

Daniel: A Dream, Two Visions, and a Calendar



I was at a gas station in town when a car of girls from the local college pulled into the parking lot. I was getting ready to fill up a couple of containers when one of the girls jumped out and wanted to know if she could help me pump my gas. I thought it was strange but, of course, I said that was fine. I could tell she really didn't know how to pump gas when she asked me if I would put the nozzle in the tank and pull the trigger, and then let her hold her hand on the nozzle, making it appear she was pumping gas. As she did this, another girl jumped out of the car with her iPhone and began to video her looking like she was pumping gas into my containers, then, they both jumped back into their car. Then, I saw them take out a list and check something off that list, and I knew they were doing some kind of a scavenger hunt. They were looking for someone who didn't know how to pump his gas, so they found me, and checked what they had done.

The world's largest scavenger hunt drew over 14,580 people, 970 teams, representing 90 different countries. I dare say there is not a person here who, at one time or another, has not participated in some form of a scavenger hunt. In this lesson, we are going to do a mini scavenger hunt as we exit into the Old Testament book of Daniel. There are some things we will be looking for as we go through Daniel. We are trying to see how Daniel fits into the big storyline of the Bible as we move from a garden of

ruin to a city of restoration. We are going to look for a dream, two visions, and a calendar. Through these, we will see us the big storyline of the book of Daniel, as well as how it fits into the big storyline of the Bible.

While are surveying the whole book of Daniel, our passage will be chapter 7:13-14. This passage will give you a glimpse into the book, but we will not exegete just those verses. You could almost think these verses are from the New Testament.

Scripture

"I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed."

In 606 BC, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah are taken from the southern kingdom of Judah into the land of Babylon. In the first 6 chapters, we see them as exiles living in the land of Babylon. We immediately realize they are tested when they sat down to their lunch at school. As children of Israel, they quickly surmised they couldn't eat what was on their plate, therefore, they asked for a special diet of vegies and water. At the end of ten days, their countenance was found better than the other kids were. When their learning experience is over, they are ten times more knowledgeable than the others are.

The next thing you know, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah are promoted to administrative positions throughout the Babylonian Empire. Then, they face that fiery furnace. Because they would not bend and they

would not bow, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were thrown in the fiery furnace, but they would not burn.

Next, there was that handwriting on the wall and Daniel was summoned. He interprets the handwriting on the wall and before the night is over, the Babylonian empire has fallen to the Medo-Persians. But even in the new kingdom, Daniel finds himself in trouble again for being loyal to his God, and he is thrown into the lion's den. While the king stays up all night worrying about Daniel, Daniel sleeps all night in the presence of the lions. Go figure!

Those first 6 chapters of Daniel get us ready for the truth that while the exiles were in Babylon, some might conclude that God had forsaken them and that's why they were there. But as they found themselves living in a Gentile culture, the children of Israel began to discover that God was still their God. He had not forsaken them, and He was with them even in exile. I wonder at how we sometimes believe that God has forsaken us.

A Dream

After Daniel was faithful to God, and God revealed His knowledge and wisdom through Daniel to the Babylon court, he was chosen to be an administrator in the land. Then the Bible says that God gifted him with the ability to interpret dreams and visions. This is when we meet King Nebuchadnezzar, and he has had a dream. Nebuchadnezzar had a whole court of people who helped him understand the meaning of the dreams he had. On this particular morning, he tells his wise men to interpret his dream, so they asked him to tell them his dream. He said no, I want you to tell me the dream first, and if you can tell me what my dream is, then I will know I can trust your interpretation. They quickly tell the king that what he is asking of them is impossible because no one can know what he dreamed except the gods. He tells them if they don't tell him his dream and the interpretation, they are all going to die.

- **Daniel Reveals the Dream**

That is when Daniel is summoned. He calls for his friends to pray because Daniel believes he serves God who can reveal dreams to a person that another has dreamed. When the prayer time is over, Daniel believes he knows Nebuchadnezzar's dream. He approaches the king and tells him his dream: You saw a statue, the head was gold, the chest and arms were silver, the belly and the thighs were bronze, and the legs were iron. The toes were mixed iron and clay, partly strong, partly brittle. Then you saw a stone that was cut out of a mountain, but no human hand had cut the stone. The stone rolled out of the mountain and fell against the statue. The statue tumbled and the stone rolled over and crushed the statue. As you watched, that uncut stone grew into a huge mountain that covered the whole earth.

- **Daniel's Interpretation**

Can you imagine the look on Nebuchadnezzar's face? I am sure his jaw drops as he says, that is it, but what does it mean? Daniel began to tell him the interpretation: King, you are as good as it gets; you are the head of gold. But the kingdom that will follow your kingdom will be silver. The kingdom that follows that will be bronze. But a third kingdom will arise after your Babylonian kingdom. It will start out with legs of iron and be so strong, but it will be partly strong and partly weak and be divided. During this kingdom, there will arise one who is not made with hands who will crush the kingdoms of the world, and his kingdom will fill the earth.

