

1. Introduction to the Book of Daniel:

Timeline (approx dates):

- 2100BC: Abraham (the forefather of Israel) moves to Canaan after God calls him there.
- 1446BC: Israel is brought out of Egypt by God's power through His servant Moses.
- 1406BC: Israel enters Canaan under Joshua and defeats the Canaanites and inhabits the land.
- 1010BC: David defeats Jerusalem and makes it the capital city of Israel.
- 962BC: First temple is built by king Solomon in Jerusalem.
- 722BC: Samaria and the northern kingdom of Israel is defeated by Assyria and taken into exile.
- 597BC: The southern kingdom of Israel (Judah) is defeated by the Babylonians and taken into exile.
- 586BC: The fall and destruction of Jerusalem and a second group from Judah is taken into exile.
- 539BC: Babylon is defeated by Cyrus king of Persia, who issues a decree for Jews to return home.
- 538BC: First group of Jews return home under Zerubbabel.
- 516BC: Second temple built in Jerusalem.
- 458BC: Second group of Jews return home under Ezra.
- 432BC: Last group of Jews return home under Nehemiah.
- 4-6BC: Christ, the Messiah is born, and brings in the eternal kingdom of God.

Kings of Babylon mentioned in the book of Daniel:

- 604-562BC: Nebuchadnezzar II; who defeated Judah and Jerusalem, and exiled them to Babylon.
- 556-539BC: Belshazzar, son of Nabonidus. Nabonidus is not mentioned in Daniel. He was the king of Babylon from 556-539BC, but he often left the reign of Babylon to his son Belshazzar.
- 539-529BC: Cyrus II; a Persian king, who conquered Babylon in 539BC and ruled over the kingdom.
- Daniel mentions king Darius the Mede. It is not certain who this king was. Was he Darius the great, who reigned after Cyrus (which wouldn't fit the chronological order found in Daniel), or was he another king who reigned over Babylon until Cyrus took charge of the city? We are not sure.

Background to the book of Daniel:

Daniel probably completed the book that bears his name shortly after the capture of Babylon by Cyrus in 539BC. As a young man he was exiled to Babylon during the first exile of Judah/Jerusalem in 597BC.

Read 2 Kings 24:1-16 and Daniel 1:1-7

Why was Judah defeated and sent into exile? (2 Kings 24:3-4; also read Jer 40:2-3; 44:4-6)

The Lord would not forgive His people for the sins they committed during the reign of Manasseh. It wasn't just because of their sins though; they would not listen to the Lord's prophets and repent.

Daniel's people were in exile. What do we learn from Psalm 137 in regard to how they felt?

They felt very sad. They were a defeated people, without hope, and they were constantly tormented by their captors. They longed for when their captors would be recompensed for what they had done to them.

Being in exile, what dangerous thoughts could they have entertained regarding the Lord God?

They could assume that God was weaker than the gods of the nations, or that He wasn't even real.

One of the most important truths in the book of Daniel that the exiles had to grasp is that God is not like the gods of the nations. What did they need to learn and know? (Dan 2:19-22; 4:34-35; 6:25-27)

The Lord God is true and sovereign. He is in control. He rules over all with awesome power and wisdom.

Because of His mighty power, what hope did Judah have? (Jer 29:10-14; Dan 2:44; 7:13-14)

God would restore His captive people to their land, and they would know the Lord. But beyond that, God would establish a new kingdom, who would be ruled by one appointed by God. We know Him to be the Lord Jesus Christ. His kingdom would be forever, and all people groups would be welcome through faith.

What do we learn about Daniel from Dan 1:4? What other attribute did he have? (Dan 2:30)

Daniel was a very gifted and blessed man, but he was very humble. He always honoured God, and because of his humility, he was esteemed by God (Dan 9:23). God loves humility (1 Peter 5:5-6).

Psalm 2 speaks of God appointing His Son to be our ruler. What right response should we have before the sovereign king, and His Son?

In humility, we should revere the Lord God and honour His Son. Daniel is a wonderful example of this.

