuchadnezzar's future actions?
10. According to Nebuchadnezzar's dream and subsequent history, what is the pattern of the rise and fall of empires?

- a. What happened to the strongest of the ancient empires? Though physically stronger than it was a generation ago, is the USA morally and spiritually stronger also?
- b. What is the humanistic view of progress?
- c. In contrast, what is the Biblical view of progress?
11. What does the rock in Nebuchadnezzar's dream represent? (Dan 2:44-45)
 - a. See Matt 21:42-44, Is 28:16, Is 8:14, I Peter 2:6-8, Psalm 2, and Matt 16:13-20.
 - b. Is the rock Christ, the Kingdom of God or is it both?
 - c. What will the rock do?
 - d. What has the rock already done? What remains to be done by the rock?
12. What is the most important fact about the prophecy of the rock?
13. What is the wise course of action for us to take in consideration of the prophecy of the rock? See Rev.11:15 and Psalm 2:12.
14. These events were the first great revelation of God to Nebuchadnezzar. What did he learn about God? How did Nebuchadnezzar refer to God? See Dan 2:47.
15. What effect did Daniel's action and God's faithfulness in this account have on Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon, Israel and the gang of four?

The Ultimate Test of Faith

Daniel 3:1-30

1. Epic language – Designating, pertaining to, or characteristic of, a kind of narrative poetry dealing with heroic action and written in elevated style.
 - a. What evidence do you see that may indicate the epic style of the narrative?
 - b. Consider J. M. Boice's testimony in Daniel: An Expository Commentary, Chapter 5, page 41.
 - c. How should we interpret epic language in the Bible?
2. Why would Nebuchadnezzar use vast resources to build an enormous statue of himself? Consider Daniel Chapter 2:31-38 and the meaning of Nebuchadnezzar's name.
 - a. Why did he use gold?
 - b. How did the statue represent a challenge to the sovereignty of God? In view of the interpretation to Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Dan 2), what was the challenge?
 - c. Why would Nebuchadnezzar require his people to worship his statue?
 - d. What other ancient leaders were considered divine?
3. What is the basis for the objection of Shadrach, Meshach, & Abednego to follow Nebuchadnezzar's command to worship the statue?
 - a. What were the alternatives for Shadrach, Meshach, & Abednego? What would bowing down to the statue imply?
 - b. Why would some of the Babylonian astrologers (their co-workers) accuse Shadrach, Meshach, & Abednego of violating Nebuchadnezzar's command? How have you seen this sort of think in the work place?
 - c. What were the consequences of disobedience to Nebuchadnezzar's command?
 - d. How can you account for the decision made by Shadrach, Meshach, & Abednego when the demands of the secular state were in conflict with the requirements of serving God? What pressures do you experience to conform to secular values?
4. Consider the dialog with Nebuchadnezzar:
 - a. How did their accusers affect Nebuchadnezzar's initial attitude toward the Jewish offenders (Dan 3:13-15)?
 - b. What caused his attitude toward Shadrach, Meshach, & Abednego to change (Dan 3:16-23)?
 - c. What is the implication to Nebuchadnezzar's question in Dan 3:15?

- d. What evidence do you see that Shadrach, Meshach, & Abednego took time and rationalized their response? In their circumstances, what would any of their rationalization sound like?
- e. What does their answer indicate about the faith and trust that Shadrach, Meshach, & Abednego had in God? How do you see the following in their answer?
 - i. Confidence in God's sovereignty.
 - ii. Their knowledge of scripture.
 - iii. Their willingness to die for their convictions.
- f. How can we translate their answer into a response to those who would pressure us to conform to secular values?
- g. What do we owe to the state, and what do we not owe? See Romans 13:1-7. To whom are rulers responsible?
5. What did Nebuchadnezzar see in the furnace?
 - a. How was Nebuchadnezzar's question in Dan 3:15 answered?
 - b. Who was the fourth person in the furnace? Why was it important for the fourth person to be seen?
 - c. What did Nebuchadnezzar learn about God? How was he impressed? How did Nebuchadnezzar refer to God in Dan 3:26-29? Compare to Dan 2:47. Whose God was He at that time? Is respect for God enough?
6. Where was Daniel while all this was going on?

Summary:

1. How can our submission to God's sovereignty lead to wise decisions when we are pressured to conform to secular values?
2. How can our knowledge of scripture cut through the ambiguity of rationalization and compromise?
3. How can our faith give us the strength to pay whatever price for our convictions?

