

GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH DANIEL

PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the book of Daniel at least once. First let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word.

Introduction

Daniel is one of the best-loved books in the Bible because of its exciting and soul-stirring **stories of faith and obedience**. It is also one of the most studied books of the Bible because of the precise nature of its **prophecies**, many of which have already been fulfilled. In fact, Daniel contains more fulfilled prophecy than any other book in the Bible. Thus, a study of the fulfillment of prophecy in Daniel will shed much light on the interpretation of prophecy in other prophetic books. This is especially important in the study of New Testament prophecy, where Daniel is quoted more than any other book in the Bible.

Aim of the Lesson

Present Daniel as a model for godly living in a godless world.

Outline of the Lesson (Use the Study Notes to add to this lesson plan as the Spirit leads you.)

The Place of Daniel in History

Daniel lived when God punished Judah for its idolatry. God used Babylon to take His people into captivity. Nebuchadnezzar took Jews to Babylon three times over a period of 20 years. Daniel was among those taken to Babylon the first time when he was 14 or 15 years of age. He lived a godly life in Babylon during the entire 70 years that the people of Judah were in captivity. He continued to live in Babylon a few years after 50,000 Jews returned to their homeland. He maybe lived until he was near 90.

Daniel lived during the time when Jeremiah and Ezekiel prophesied to Judah. Jeremiah was the first of the three to prophesy to Judah. He ministered in Judah before the first band was taken to Babylon. He warned the people that God was going to use Babylon to conquer Judah for its sins against Him. Jeremiah continued to minister in Judah until Babylon destroyed Jerusalem and took most of its people to Babylon. He prophesied that the Jews would be in captivity for 70 years (Jer 25:11-12; 29:10). He was allowed to stay in the land with some poor people, but soon afterward they fled to Egypt when they feared Nebuchadnezzar would punish them for the assassination of his appointed leader. Jeremiah told them to trust God to take care of them, but they did not listen to him and took him to Egypt with them.

Ezekiel was in the second band of Jews taken captive to Babylon. He prophesied to the Jews that they would be in Babylon for many years, but he encouraged them with God's promise of a glorious future for Israel. He had not forsaken them.

Daniel also ministered in Babylon, but his witness for God was to the kings of Babylon and Medo-Persia. He was an amazing servant for God in a worldly government as shown in the Study Notes for this lesson. His witness and that of his three friends is part of the message that Daniel tells in this book. He also gives many important prophecies that primarily pertain to the Messiah and His people. Some of these prophecies have a bearing on Christians who will rule with Christ in His Kingdom on earth.