Summary: God is the sovereign King. Let us humbly serve Him and His Son in their kingdom.

2. **Be Holy: Daniel 1**

Review: *No matter what happens in life, or how strong evil becomes, what are we to always remember? (Dan 4:34-35)* God is seated on the throne and He rules over all – He is in control. He is sovereign.

What response should we have before God, and His Son, in the light of who God is? (Psa 2:10-12)
We should humble ourselves before Him; revering, honouring, worshipping and serving Him.

Discuss: We often love to fit in; at school/college, at our workplace, etc. *Why do we often try and fit in? As a Christian, what dangers are there in trying to "fit in"?*

Considering the Text: Daniel 1:1-21

Who caused Jehoiakim and the vessels of God to be captured by the Babylonians? (Dan 1:1-2)
The emphatic answer is God – not Nebuchadnezzar. From the very beginning of Daniel, God is the one who is presented as ruling and reigning, and using people such as Nebuchadnezzar as His servants to do His will. Remember: God could so easily have protected Jerusalem if He chose (cf. 2 Kings 19:32-36).

It may appear that God's actions would cause His enemies to view Him with contempt, but what was God up to through Daniel and his friends? (cf. Dan 3:28-29; 4:34-35; 6:25-27)
God would use these four Jewish youths to teach the king of Babylon and His people who truly is God, and who is to be worshipped and feared. God's desire was for the nations to see His glory and greatness.

Many of the exiles didn't return home when Cyrus issued his decree in 539BC. What do you think may have contributed to this?

They lost all hope in God, and thought that He was impotent, rather than omnipotent (all powerful). They also probably became assimilated with the Babylonians, and lost their true identity as God's people.

Daniel and his friends were under pressure to be absorbed and assimilated into Babylonian culture, and to lose their identity as God's people. What things make this clear? (Dan 1:3-7)

They were to be educated and learn the language of the Babylonians, they were to eat and drink according to Babylonian customs, and they were assigned new names that incorporated the names of the Babylonian gods. Note: Their original names had special meaning: Daniel means "God is my judge"; Hananiah means "Jehovah has given"; Mishael means "who is like God?"; Azariah means "Whom Jehovah helps".

Daniel knew the pressure on him and his friends to lose their identity. What did he do? (Dan 1:8)
He resolved to not eat the king's food or drink the king's wine.

What was wrong with the king's food and the king's wine anyway? Was Daniel being legalistic?
Daniel knew the commands God had given His people. He was not free to eat any meat or drink any wine. We can be sure that the food and drink given him had been offered up to Babylonian gods. Thus, Daniel would break God's command if he should take it. That's why Daniel speaks of being defiled (becoming unclean before God) if he should eat the food or drink the wine. Daniel wasn't legalistic; he was obedient.

Daniel's choice to not be defiled by the king's food and drink was potentially costly. Why?
He could easily have been executed, for Nebuchadnezzar had issued a decree that he and the others had to eat his food and drink his wine. Daniel's action was rebellion. But he was willing to make a stand.

Why didn't Daniel and his friends receive the death sentence? (Dan 1:9-16)
God granted Daniel and his friends favour (grace) in the sight of the king's commander. He also gave Daniel wisdom to ask for undefiled food (vegetables and water) and God made sure that they were kept healthier than all the rest (cf. 1 Sam 2:30 – the Lord says "He who honours Me, I will honour").

What else did God graciously do for Daniel and his friends? (Dan 1:17)
It was God who granted them knowledge and wisdom. God even caused Daniel to interpret dreams and visions, which was critical, for through visions and dreams, God would communicate future events.

What did the king think of Daniel and his friends? (Dan 1:18-21) Why had God brought this about?
Nebuchadnezzar was really impressed with them. But let us remember that God had brought this about, for He would use these four Jewish youths to reveal His glory and greatness in the land of Babylon.