Personal Pride & God's Sovereignty

Daniel 4:1-3

1. Who is the author of Daniel 4? Why did he write, and to whom did he write?
2. In comparison to Daniel 1 to 3, what change has taken place in Nebuchadnezzar?
 - a. What had God been trying to teach Nebuchadnezzar in these earlier chapters?
 - b. Why did Nebuchadnezzar praise God?
 - c. What attributes of God did Nebuchadnezzar include in his praise?
 - d. What is missing from Nebuchadnezzar's acknowledgements of God in his earlier statements about God?

Daniel 4:4-18

1. Describe Nebuchadnezzar's dream.
 - a. Why did it terrify him?
 - b. Who did Nebuchadnezzar first command to interpret his dream? Why?
 - c. Why did Nebuchadnezzar expect that Daniel could interpret his dream?

Daniel 4:19-27

1. What was the interpretation to Nebuchadnezzar's dream?
 - a. What was Daniel's attitude in interpreting the dream?
 - b. What did the dream acknowledge about Nebuchadnezzar and his empire?
 - c. Who benefited from the "tree"?
 - d. What did Daniel add to the dream's interpretation?
2. What was the advice Daniel gave to Nebuchadnezzar? Why would Daniel dare to give such advice?
 - a. What is the relationship between the interpretation and Daniel's advice?

- b. What sins and wickedness (verse 27) could Daniel have had in mind?

Daniel 4:28-37

1. Describe Nebuchadnezzar's thoughts as he considered Babylon.
 - a. What is wrong with his thinking considering what Daniel told him in Chapter 2:36?
 - b. What does his thinking indicate? What is the sin in such thinking?
 - c. What is God's attitude and judgment about such thinking? Consider Proverbs 8:13 & 16:18.
 - d. Where does prideful thinking place glory? Where ought it be placed?
 - e. What can we take pride in? See James 1:9.
2. What was the result of such thinking for Nebuchadnezzar?
 - a. What was God's purpose for Nebuchadnezzar's madness?
 - b. How does God's judgment fit Nebuchadnezzar's sin?
 - c. What is the name of God that Nebuchadnezzar used repeatedly in verses 2, 17, 24, 25, 32 & 34?
 - i. Genesis 14:17-20. What does this name signify?
 - ii. Isaiah 14:12-15. Consider Satan's rebellion.
 - iii. What has Nebuchadnezzar emphasized with the repetition?
 - d. How have individuals and nations sinned likewise with prideful thinking?
 - i. When we do well, what do we think?
 - ii. When we fail, whom do we blame?
 - iii. What is the result of taking the glory of God for ourselves? See Rom 1:18-25, 28.

Summary

1. If God worked to change Nebuchadnezzar's heart, what hope is there for other people you know who seem resistant to the Gospel?
2. In light of Nebuchadnezzar's story, what is our role as Christian people?
 - a. What power is appropriated to accomplish God's work?
 - b. What gifts has God given to you to accomplish his work?
 - c. What is the role of our small group to accomplish God's work?

The Hand Writing on the Wall Crashing the Party

Daniel is in his 70's at the time Darius the Mede conquered Babylon in 539 BC. At that time, Daniel Chapter 5 is the account of God's judgment on Belshazzar, Nebuchadnezzar's grandson and son of Nabonidus, the last Babylonian king. At the fall, of Babylon Belshazzar, the crown prince, acted as regent in the absence of his father.

See http://www.essortment.com/all/writingwallfal_rghs.htm for more information.

Daniel 5:1-31

1. Review Daniel 1:1-2. Other than the wealth associated with the precious metals in the Temple articles, why would Nebuchadnezzar place them in the treasure house of his god? What did that act represent to him?
2. Fifty-eight years later, we find Nebuchadnezzar's grandson, Belshazzar, throwing a party, and using the Temple articles to drink from them. What was Belshazzar's purpose in doing so? What was the critical issue in abusing the Temple articles?
3. Compare Belshazzar to Nebuchadnezzar. How were they similar, and how were they different?
 - a. What was Nebuchadnezzar's sin in Daniel 4? What was Belshazzar's sin?
 - b. What did Nebuchadnezzar learn in the earlier chapters?
 - c. Why did Belshazzar refuse to learn from Nebuchadnezzar's experiences? Compare Daniel 5:22-23 to Rom 1:18-23, 28-32.
4. What were the Medes and Persians doing while Belshazzar was throwing a party?