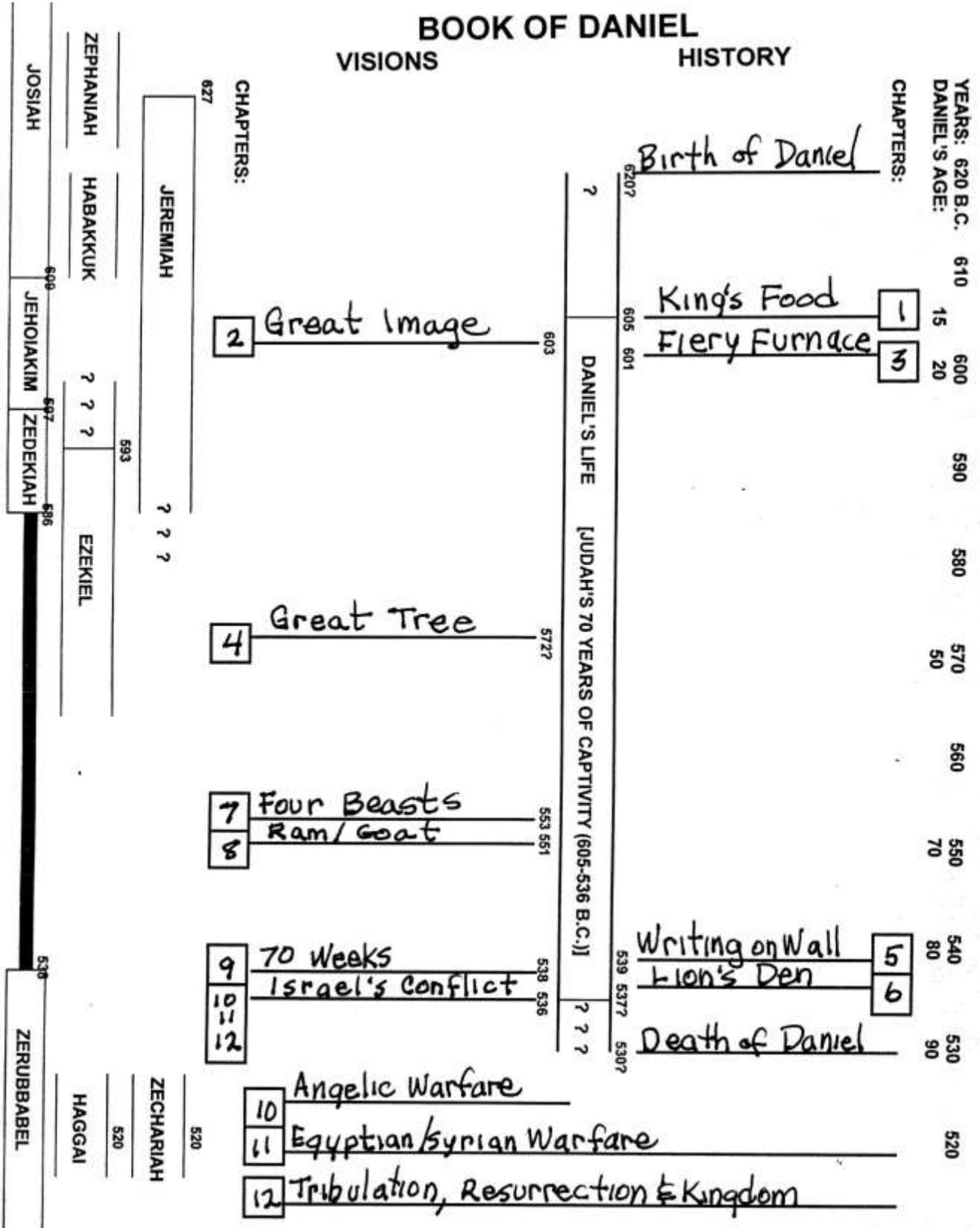
We must present our bodies to the Lord and not be conformed to this world, but be transformed in our minds that we may do His will and please Him with our lives (Rom 12:1).

THE PLACE OF DANIEL IN HISTORY

by Roger L. Peterson

WORLD KINGDOMS	TIMES	LEADERS AND EVENTS
Egyptian	2000 BC	
	1500 BC	Moses
	1000 BC	David
Assyrian		Hezekiah, Isaiah
Babylonian Medo-Persian	DANIEL 500 BC	Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Nebuchadnezzar Haggai, Zechariah, Cyrus, Darius Esther, Xerxes, Ezra, Nehemiah, Malachi
Grecian		Alexander the Great, Ptolemy, Seleucus Antiochus Epiphanes
Roman 0	REVELATION	Augustus Caesar Jesus Christ, Peter, Paul John
	AD 500	Western Roman Empire Falls Gregory I
	AD 1000	
	AD 1500	Eastern Roman Empire Falls Reformation
	AD 2000	
Roman Kingdom Revived Christ's Millennial Kingdom	(?) (?)	Tribulation: Antichrist +10 Kings Christ Returns to earth