We live in a world hostile to Christ's way as we live for Him in His kingdom. The world seeks to draw us in so that we become worldly. What do we learn in Rom 12:2, 1 John 2:15-17 & 1 Pet 1:14-16?
Don't be conformed to the ways of this fallen world; be renewed by the Word and Spirit of God so that we do God's will and glorify Him. Don't love the world; love the Father and do His will. Be holy.

Summary: For God's glory, don't become worldly or be conformed to this world. Be holy.

3. **Daniel – A Man of Prayer and Praise: Daniel 2:1-23**

Review: *Like for Daniel and his friends in Babylon, what do we face when we live in this world? (Dan 1)*
We face the danger of becoming worldly, and losing our identity as God's children and followers of Jesus.

How are we to combat this pressure to conform? (Rom 12:2, 1 John 2:15-17 & 1 Pet 1:14-16)

We are to be constantly renewing our mind, and making sure we love the Father, and seek to be holy.

Discuss: *When our life is shaken and under threat, we often respond by worrying and panicking. Why? (cf. Matt 6:25-33)* [Worry shows that we have little faith and we don't trust God's love and care of us]

How should we respond when we are anxious or worried? (1 Peter 5:6-7) [We should pray]

Considering the Text: Daniel 2:1-23

Nebuchadnezzar ruled the world. With his military might he was the most powerful man alive. But then he had an extraordinary dream; but what was his extraordinary command? Why? (Dan 2:1-11)

He not only wanted the interpretation of the dream, but he wanted his 'wise men' to tell him the dream. He was no doubt aware that his dream was special, and he didn't want his "wise men" to just give him another bogus interpretation; so to test them, he asked them to tell him his dream. What a request!

As the "wise men" fail to tell the king his dream, the order is given to kill them, and this includes Daniel and his friends. How does Daniel respond? What do we learn about Daniel? (Dan 2:12-16)

Daniel does not panic and become fearful. Wisely he speaks to the king's commander, who was given the order to kill the "wise men", and he gets permission to speak to the king to request more time. Courageously he approached an angry king who could have struck him down. Also, he acted with wisdom and courage, not just for himself, but that the "wise men" of Babylon might be spared.

Daniel didn't just approach the king. What else did he do? (Dan 2:17-18)

Daniel prayed, and he requested his friends to pray as well. They prayed that the true King and God of heaven would have compassion (or mercy) on them by giving Daniel the king's dream and its interpretation.

Prayer is mentioned much in the book of Daniel, for Daniel was a man of prayer. Besides praying in time of need, how often did Daniel pray each day? (Dan 6:10)

Daniel prayed three times a day; that is, he took time out three times a day to stop his activities and to pray to the God of heaven. Of course, this does not count the many other times he prayed during the day.

What else do we learn from Daniel in regard to prayer? (Dan 2:17-18; Dan 6:10)

Daniel had his set times of prayer in his house; away from the distractions of the world. He prayed in a kneeling position out of reverence for God, and he prayed toward Jerusalem for in the Old Testament, it was in the temple at Jerusalem that God's presence resided.

We should have set times a day to pray. What should it look like? (cf. Matt 6:5-13; John 16:23)

Like with Daniel's example, we ought to pray in a quiet place (Matt 6:6), with reverence to God (Matt 6:9), and rather toward Jerusalem, we should pray through Jesus (John 16:23).

Daniel urged his friends to pray with him. What can we learn from this?

It's good to encourage others to pray with us. Paul requested others to pray for him (2 Thess 3:1; Heb 13:18). We should encourage others to pray for us too. It's not that God won't answer the prayer of one person (cf. Jam 5:16). It's just that it's good to pray for each other as we are part of one family.

God answered Daniel's prayer. Why do you think He did?

God would use Daniel and his friends to make His glorious name known among the Babylonians; so they needed to be spared. Remember that God had already spared Daniel and his friends earlier (Dan 1:9).

What was Daniel's response to God giving him the king's dream and its interpretation? (Dan 2:19-23)

He immediately prayed, and he expressed to God his praise and thanksgiving.