- a. What relationship could there be between Belshazzar's stupidity and his sins?
- b. Why was he impervious to the impending danger?
- c. Where do you see this behavior in our modern culture? Are we amusing ourselves to death?
5. What was Daniel's attitude toward Belshazzar in verse 17?
6. Why would Belshazzar offer to make Daniel third highest ruler in the kingdom?
7. How is God's judgment illustrated in Daniel 5?
 - a. Did Belshazzar expect God's judgment?
 - b. How much sin will God tolerate before his judgment is implemented? See Matthew 24:36-44. What sure thing can we expect?
8. Skim read Revelation 17-19.
 - a. Why would the Apostle John refer to the fall of Babylon as a picture of the final judgment?
 - b. Who will rejoice at the last judgment? Why? See Rev 19:1-4.
 - c. If God does not get pleasure from condemning the wicked, why would his word tell us about such things?
9. What defense do we have at the last judgment?
 - a. When our sins are exposed, how will we respond to the same words, "Mene, Tekel, Parsin? See Heb 4:14-16 & I John 2:1-2.
 - b. What should we do about the last judgment now?

Feeding the Lions

Boice suggests that Daniel is in his 80's at the time he served Darius the Mede. Apparently, he served a new administration that had some of the same problems of Nebuchadnezzar's and Belshazzar's rule.

Daniel 6:1-28

1. Satraps were provincial governors, usually of the royal family or Persian nobility and held office indefinitely. They collected taxes, were the highest judicial authority, and were responsible for internal security and for raising and maintaining an army. What relationship did Daniel have with them?
 - a. What did they know about Daniel?
 - b. What reputation did Daniel have among them?
 - c. How did Darius view Daniel? What value did Darius see in him?
 - d. Why is it important for Christians to have a similar reputation? See Proverbs 22:1.
2. What strategy did Daniel's rivals use to plot against him? Why?
 - a. Why did Darius so easily accommodate Daniel's rivals?
 - b. Why was Darius not able to see their strategy and motives?
3. Compare Darius to Belshazzar and Nebuchadnezzar. How were they similar to Darius?
 - a. What did Nebuchadnezzar learn in Daniel 4?
 - b. What did Belshazzar learn in Daniel 5?
 - c. What was Darius thinking when he agreed to limit prayers to only himself in 6:7?
 - d. In what ways have people in secular societies put themselves in the place of God?
 - e. What changed Darius?
4. What did Daniel know about the laws of the Medes and Persians?
 - a. Why did he not discontinue his practice of praying for the next 30 days? Was he unaware of the danger he was in? See 6:10
 - b. When confronted by his accusers, what was he praying about?

- c. Why didn't he simply close the window when he prayed? Why did he not privatize his faith in God as many Christians do today?
- d. How can we honor God before a watching world?
5. What position was Daniel in without his friends?
6. What did Daniel's accusers know about Daniel's God? What did Darius know about Daniel's prayers? What did Daniel know that they did not?
7. When Darius understood the position Daniel was in because of his accusers, what alternatives did Darius have?
8. What did Darius believe about God when Daniel was put into the lions' den?
 - a. After Daniel was put into the lions' den, who could not sleep? Why?
 - b. The following morning, what did Darius expect to hear when he called to Daniel?
9. What was Darius' conclusion about God in 6:25-27?
 - a. Compare Darius' conclusion about God to Nebuchadnezzar's in Daniel 4:1-4 & 34-35.
 - b. Is Daniel 6:25-27 true today? What difference does it make?
10. Based on Daniel Chapter 6, how is Daniel a Christ like character? Note 6:17.
11. Why did God save Daniel? Does God always save his people from such circumstances? See Heb 11:32-38.
12. In what ways do the events in Daniel 6 illustrate God's sovereignty?
13. What are the implications of God's sovereignty for Christians today?

Daniel's Dream

Belshazzar ruled Babylon from about 553 to 539 BC. Daniel experienced the dream about 14 years before the account of Belshazzar and the hand writing on the wall in Chapter 5. Starting with Chapter 7, the book of Daniel switches from the chronological narrative of events to a trans-historical presentation of visions and dreams of Daniel.

Daniel 7:1-14 --- Daniel's Dream

Daniel 7:15-28 --- The Interpretation of Daniel's Dream

1. Compare Daniel's dream to Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Chapter 2?
 - a. What similarities are evident?
 - b. How are they different?
 - c. What was Daniel's reaction to the dream? Compare his reaction to Nebuchadnezzar's reaction to his dream? (Compare 2:1 to 7:15)
 - d. For each (Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel), what did they depend on as the source of the interpretations?
2. Describe each of the beasts in Daniel's dream.
 - a. Compare 7:4 to Nebuchadnezzar's experience in 4:28-37.
 - b. What is the nature of the beasts in Daniel's dream, and how are the first three beasts different from the fourth?
 - c. What do the beasts represent?
 - d. If the beast's horns were symbols of power, what would you expect them to represent in the dream?
3. In addition to the beasts, what other characters are in Daniel's dream?
 - a. Describe the "Ancient of Days" and the setting around him.
 - b. Symbolically, what could fire represent in the dream? See Acts 2:3-4, Heb 12:29 & Rev 20:14.
 - c. Compare 7:13-14 to 2:44 and 3:25. See Mark 14:60-62 & Isaiah 9:6-7. Who is the Son of Man?
4. Boice suggests that Nebuchadnezzar's dream and Daniel's dream are of the same thing, but from different points of view: Nebuchadnezzar's, from man's perspective and Daniel's, from God's perspective.
 - a. Why would man visualize these kingdoms as great and noble?
 - b. Why would God visualize these kingdoms as beasts?
5. What is the main thought of the dream in 7:17-18?