- ❖ **The kings or kingdoms in Nebuchadnezzar's dream**

The head of gold: Babylonian king

The shoulders of silver: Medo-Persian king

The belly and thighs of bronze: Greek Empire

The legs of iron: Roman Empire

Do you see it? A pagan king dreaming a dream, over 500 years earlier, that a Messiah would come who would establish a kingdom that would ultimately grow into the kingdom that would fill the whole world! Wow!! Do you get it? The people in exile should have been looking for a Messiah to come in the third kingdom after the Babylonian kingdom. The Jewish people had no excuse for missing the coming of the Messiah.

Two Visions

- **First Vision**

The first vision is in Daniel chapter 7. In the night, Daniel has a vision of a sea, and the four winds of the earth begin to blow, and out of the sea come four beasts. The first beast is a lion with eagle's wings. (My grandsons like to play a game where we make up animals and this would have been a good one; a lion with eagle's wings!) When the lion stood up and spread its eagle wings, the wings were plucked off of it and it looked like a man, and it had the mind of a man. The second beast that came out of the sea was a bear. It had three ribs in its teeth, and it had been given the ability to devour flesh. Then, a leopard appeared, and it had four wings. Finally, the fourth beast appeared, and Daniel couldn't even describe it in animalistic language; it was so terrible and horrible. It had iron feet and it trampled on everything in its path. It had ten horns, and then a smaller horn grew, before which three were plucked up by the roots.

❖ Kingdoms of the Vision

The Lion: Babylonians

The Bear: Medo-Persians

The Leopard: Greeks

The Fourth Beast: Roman Empire

Do you get it? In his vision, Daniel sees the Ancient of Days. Wow! He describes Him with the same language that John the Revelator describes Him when he sees God. He is sitting on a throne. It's a throne of judgement and the books are open. The beast dies and the kingdoms of the world are getting ready to be judged. Then, all of a sudden, Daniel sees coming with the clouds of the heaven, one like a Son of Man. He appears in the presence of the Ancient of Days, and He gives to him a Kingdom unlike the kingdoms of the world that has been judged. It is a Kingdom that will last forever and ever and ever.

You know who this King, this Son of Man, is; it is Jesus Christ! We talk about Jesus Christ as the Messiah, the Savior, the Great I Am, and the Son of God. We describe Him in so many ways. But when read through the gospels, Jesus referred to Himself as the Son of Man, more than any other designation. As a matter of fact, when Jesus was on trial, He made a reference of being the Son of Man. Immediately, the Jewish courts said we need no other evidence, let's do away with Him now! He had committed blasphemy because He had referred to Himself as Daniel's Son of Man.

Now, Daniel was troubled by that little horn. He watched as the saints of God received and possessed this eternal kingdom. But before they possessed it, this little horn (a ruler) made war with them, and prevailed over them. Did you hear that? Just as God's people were persecuted in Egypt, as they were persecuted in Babylon, God, who is sovereign, allows His people to face trials, tribulations, and persecution. The next time something happens to you, instead of wondering what you have done to deserve it, look at it as if it might be part of God's plan for your life. Before we, the saints of God, possess the Kingdom in its fullness, there will come a time when God will let the kingdom of this world prevail against His Church!

Daniel said when I saw this ruler prevail, I lost color in my face, and in my mind, there is an alarm going off! This little horn, this ruler, would prevail against God's people, but his time would come to an end and he would be

judged. Then, the Saints would receive and possess the eternal Kingdom forever and ever and ever.

- **Second Vision**

The next vision of Daniel is found in chapter 8. Daniel sees a ram and a male goat. The ram has two horns. The second horn is higher than the first horn, and it came up after the first horn. This ram is having his day; no matter what direction he goes, he has his way with the world. Then, all of a sudden, a male goat with one horn in the middle of his forehead comes charging against the ram without even touching the ground. When he gets to the ram, he crushes it! The male goat with one horn defeats the ram with two horns. After he defeats the ram, he is great. But then his horn gets broken, and four horns come up in place of the broken horn. Those four horns rule the world.

One of those horns decides to invade God's country, the southern kingdom of Judah. When he comes into the land of Judah, he does the unthinkable; he commits what Daniel called the abomination of desolation in the temple. Remember, there was no temple in Jerusalem at that time, so Daniel begins to understand the temple will be rebuilt. However, when it's rebuilt, an abomination will take place in it.

- ❖ **Representation of the Horns**

The ram with the two horns represents the Medo-Persian Empire. The Persians were always stronger than the Medes, and that is why their horn was larger. They ruled the world until a young Greek began to campaign. His name was Alexander the Great. Alexander the Great and his army defeated the Persian Empire. Alexander died at the age of 33, and his kingdom was given to his four generals. Now, remember the leopard had four wings, which represented the four generals of Alexander the Great when the Greeks ruled. Now, you have four horns, again telling us this is the Greek Empire.

Now remember, Daniel was writing this hundreds and hundreds of years before this happened. As a matter of fact, if you read some commentaries, they date Daniel in the 100's. These prophecies so correctly described what happened in world history that many say Daniel had to have written it after it happened. They say that there was no way he could have written it before. Of course, we do not believe Daniel wrote this, we believe God enabled Daniel to write this.