REFLECT: *When God answers our prayers, how do we respond? Do we praise God immediately?*

Consider Daniel's prayer of praise. What does he praise God for? (Dan 2:19-23)

He praises God for who He is; He alone is wise and powerful, ruling the world in His great sovereignty. He also gives thanks for how God had given him wisdom and power to know the king's dream.

When we pray, do we adore God for who He is, and give thanks for what He does for us? Or like many, are our prayers normally about bringing to God our "shopping list" of requests? [Discuss]

We should pray according to **ACTS**; Adore God, Confess sin, Thank God, Supplicate (for ourselves/others).

Summary: Let us be a people of prayer and praise; adoring God and giving thanks to Him.

4. The King's Dream and The Eternal Kingdom: Daniel 2:24-49

Review: *What traits did Daniel display and what did he do when he faced execution? (Dan 2:14-18)*

Daniel was wise, discerning and bold, but above all, he was a man of prayer. He prayed, rather than panic.

When God answered Daniel's prayer, what did Daniel do straight after? (Dan 2:20-23)

He didn't race off and boast before the king about how he knew the dream and its interpretation. Rather, he praised God for who the Lord is and he thanked Him. Do our prayers have adoration and thanks in?

Discuss: *Like any period of history we have kingdoms that dominate the world. Daniel had Babylon. What kingdoms/countries rule the world presently? How should we view this world's kingdoms? (cf. Dan 2:21)*

Considering the Text: Daniel 2:24-49

After answering his prayer, what did Daniel do next? What do we see in his heart? (Dan 2:24)

With compassion, Daniel went to Arioch and asked that he spare all Babylon's wise men; not just himself.

Read Dan 2:25-30. What do you notice about the way Daniel speaks to the king?

He did not boast, but honoured the God of heaven as the one who had revealed the mystery of the dream.

What do we learn about the king's dream in Dan 2:28-29?

This was no ordinary dream. It was given by the God of heaven so that the king might know the future.

Read Dan 2:31-43. What was the thrust of the king's dream?

It was about kingdoms (world powers) that would come and go in the future. It was also about a different, future kingdom that would endure forever and fill the whole earth (v. 35).

What do we learn about the first kingdom? (Dan 2:36-38)

It is depicted as the head of gold, standing for a kingdom of extravagant wealth and power – it is Babylon.

What should king Nebuchadnezzar have understood from this first part of the dream? (Dan 2:36-38)

The God of heaven had given him his power and rule. Nebuchadnezzar did not accomplish this himself.

What should we understand from Dan 2:39?

Babylon would not endure. A second kingdom (Medes and Persians) would conquer them. They wouldn't be as great as Babylon, and so they are depicted as the silver of the statue. Then after them would come a third inferior kingdom (the Greeks under king Alexander); it is depicted as the bronze of the statue.

The fourth kingdom stands for the kingdom of Rome. What do we learn about it? (Dan 2:40-43)

The kingdom of Rome (Roman Empire) would be a devastating one, smashing others just as iron does. It would also be a divided kingdom; strong in some places and weak in others.

From what you know of history, how true was the description of each kingdom?

It was very true and accurate, showing us that God knows all things – including the future. For example, the Roman Empire was divided, eventually imploding from internal problems. Also, all four kingdoms would end up not enduring, despite how powerful they were in their time (v. 35).

The dream described a fifth and final kingdom. What do we learn about it? (Dan 2:34-35, 44-45)

This final kingdom would be set up by God, and not by man. It would appear in the days of the fourth kingdom, and it would smash all other kingdoms. Indeed, it would be separate from the statue (which represents the other kingdoms), and come against it. It would also be an eternal kingdom; unlike the others.

What do you think this fifth kingdom is? Why? (Mark 1:14-15; Mark 4:30-32; Rev 11:15)

It is the kingdom of God that was established by the Lord Jesus Christ. He came so humbly (as a stone), but ever since His death and resurrection, His kingdom has been growing filling the earth (like a mighty mountain). One day Jesus will return and completely establish His kingdom and rule on earth. It is an eternal kingdom, and it will never be vanquished by human kingdoms or satanic powers (Matt 16:18).