- a. Is that main thought comforting or scary to you? Why?
- b. If Daniel's dream is parallel to Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Chapter 2, what are the four kingdoms represented in Daniel's dream?
- c. What bothered Daniel the most about his dream?
6. What additional information was provided in Daniel's dream about the fourth kingdom that was not in Nebuchadnezzar's dream?
7. Until now, how has history verified the interpretation of Daniel's dream?
 - a. What has been fulfilled, what has not been fulfilled?
 - i. Babylon's aggressive rapid achievements declined after Nebuchadnezzar's restoration.
 - ii. The Medes & Persians conquered the Lydian kingdom (today's Turkey), the Chaldean Empire (Babylon), and Egypt.
 - iii. The Greeks under Alexander the Great rapidly conquered most of the known world in one extended campaign, and then broke up into 4 parts.
 - iv. Rome – The 10 horns:
 1. Boice: "...presumably representing ten confederated kingdoms." The little horn "...seems to be the first reference to ... the Antichrist."
 2. Others refer to 10 Roman conquerors, and the little horn being Vespasian, who put down the Jewish revolt and destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD.
 3. Also, see Rev 17:12-14.
8. Why is Daniel's dream limited to these 4 empires?
9. What has been the relationship between Israel and these empires?
10. What in Daniel's dream (7:18, 27) reminds us of the stone uncut by human hands in 2:34?
 - a. Describe this kingdom? Who is its leader? (7:13-14)
 - b. At what point in history was this kingdom born? (Mark 1:15, Rom 5:6)
 - c. What is the state of this kingdom today? If you were required to give the "State of the Kingdom" speech, what would you say?
 - d. What contrast do you see between this kingdom and the others in Daniel's dream?
11. Why did God give Daniel this dream? Why was he "deeply troubled?" Who was to receive this prophecy? What did it mean to the remnant of Israel at that time?
12. What are the implications of God's sovereignty for Christians today? What may we look forward to regarding this kingdom and God's sovereignty over history?

Daniel's Vision of "the Son of Man"

The concept of Jesus in the Old Testament is interesting and worthy of exploration. Although there are many references to Jesus in the Old Testament, the title, "the Son of Man" is only found in Daniel 7:13-14. Jesus referred to himself using this title almost exclusively, and his Jewish contemporaries understood that he was claiming to be the divine King in this Daniel text. There are other names or titles for the Messiah in the Old Testament, but Jesus chose this one.

Look at the other names and titles for Jesus, and try to answer the question of why he preferred the title, "the Son of Man" to all the others.

Daniel 7:1-14 – Daniel's Dream

1. In addition to the beasts in Daniel's vision, what other two figures did Daniel see? What are their titles, and whom do they represent?
 - a. At what point did the Son of Man appear in the vision?
 - b. Considering the main theme in Daniel about the sovereignty of God, what is surprising about Daniel 7:13-14?

- c. Although surprising, why should we expect the Ancient of Days to give “authority, glory, and sovereign power” to the Son of Man? See II Sam 7:11b-16, Isaiah 9:7, & Luke 1:26-33.
- d. How does Daniel 7:13-14 connect with Daniel 2:44-45a and the other verses above?
- 2. Consider the following possible references to Jesus in the Old Testament:
 - a. Note the plural pronouns in the following texts: Gen 1:26 & Gen 11:7. What can these verses mean when the Scriptures stress the truth that there is only one God?
 - b. In the Garden of Eden, Gen 3:8-10.
 - c. The “messenger” appearing to Abraham in Gen 18:1 & 17.
 - d. In the furnace, Daniel 3:25.
 - e. John 12:37-41, referring to Isaiah 6:1.
 - f. Psalm 110.
- 3. Consider some other names of Jesus in the Bible:
 - a. Christ (Messiah).
 - b. Lord
 - c. Bridegroom
 - d. Alpha & Omega
 - e. I Am
 - f. Wonderful Counselor
 - g. Mighty God
 - h. Prince of Peace
 - i. Lamb of God
 - j. The Word
 - k. The Bread of Life
 - l. The True Vine
 - m. The light of the World
 - n. Good Shepherd
 - o. Living Water
 - p. Son of God
 - q. Resurrection and the Life
 - r. Way, the Truth, and the Life
- 4. What does the title “the Son of Man” indicate that the other names or titles do not? How does the title “the Son of Man” illustrate Jesus’ humility, and at the same time indicate his claim to be King of Kings & Lord of Lords?
- 5. How does John 1:14 illustrate the concept of the title “the Son of Man?” What does, he... “made his dwelling among us,” mean to you? See Heb 5:14-16.
- 6. How does the title “the Son of Man” avoid reference to contemporary, earnest but wrong messianic expectations – namely to take political control and kick out the Romans?
- 7. How did the title “the Son of Man” allow Jesus to identify himself in his own way? How did he use the title to teach about himself?
 - a. John 3:13, 6:62.
 - b. John 3:14-15
 - c. John 6:53-54
 - d. John 5:25-27
- 8. Compare Daniel 7:13-14 to Phil 2:9-11. How will we bow before him: willingly to the one we adore, or reluctantly before his judgment? If willingly, it must be now!

