

GROWTH + GROUPS

NAVIGATE LIFE TOGETHER

Maranatha Chapel Sermon Based Study Guide
SB 03.17.2024

HOW SHOULD WE LIVE? - DANIEL 8:1-27

PART 1: Receiving the Message and Relating to the Study

What insights, principles or observations stood out to you from this week's message? Discuss with your group.

Today in Daniel chapter 8, we're going to look at another vision that God gave Daniel. However, this one is slightly different than the others in that it focuses more specifically with the future of the Jewish people. This point is underscored by the fact that at this point, the book switches from Aramaic back to Hebrew. Some of you may recall how beginning in chapter 2, the language Daniel was writing in switched from Hebrew to Aramaic. Why is that? Because the subjects Daniel was writing about in those chapters deal primarily with the gentile nations. At this point, the focus shifts back to the Jewish people so it's fitting that the writing switches back to Hebrew. Let's get into our lesson...

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

1. What struck you most from Pastor Daniel's sermon?
2. Who do you think of as the most evil people throughout history? What makes you think this way about them?

PART 2: Digging Deeper in God's Word: Life Lessons

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ DANIEL 8:1-12

This chapter lays itself out very similarly to the last one we studied. In the first half, Daniel receives a heavenly vision filled with animals and horns. Then, in the middle, he is introduced to an angel who gets identified as Gabriel, who provides him with the interpretation in the second half. This is the same Gabriel who shows up in the New Testament and announces to Mary that she is pregnant with the Messiah. He's one of only three angels who are named in Scripture. The others are Michael and Lucifer.

1. How is the ram described in verses 1-4? The goat in verses 5-8? The little horn in verses 9-14?
2. Put yourself in Daniel's shoes, how would you have responded to the vision without interpretation? How would you respond with the interpretation?

The ram is described as having two horns, with one being newer and longer than the other. It charged west, north, and south, and no animal could withstand its charge. "He did whatever he wanted," signifying its power and authority.

The goat is described as having one large horn. It came from the west and didn't touch the ground. While the ram previously had been unbeatable, it now fell before the power of the goat. Curiously, the goat became even more arrogant, but then its horn was broken into four horns, one for each four directions on a compass.

A little horn grew from one of the four horns on the goat, and it grew toward the south, east, and the beautiful land. It even grew to the sky and made some of the stars fall. It acted arrogantly toward the Prince of the heavenly army and stopped His regular sacrifice in the sanctuary. It threw truth to the ground and did whatever it wanted.

Notice the repeated ideas of the ram, goat, and little horn doing whatever they wanted and acting arrogantly. And the little horn one day will eventually put a stop to the heart of the Israelites faith: the sacrifices in the temple. These comments from the vision help us to understand the interpretation that comes next and the cry of the oppressed heart: How long, O Lord?

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ DANIEL 8:13-27

1. What would it mean to you to know that your oppression had a time limit, however lengthy? (vs 14)

Knowing there was an end to oppression would make it possible to endure. But of course, this requires believing the word of God that He knows what the future holds and has the power and the will to end the oppression. So, in essence, this vision to Daniel, which disturbed him greatly, was meant to demonstrate God's knowledge and power and to instill faith and hope in His people so they could endure their suffering and turn their hearts to Him.

2. How is your understanding of Scripture and history challenged by this vision speaking to the very real and historical kingdoms of Medo-Persia and Greece?
3. What is the identity of the Goat and its large Horn? Why did its feet not touch the ground? (8:5-8,21-22) Who are the 4 horns coming out after the large horn was broken off?
4. What further insight do we gain about the actions and attitude of the "little horn" from this interpretation of the vision? (Read Danile 7:8-14 for further discussion on the "little horn.")

The "little horn" king will be ruthless and cunning and won't remain "little." He will be empowered by something greater than himself, presumably a demonic power. He will attack and try to destroy the Israelites, and he will set himself up against God, the Prince of princes. But for all his authority and intrigue, he will come to an end by the hand of God and not a human hand, showing that God indeed is the One in control over all of history. This arrogant king, almost universally believed to be Antiochus IV Epiphanes (reign 175-164 B.C.), would arise to persecute the Jews by the allowance of God to discipline His rebellious people, but the king's reign of terror would end as God had said (see Dan. 2:44-45). The end to the Jews' oppression would be welcomed with rejoicing, but God had more in store for His people. Not only would oppression end, but one day they would receive the one true King to end sin and oppression for all time.

5. Pastor Daniel asked the question, does this prophecy pertain to Antiochus Epiphanes or the Anti-Christ? Read Daniel 8:9-14 and Matthew 24:14-21 to answer this question.
6. How did the Grecian empire and language pave the way for the Gospel to spread all over the world during the time of Rome?

PART 3: Applying God's Word

What did you learn from this study and how does this personally speak to you? Discuss with your group.

ENCOUNTER GOD in 2024

How does Daniel respond to this incredible vision about the future? After resting for a few days, he gets up and 'went about the king's business.' Even though he was serving a pagan king in a foreign land, he got back to work. What should your response be to everything we've talked about today? Should you dig a bunker and hide out in fear? No. It should inspire you to make sure you are doing the Kings business. Daniel served an earthly king. We are serving an eternal King! You need to make sure you are busy carrying out the King's business!

1. In what ways can you be about the Fathers business in these last days? What is the Fathers business?
2. What are some ways you need to take to heart the presence and promise of Jesus' eternal kingdom for His followers?
3. How will you change your beliefs and actions to reflect the truth that God is all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-good?

PRAYER: Father, You are the only One in control of all things. Though at times we struggle to see it and even believe it, please help our unbelief so we can live in light of your power, strength, and goodness. You have called us out of our sin and made us a kingdom of priests in this world. May Your Holy Spirit guide us and embolden us to proclaim Jesus as the one true King overall, and may we profess with faith and boldness that evil and oppression will see their end at His coming. Amen.

'All authority in heaven and earth has been given to Me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'

(Matt. 28:18-20)