How does the description of the king of this final kingdom (Christ Jesus) fit in with what we know?

Cut-out without hands – born supernaturally (Isa 7:14); a stone – yet the capstone (1 Pet 2:6-8); Jesus came in the time of the Roman Empire (Luk 2:1ff); His kingdom stretches over all kingdoms/countries (Rev 5:9-10).

What did the dream and its interpretation result in? (Dan 2:46-48)

Although Daniel was honoured, the true God of heaven was glorified; even by Nebuchadnezzar. He even declared the true God to be the God of all gods and the Lord of all lords (cf. Isa 45:5-6).

Daniel made sure God was glorified (cf. v.28, 30, 44). Is God's glory uppermost in our mind?

Summary: **There is only one kingdom that will endure; the kingdom of God that was established through the Lord Jesus Christ. Are you part of it through faith in Christ?**

5. Standing for God for His Glory: Daniel 3:1-30

Review: *What did the dream of king Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2 reveal?*

All the kingdoms of this world will pass away, but one will endure forever. This enduring kingdom was established by God, and as we now know, it was established through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

How would you describe Daniel's part in telling the king the meaning of the dream?

He was humble and he sought to glorify God (Dan 2:28,47). What a model for us!

Discuss: *We often associate peer pressure with the teenage years. Are we still affected by it? How?*

Why do we yield to peer pressure, even though we know it displeases the Lord? [Discuss]

Considering the Text: Daniel 3:1-30

After having a dream of a statue that would be destroyed, Nebuchadnezzar builds a huge golden statue (27.4m high, 2.74m wide), and forces people to worship it (Dan 3:1-7). What do you make of this? Nebuchadnezzar still didn't get it! Despite his dream from God, and declaring God to be the God of gods (Dan 2:47), he still wasn't a worshipper of God. He honoured statues and forced people to worship them.

It appears that all bowed down to Nebuchadnezzar's golden statue in fear of being burnt alive. However, what do we read in Dan 3:8-12? To defy the command, what would it have meant doing?

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were the only ones who didn't bow down to the statue. While everyone else fell down in worship, they remained standing. They would have stood out from among the crowd.

Daniel's friends had incredible pressure on them to fall down and worship the statue. In what ways could they have bowed down and justified themselves, although it would have been wrong?

They could have bowed down, and in their hearts secretly worshipped God. They could have argued that it was better for them to be around as a witness for God, and so they should not jeopardise their lives by disobeying the king. They could have argued that it is God's will for them to obey authorities.

REFLECT: *We are commanded to obey earthly authorities (Rom 13:1-2). Is it okay to defy them? When is it okay (Acts 4:18-20; 5:27-29)? [Discuss]*

In Dan 3:13-15 how did the king respond to their disobedience?

He was angry. He immediately put them to the test, and warned them that they would be burnt alive if they didn't worship the statue. He boasted that no god could protect them if they should disobey him, showing that he still had little idea of who the true God is.

The response of Daniel's friends to the king was so beautiful and perfect. Why? (Dan 3:16-18)

Firstly, they didn't try to get themselves off the hook and justify their actions. Secondly, they trusted that there is a God who could deliver them, and they had confidence that He would. Thirdly, they rested in God's sovereignty. We cannot tell God what to do; it must be according to His will and purpose.

When we pray, what can we learn from the response of Daniel's friends in Dan 3:16-18?

We are to pray in faith, knowing that God is able to do what we ask of Him (cf. Jam 1:6-7). However, we are not to be demanding, treating God as if He is our servant, and who is there to serve us.

REFLECT: *The king was furious at the response of Daniel's friends (Dan 3:19-20). What do you think God thought of their response? How does that help us to obey the Lord rather than man? [Discuss]*

What is incredible about the account in Dan 3:21-23?

Despite the furnace being seven times hotter, and the soldiers who escorted them to the furnace being killed by the heat, Daniel's friends did not yield. They stood their ground and lived out Dan 3:18.