We are invited to join the multitude who encircle the throne of God saying,

Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength
and honor and glory and praise!

and who sing together with every living creature,

To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb
be praise and honor and glory and power for ever and ever! 1

(1. Boice, J. M., 1989. Daniel: An Expository Commentary, and Rev. 5:11-13.)

Daniel's Vision for the Hebrews

Daniel Chapter 8 covers some of the same things we saw in Chapters 2 and 7. So why did Daniel make the repetition? And why did he receive a second vision of the same things? Finally, what is the connection between the era of Daniel's vision and our present times?

Daniel 8:1-14 – Daniel's Vision

Daniel 8:15-27 – The Interpretation

1. What was the historical context of Daniel's vision in Chapter 8?
 - a. Which empire was in power at the time?
 - b. What was the geographical context of Daniel's Chapter 8 vision?
2. List the elements of Daniel's vision and their interpretations in chapter 8.
3. What is similar and what is different with respect to Daniel's vision in chapter 7?
 - a. What kingdoms are represented in each vision?
 - b. What kingdoms are not included in the chapter 8 vision that are included in the chapter 7 vision?
 - c. Daniel used Hebrew from 1:1 to 2:3, Aramaic from 2:4 to 7:28 and Hebrew from 8:1 to the end of the book. If there is some repetition of chapter 7 in chapter 8, what could be the reason for the shift in language from chapter 7 to chapter 8?
 - d. What new details are presented in chapter 8 that are not in chapter 7?
4. In our last study (Daniel 7:13-14) we considered the title "the Son of Man" as it belongs to Jesus? Why then do we find the title applied to Daniel by Gabriel in 8:17? What may be inferred from this observation?
5. Consider the vision and its interpretation in chapter 8 with respect to recorded history:
 - a. The ram with two horns, one longer than the other.
 - b. The goat with the prominent horn.
 - c. The goat's broken horn.
 - d. The 4 replacement horns.
 - e. The powerful and rebellious horn.
 - f. The surrender of the sanctuary.
 - g. The "stern faced king, a master of intrigue" "will be destroyed, but not by human power." 8:25
 - h. 2300 evenings and mornings. 8:14
6. If Daniel's vision was clearly explained to him in detail by Gabriel, but in 8:27 he said, "... it was beyond understanding." What didn't he understand? Why?
7. What does predictive prophecy teach us about the God of the Bible?
 - a. What does fulfilled prophecy indicate?
 - b. How is God's sovereignty demonstrated by fulfilled prophecy?

8. What does predictive prophecy teach us about the Bible? What does recorded history teach us about the Bible?
9. History illustrates Antiochus IV as the powerful and rebellious horn, who caused great persecution and suffering of the Hebrew people in Israel. If you were Jewish living there in Jerusalem at that time, how would you view Daniel 8? What would its message be to you?
10. If you lived in Jerusalem in Jesus day, what would you think of his words in Matt 24:15-25?
11. Consider "2300 evenings & mornings."
12. $2300 \text{ days} = 6 \text{ years} + 111 \text{ days}$
13. $2300/2 = 3 \text{ years} + 55 \text{ days}$
14. Some Historical Facts
 - a. After the fall of Babylon to the Medes & Persians, the citadel of Susa was designated to be the capital of the empire by Darius I.
 - b. The Persians dominated the Medes.
 - c. Alexander the Great swiftly (in only 3 years) conquered the Persian Empire and died at 33.
 - d. Alexander's 4 generals replaced him and jostled for supremacy.
 - i. Ptolemy – Egypt
 - ii. Seleucus – Babylon, Syria & the eastern part of the Empire
 - iii. Lysimachus – Thrace, Asia Minor, & Macedonia
 - iv. Cassander – Greece & Macedonia
15. Antiochus IV Epiphanes ("Magnificent" or "God made manifest") was the 8th king of the Seleucid dynasty. Enemies referred to him as Antiochus Epimanes (Madman).
 - a. To consolidate his empire and strengthen his hold over the region, Antiochus decided to Hellenize the Jews by outlawing Judaism, and by erecting an idol of Zeus in the Temple. This was anathema to the Jews, and they called it "the abomination of desolation." It was a crime to possess Jewish scripture.
 - b. When they refused, Antiochus sent an army to enforce his decree. Because of the resistance, the city was destroyed and many pious Jews were slaughtered. In addition, Antiochus desecrated the Temple by offering swine upon it. See Hebrews 11:35-38.
 - c. Antiochus IV Epiphanes suddenly died of "natural" causes in 164 BC.
 - d. The Temple was reconsecrated by the Maccabees in 164 BC, approximately 3 years after Antiochus began his repression of Jewish worship.