Now, under the divided Greek empire in 171 BC, Antiochus Epiphanes marched on Jerusalem and besieged the city. When the siege was over, he went into the temple and offered a pig to God on the altar. Whoa! A Jewish person could not eat pork, and Antiochus Epiphanes brings a hog with him! He believed his god was greater than Israel's God, and offered a pig on the altar of the temple and committed what Daniel called the abomination of desolation. When Daniel saw what was going to happen in the future, it made him sick and he sat down. If this man can tell a pagan what he dreamed, tell him the interpretation of the dream, and then see two visions which have been fulfilled exactly, I'm going to listen to him.

A Calendar

When the two vision are over, Daniel gets ready to read his Bible. I have had this thought that if I am Daniel and God were speaking to me the way God is speaking to Daniel, (giving him visions and talking to him) why read your Bible? I mean, come on, he was a prophet! But Daniel is reading Jeremiah, and he comes across the part where Jeremiah tells children of Israel to buy homes and farms, plant gardens, build houses, get chariots, and be good employers when they get to Babylon, because they are going to be there for a while. As a matter of fact, they were going to be there for 70 years. Daniel was reading Jeremiah in the first year of Darius. He remembers that he came to Babylon in 606 BC, and Darius began his reign in 539 BC, so do the math; Daniel had been there 67 years. When he sees what Jeremiah said, he gets excited and believes that within three years

they will be going home to Judah! So Daniel started praying. That's a little strange, isn't it? Most of us don't pray when we know what God's will is; we pray because we don't know what God's will is.

Why don't we pray when we know God's will? Daniel did. As a matter of fact, knowing God's will drove him to prayer! He prayed because he wanted to be ready for what was going to happen, and he wanted the Israelites to be ready. Prayer is not about us getting what we want from God! Prayer is about God getting what He wants from us. Do you get that? None of us believes we know more than God does!

As Daniel prays, getting ready to go home and lead the children of Israel who want to go home, Gabriel appears to Daniel and tells him it is not time to go home yet. WHAT? Gabriel said, oh Daniel, I want to give you some insight and understanding. When God gave Jeremiah the 70 weeks, Jeremiah didn't know those 70 weeks didn't mean 70 years. They were really 70 weeks of 7 years, so $70 \times 7 = 490$ years. He gave Daniel a calendar, and in verse 24, he lists six things that will happen.

He divides the 490 years into three groups:

- 1. 7-7s**
- 2. 62-7s**
- 3. 1-7**

The calendar starts with the decree to rebuild Jerusalem. When we were in the historical books, I gave you some important dates to remember: 606 BC, 597 BC, and 586 BC. Then, I gave three more important dates: 539 BC, 457 BC and 445 BC. They all deal with the rebuilding of Jerusalem, or some part of it.

In the prophetic calendar that God gave Daniel, there had already been 7 weeks of 7, which is 49 weeks. Then, when you multiply 62×7 , you get 434. So at the end of 62 weeks, you would add 49 and 434, which equals 483. That leaves one week of 7's, which added to 483 equals 490 weeks. If you take 483 years and add them to Ezra's 457 BC, the year would be 27

AD. (You have to take into account the year you add when going from 1 BC to 1 AD.) In 27 A.D., Jesus stepped down into a pool of water, the heavens opened, the Spirit of God descended on them like a dove, and a voice said this is My Son in whom I am well pleased. In three years, He would be crucified...wow...Daniel said that at the end of 62 weeks, He would be cut off. He was cut off.

If you get the dream, the two visions, and the calendar, the Jewish people should have known that Jesus was their Messiah! From their own prophet, they had no excuse not to know when Jesus the Messiah was coming and what was going to happen to Him because of His love for His people! Daniel thought they were going home. But God said when you get there you will not be home yet, because that's not home! My people will not be home until my prophetic calendar has been fulfilled!

Israel was looking forward to going home, and Daniel missed it; so God showed Daniel they won't be home until the Messiah comes. He will offer the death on the cross that is going to deal with what was really wrong with them, and that is their sin. Then, He will initiate a Kingdom that will be a spiritual Kingdom, and one day, it will be fully manifested into a physical Kingdom. There will be no end to that Kingdom; it will last forever and ever and ever. We will reign with Him on the new heaven and the new earth, forever.

But, there is still 1 week of 7s left. Part of that week will be defined by a time, a times, and half a time, which John the Revelator picks up on as a time of great tribulation. Daniel saw years before John did that the little horn, the antichrist, would make war before we would all ultimately get home with the saints of God, and he will prevail over them for 3 ½ years. We are not home yet. For those of you who have been led to believe that you are going to miss it, according to the Word of God, you are not. If you are a saint of God, you will be in the middle of it if we get to be that generation that lives when before Christ steps out on that cloud and brings to us a new heaven and a new earth.

It will look like we are losing but we won't lose. Daniel has been right about everything that has happened until now, and I absolutely do not believe he has missed this! Jesus is the fulfillment of Daniel chapter 7. Jesus, the Messiah, is the Son of Man.