Nebuchadnezzar could have thought that these three men would serve as an example in his kingdom of what happens to those who disobey him. But what happens next? (Dan 3:24-27)

The king is astounded. Daniel's friends walked around in the furnace with another being, and when they came out of the fire, they didn't even smell of fire. Such was the protection of God. It was miraculous.

Who was this being who joined Daniel's friends in the furnace? What can we learn from this?

We don't know who it was. It may have been an angel or the Lord Jesus Himself. But what a picture we have. The Lord is always with us, even in the midst of our trials. We never need to fear (Heb 13:5-6).

By standing for God and trusting in Him, what did Daniel's friends bring about? (Dan 3:28-30)

They caused the king to glorify God, and he even decreed that the whole kingdom should honour God. At the end of the day, the most important task we have is to see our Father glorified, and Christ honoured.

Summary: Despite the world, stand for God so that His name may be glorified through you.

6. A Pagan King Praises the King of Kings: Daniel 4:1-37

Review: *When faced with death, how did Daniel's friends respond to a very angry king? (Dan 3:16-18)*

They trusted the Lord to rescue them from the king, and even if God should choose not to rescue them, they made it clear that they would not dishonour the true God by worshipping an idol.

What did the obedience of Daniel's friends lead to? (Dan 3:28-29)

It led to God being glorified, and to king Nebuchadnezzar honouring the God of heaven.

Discuss: *We often scoff pagans (unbelievers), and especially if they are in positions of authority. Should we (cf. Rom 13:1-2; 1 Tim 2:1-4)? What should we be doing and hoping for? [Praying for their salvation]*

Considering the Text: Daniel 4:1-37

Daniel 4 is a testimony to God's glory. Who is it by? Is this surprising? (Dan 4:1-3)

It is the testimony of Nebuchadnezzar; a pagan king. Unlike other testimonies, this is from a non-Israelite.

Dan 4:1-3 is a summary of Nebuchadnezzar's testimony. What is the main thrust of it?

Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged and worshiped the true God, declaring His wonders and His rule over all.

Did you pick up something different about Nebuchadnezzar in v.1 in his address to the people?

In Dan 1-3 Nebuchadnezzar seems to be a moody and angry king (cf. Dan 3:19), but here in Dan 4:1, he wishes his people peace. Note: When we are right with God, we have a right attitude toward others.

REFLECT: *Do you have a testimony to share with others in regard to how you have come to know God? What would be the key things you would mention? How has your life changed? (cf. 2 Cor 5:17)*

Nebuchadnezzar didn't just automatically come to worship and adore the true God, for like all of us, what are we naturally like? (cf. Rom 3:10-12; Rom 8:6-8; Col 1:21)

We are hostile to God and want to be free to live and act as we please, and to believe whatever suits us.

Dan 4:4-37 is the story of what God did to help Nebuchadnezzar acknowledge and worship Him.

What was Nebuchadnezzar's state before God acted, and what did God do in His mercy? (Dan 4:4-9)

Nebuchadnezzar was at ease and flourishing. Yet, if he should die, he would have faced an eternity in hell. In mercy, God gave him a dream to alarm and trouble him, and God made sure that Daniel was called so that Nebuchadnezzar might hear a right interpretation of the dream; not lies from the devil.

In Dan 4:10-18, Nebuchadnezzar shares his dream. Before he had the dream, what was Nebuchadnezzar's belief system (Dan 4:8-9, 18)? What was the goal of the dream? (Dan 4:17)

Nebuchadnezzar believed in many gods, and his personal god was Bel (which was incorporated into Daniel's Babylonian name). The goal of the dream was to help Nebuchadnezzar know that there is only one God, and He rules over all, and bestows earthly leadership to whomever He chooses.

What was the right interpretation of the dream? (Read Dan 4:19-26)

Proud Nebuchadnezzar would be humbled and become like an animal for a period of seven years.