The Answer to Daniel's Prayer

Chapter 9 includes Daniel's intercessory prayer for exiled Israel and the Lord's answer to it. The answer includes additional predictive prophecy about the coming the Messiah and of end times. Like Chapter 8, history is in agreement with the predictive prophecy for Daniel and the nation of Israel.

Daniel 9:1-19 – Daniel's intercessory prayer

1. Make an outline of Daniel's prayer.
 - a. What are the main points?
 - b. In what order do they occur?
 - c. What significance do you see in the order of the main points?
 - d. In what ways can you make this outline a model for personal, intercessory prayer?
2. What were Daniel's circumstances when he offered the prayer of Chapter 9?
 - a. How long had the exiles been captive in Babylon at this point?
 - b. How was Daniel affected by the visions of Chapters 7 & 8? (See 7:28 & 8:27)

- c. What drove him to study Jeremiah and to pray?
3. Why would Daniel repeatedly include himself along with the people of Israel who in Daniel's prayer, "... have rebelled against [God]" and, have not obeyed the Lord our God or kept the laws he gave us through his servants the prophets?"
 - a. What value is there for intercessory prayer? What reasons would you have to pray for others who are in rebellion against God?
4. What arguments did Daniel present in his prayer for God to hear and act?

Daniel 9:20-27 – "The 'Backbone' Prophecy"

1. Why did Gabriel come to Daniel? What was Gabriel's mission?
2. What are the possibilities for interpreting the term "sevens"?
3. Consider Daniel 9:24.
 - a. What is necessary to "finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, [and] to bring in everlasting righteousness?"
4. Boice lists the following that are to be fitted into this period:
 - a. Transgression is to be finished.
 - b. An end to sin is made.
 - c. An atonement for wickedness is made.
 - d. Everlasting righteousness is to be brought in.
 - e. The vision and prophecy are to be sealed up.
 - f. The most holy (the Most Holy Place or the most holy One) is to be anointed.
 - g. What is the main point of Daniel 9:24?
5. To what decree does Daniel 9:25 refer? See Ezra 7:7 & 7:12-26. Artaxerxes I issued this decree in 457 BC.
 - a. If "seven" refers to 7 years, what year would it be after 7 "sevens," when Jerusalem would "be rebuilt with streets and a trench?" Boice notes that reconstruction was completed by this time.
 - b. What year would it be after the passing of 62 more "sevens"?
 - c. What was occurring in history at that time?
 - d. Who is the "Anointed One"?
 - e. Considering the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, what troubles did Israel have?
6. Consider Daniel 9:26.
 - a. What year was it after 62 "sevens"?
 - b. How long was Christ's earthly ministry? What year did it end?
 - c. When did the Romans destroy the Temple?
7. What about the last "seven"? If it does not fit any historical events, what other possibilities are there?

Summary

1. How does Gabriel's message to Daniel represent an answer to his prayer?
2. In your prayer times, who or what will be the object of intercessory prayer?
3. How can you apply the teachings in Daniel 9:20-27?

Encounter Down by the River Side

In Chapters 10 through 12, Daniel receives another vision in about 535 BC, this time down by the Tigris River. The vision is an encounter with an angel who provides more details of predictive prophecy to the dreams and visions of Chapters 2, 7, 8, and 9 regarding the people of Israel and of end times. The timing of the vision came approximately during the second year after the first group of Jewish exiles returned to Jerusalem under the leadership of Zerubbable the Persian governor and Joshua the high priest. The timing of the vision also is close to the fifteen-year cessation of the work to rebuild the Temple. The work continued during the time of Haggai, one of the Minor Prophets. See Ezra 1:1-2, Ezra 4:24, & Haggai 1:1-3.