DANIEL		
FOCUS	DIVISIONS	LANGUAGES
HISTORY	KING'S FOOD	1:1
		1:21
VISION [HISTORY]	DREAM: GREAT IMAGE	2:1
		2:49
HISTORY	FIERY FURNACE	3:1
		3:30
VISION [HISTORY]	DREAM: GREAT TREE	4:1
		4:37
HISTORY	WRITING ON WALL	5:1
		5:31
		6:1
LION'S DEN		6:28
		7:1
		7:28
VISIONS	FOUR BEASTS	7:28
		8:1
		8:27
		9:1
		9:27
RAM AND MALE GOAT		10:1
		10:1
SEVENTY WEEKS		12:13
		12:13
ISRAEL'S CONFLICT Angelic Warfare [10] Egypt / Syrian Conflict [11] Tribulation, Resurrection and Christ's Kingdom [12]		12:13
		12:13
PLACE: BABYLON / PERSIA		DATE: c.605-536 B.C.



The Contents of Daniel

The contents of Daniel are given in the two charts above. The first chart shows the focus, divisions and languages of the book of Daniel. Daniel's focus is on history in the first six chapters and on the visions he received in the next six chapters. Chapters 2 and 4 tell about two prophetic dreams that God gave to Nebuchadnezzar, but they reveal how Daniel interpreted them for the king, so they are historical in that sense. The first dream foretold the history of the world empires as they would relate to God's people. Much of the prophecy has been fulfilled, but the most important part awaits fulfillment. The second dream foretold what God would do to Nebuchadnezzar on account of his pride. It came to pass about a year later. Daniel interpreted both dreams for Nebuchadnezzar. Chapters 7-12 tell about prophetic visions that primarily relate to Israel.

The middle section of the first chart is the outline of the twelve chapters of Daniel. However it is not chronological, The chronology of Daniel will be shown in the second chart.

The right-hand section of the first chart shows that Daniel wrote the book in two languages. When Daniel's message was meaningful for the Jewish leaders, he wrote in Hebrew; when his message was significant for the leaders of Babylon and Persia, he wrote in Aramaic. By knowing when he used Hebrew and when he used Aramaic, it is helpful in knowing to which people he was giving this particular message.

The second chart helps the Bible student see when these events occur chronologically. The chapters in Daniel are not given in chronological order as this chart will show. This chart will relate the visions to the stories in Daniel. This chart will also show when other men lived during Daniel's life. The question marks at the beginning and at the end of Daniel's lifespan (in the middle of the chart) indicate that we do not know for certain when he was born and when he died.

The second chart is provided for the students (in the student lesson). It does not have the boxes and blanks filled in. The blanks are for the chapter titles and the boxes are for the number of the chapters. Give the students the chapter titles for the blanks; let them find the correct chapter number for the boxes.

We need to know how Daniel wrote his book so we will understand it and interpret it accurately.

The Purposes of Daniel

An important purpose for this book to be written is the **encouragement** it provided to the Jewish people who were under the judgment of God for their sin. Another purpose is the **faith** it inspired in God's sovereignty and greatness (4:17b, 34-37). A third purpose is the **example of godly living** set forth by Daniel and his three friends.

The fourth purpose is the support that Daniel's prophecies give to the **interpretation of all prophecy**. One, it supports the literal interpretation of prophecy. Two, it gives the relevance of prophecy by showing that God will restore the earth to its original glory, which will glorify Him. Three, it gives credibility to the accuracy of prophecy. More is said on the purposes of Daniel's book in the Study Notes.

We need to know the purposes of Daniel so we can focus on them and let them have an impact on our lives.

DANIEL IS A PRACTICAL BOOK AS WELL AS PROPHETICAL BOOK

Note to the teacher: Ask your students questions from the Student's Lesson and appoint different ones to read the Scriptures where the answers can be found. After a right answer is found, share other truths you have gleaned from your study of the Bible, from the Study Notes and from the Teacher's Plan. Make applications to the students' lives where they fit (some are found in the Teacher's Plan). This approach will keep the interest of your students.