The last three chapters of Daniel are an account of the last vision recorded by him:

Chapter 10 – The preface to the vision.

Chapter 11 – The content of the vision.

Chapter 12 – The postscript of the vision.

The account of the vision provides us with some interesting insights of the spiritual world, which the earlier ones did not.

1. Review the points of the earlier dreams and visions.
 - a. Chapter 2 – Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of a statue.
 - b. Chapter 7 – Daniel’s dream of four beasts.
 - c. Chapter 8 – Daniel’s vision of a ram and a goat.
 - d. Chapter 9 – Daniel’s vision of Gabriel.
2. What pattern do you see in the progression of these dreams and visions?
3. Daniel 10:1 to 11:1 – The preface to the vision: spiritual warfare.
4. Consider and comment on the following Biblical glimpses of spiritual warfare and the spiritual world:
 - a. Job 1:1 to 2:10
 - b. I Kings 22:19-23
 - c. Zechariah 3:1-10
 - d. Revelation 12:7-12
 - e. Luke 2:8-14
 - f. Ephesians 1:3, 19-21, Colossians 1:16
 - g. Ephesians 6:10-18
5. What contrasts do you see in these Bible accounts?
 - a. What spiritual entities exist in the spiritual world?
 - b. Where are the battle lines drawn? Who is on each side?
 - c. What is the nature and power of God? What is the nature and power of Satan and his fallen angels?
 - d. What do these accounts teach about the sovereignty of God?
6. Compare Daniel’s vision in Dan. 10:5-6 to John’s in Rev. 1:12-18.
 - a. What is similar and what is different?
 - b. What conclusions can you make about these spiritual entities?
7. Why did the angel come to Daniel? What was his mission?
8. What was Daniel’s initial reaction to the vision? What encouragement did Daniel receive?
9. What are your impressions of Dan. 10:13?
 - a. What conclusion can you make about this verse?
 - b. Who is the “prince of the Persian kingdom”?
 - c. What does the 21-day delay indicate about the angel, Michael, and the “Prince of Persia”?
10. How did the angel prepare Daniel to receive the content of the predictive prophecy of the vision?
11. What did Daniel do after he received the vision? See Dan. 10:1-3. Why did he react this way?

Summary and Application

1. How do you experience spiritual warfare? What areas of life are affected? Where is the battleground?
2. What protection and weapons do you have?
3. What disciplines should we exercise? See John 15:5-8 & Luke 9:23-26.
4. Who are the stakeholders in spiritual warfare?
5. What are the potential costs for you in spiritual warfare? See Hebrews 11.
6. How can you recognize success in spiritual warfare?
7. How is God’s sovereignty an encouragement to you in spiritual warfare?

Daniel’s Last Vision

Chapter 10 introduced the discussion about spiritual warfare. Daniel 11:2 to 12:4 recounts the vision, and Daniel 12 is the postscript of the vision.

- The description of the vision is presented in three parts:
- The History of the Near East from Daniel's time up to the rule of Antiochus Epiphanes.
- The character traits and career of Antiochus Epiphanes.
- One of three possibilities:
 - A focus on Antiochus
 - Events of the early Roman Empire
 - Events yet to come.

Daniel 11:2 - 19 – A Detailed History.

1. If you read this text with the presupposition that God cannot or would not give this detailed information to a prophet hundreds of years before the events, what conclusion would you make about the Book of Daniel?
 - a. Review the following texts: Dan 7:2..., 8:1..., & 9:21...
 - b. If these texts indicate Daniel's personal testimony about these visions, what would such a presupposition suggest about the authenticity of the book? What does the book claim?
 - c. What is the basis for such a presupposition?
2. Consider Alexander the Great and the history of the four kingdoms that followed his rule:
 - a. Antipater
 - b. Lysimachus
 - c. Ptolemy – Egypt (South)
 - d. Seleucus – Syria (North)
3. What conclusions can you make about fulfilled prophesy in the Bible?
 - a. The God of the Bible.
 - b. The reliability of the Bible.
 - c. The hope and encouragement that we have. (See Matt 28:20)

Daniel 11:20 - 35 – Antiochus Epiphanes.

1. What adjectives are used to describe Antiochus Epiphanes?
2. How are his actions consistent with his description?
 - a. Why did he turn against Israel (Dan 11:30-31)?
 - b. What ended the rule of Antiochus Epiphanes?
 - c. How did his actions contribute to the success of the Maccabees revolt?

Daniel 11:36 to 12:4 – End Times.

1. Should these verses be taken as literal or symbolic? Why? Is the context of the preceding verses literal or symbolic?
2. Should these verses be read as history or future events? Why?
 - a. If history, would you expect to find agreement among commentators like those found for Daniel 11:20-35?
 - b. If history, what if any, consistency with the text can be cited about Antiochus' career?
 - c. If future events, who are the characters included in Daniel 11:36 to 12:4?
3. Three approaches can be exercised to interpret this section:
 - a. The continued career of Antiochus. There is no obvious break between 11:35 & 36. However, this section does not fit Antiochus' known career.
 - b. A prophesy of part of Roman history. The assumption is that "king" = kingdom. But this treatment of the text is not consistent with the rest of the chapter.
 - c. A reference to the Antichrist to come before Jesus' return. This is Boice's interpretative approach. The king of Dan 11:36 is a type of greater evil character for the last days. He supports this with Dan 11:40,

which refers to “the last days” (fixing the time frame of the section) and which alludes to the battle of Armageddon in Dan 11:44-45.

4. Read Ezekiel 38:1-6, Rev 16:15-16, & Rev 19:1-3.
5. How can these texts help you interpret Daniel 11:36 to 12:4?
 - a. What is the great persecution in Dan 12:1?
 - b. How should we interpret Dan 12:2? To what does this verse refer?
 - c. How is Dan 12:3 connected to Rev 19?

Summary and Application

Read Psalm 11, noting the question in verse 3

1. In view of these interpretations of future events, what should the people of God do when they occur?
2. In view of today's events, what should the people of God do when they occur?

Why Shine?

Daniel 12 is the postscript of the vision given in Chapter 11. After reading it we see that even the angels are confused. So, what's in it for us?

Daniel 12:5 - 13 – The Postscript

1. What question did the angels ask about the prophecy? What was the answer, and what indication do you see that Daniel or the angel understood it? Note I Peter 1:10-12.
 - a. Are these words understandable to us?
 - b. If these words were not understandable to Daniel or the angel, what good are they to us?
2. Note Dan 12:4. “Many will go here and there to increase knowledge.” The phrase, “here and there” is a Hebrew idiom, suggesting a frantic but futile pursuit of something that is illusive.
 - a. What is the meaning of this quote?
 - b. Have you observed this phenomenon? Where?
3. Compare the definitions of knowledge, understanding and wisdom.
4. What approach do secular people take to gain knowledge and understanding?
 - a. What can be understood by the scientific approach, using reason alone? What cannot be understood by it?
 - b. What can be understood by the attention to our senses? What cannot be understood by it? Give some examples.
 - c. What examples can you give for the abusive outcomes of these approaches to knowledge and understanding?
 - d. How do these approaches change over time?
5. What is the appropriate approach to gain knowledge, understanding and wisdom for us? Where do we find true reality? See Proverbs 9:10.
 - a. How does this differ from the secular approaches listed above?
 - b. What dangers are associated with these secular approaches? See Romans 1:18-32.
 - c. How does the knowledge of God provide what these secular pursuits for knowledge and understanding lack, satisfying both mind and emotion? See John 10:14-15 & 14:6.
 - d. How does the eternal and unchanging nature of God satisfy our quest for knowledge and understanding?
6. What do you find that is difficult in Daniel 12:7
 - a. What does verse 7 imply about God's people?
 - b. What are the possibilities for its meaning?

7. Considering the description in Daniel 12 and in the following references, are we in the "Last Days"? Luke 21:5-38 (said by Jesus during the passion week) & II Timothy 3:1-5.
 - a. What evidence do you see for your opinion?
 - b. What, if anything, is missing in our time that is included in these descriptions of the "Last Days"?
 - c. If we are not yet in the "Last Days," is our time anything like these descriptions? Describe how?
8. What is the connection between Romans 1:18-32 and Daniel 12:4?
 - a. What is the process in Romans? What results from what?
 - b. What is the final result of rejecting the knowledge of God?
9. Consider the quotes: "Close up and seal the words of the scroll" (12:4) and "The words are closed up and sealed" (12:9). Since this prophecy has been open and available from the time Daniel wrote it, what do these phrases mean?
 - a. How would an attorney understand these phrases?
 - b. Are the words sealed up because we do not understand them?
 - c. Compare these phrases to Rev 22:10-11.
 - d. Consider the advantage we have for understanding the prophecy that the people of Daniel's day did not have. What don't we understand about it?
10. If Daniel was confused by the prophecy, and we are confused by the prophecy, what is the point of Daniel 12?
 - a. What things are suggested in Daniel 12 for us to do?
 - b. What warning is there for us?
11. What combination of ideas is positive about God's people living in evil times?
 - a. What is the meaning for God's people to "shine like the brightness of heaven"? See Exodus 34:29-35 & II Cor 3:7-18.
 - b. What do we need to do to reflect God's glory? For what purpose?
 - c. How can we triumph in a time of evil?