What do you notice about Daniel's attitude toward the king? (Dan 4:19, 27)

Daniel didn't jump for joy that the king would be humbled. He sought the king's welfare, and urged him to repent and do what is right in order to be spared judgment. We ought to be the same (cf. Matt 5:43-45).

Read Dan 4:28-33. What ended up happening?

Nebuchadnezzar did not heed Daniel's advice. Instead of repenting and humbling himself, he became more proud, and so the dream was executed. Nebuchadnezzar was humbled, living like an animal for seven years.

After the king became like an animal, what surprising thing happened next? (Dan 4:34-37)

Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged the true and living God, and was restored to being king. Indeed, more greatness was given to him. What an example this is of God exalting the humble (1 Peter 5:5-6).

Consider Dan 4:34-37. What does Nebuchadnezzar specifically declare about the true God?

There is no one like the Lord. He alone rules over all. His dominion is eternal. No one has the power to thwart His purposes, or to challenge Him. He is righteous and just and is the only one to be worshipped.

Nebuchadnezzar could have been struck down (cf. Acts 12:21-23). What was he shown? (cf. Rom 2:4) God showed him mercy. God troubled him by the dream He gave him, and didn't strike him down when he became proud, but humbled him so that from his despair he might see and acknowledge the true God. Note: Nebuchadnezzar's praise and glory of God is equal to that of any of the great prophets of God. It's likely that we will see him in glory – to the praise of God's glory and grace.

Summary: We all need humbling before we will acknowledge God, and before we can know Him.

7. When We Just Don't Learn: Daniel 5:1-31

Review: *How did Nebuchadnezzar, a pagan king and worshipper of idols, come to worship the true God?* In mercy, God intervened in his life. He disturbed Nebuchadnezzar's life of ease by giving him a dream, and then humbled this proud and arrogant king, so that he might acknowledge the true and living God.

What was Daniel's response after hearing the dream king Nebuchadnezzar had? (Dan 4:19, 27)

Daniel was concerned for the king. In mercy, he sought to encourage the king to repent. Daniel's desire was that this pagan king would know and worship the true and living God (that he would be "saved").

Discuss: *God is a God of mercy, as well as a God of justice (Exod 34:6-7). From your knowledge of the Bible, when does God bring justice and judgment? [Discuss]*

It's not just when we sin, but it's more when we refuse to listen to Him, humble ourselves and repent.

Considering the Text: Daniel 5:1-31

Belshazzar was the grandson of king Nebuchadnezzar. He ruled Babylon under his father king Nabonidus. What do we learn about Belshazzar from Dan 5:1-4 and Dan 5:20-22?

Although Belshazzar knew of how his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar had been humbled by God and how he had become a worshipper of the true God, Belshazzar was arrogant, showing contempt for the true God by using the gold vessels from God's temple, and by continuing to worship idols.

Belshazzar was in high spirits, but what happened to him when God intervened? (Dan 5:5-9)

When God wrote on the wall, Belshazzar became frightened. No longer was he confident and boastful.

REFLECT: *People can put on a show and look great in the eyes of others, but when trials come, it shows their real substance. Contrast Belshazzar's response to that of Daniel's friends in Dan 2:15-18.*

Read Dan 5:10-12. What is so surprising here in the account?

Belshazzar did not know, or remember, that one of his subjects, Daniel, would be able to help him. It appears that not only had Belshazzar turned from the true God, but he had discarded the Lord's servant, Daniel. Yet, the queen seemed to know about Daniel, and she is used by God so that he is summoned.

What do we learn about Belshazzar from his words to Daniel in Dan 5:13-16?

Despite his riches and power, and despite having all his wise men, he cannot make sense of the writing on the wall. He is so desperate that he is willing to honour Daniel and reward him well if he could help him.

How does Daniel feel about receiving honour and wealth if he interpreted the writing? (Dan 5:17)

He is not impressed with the king's offer of wealth and honour. He would not indulge in desire. Instead, he knew that he was there to let the king know the Lord's word – which was a word of judgment.

Read Daniel's reply to the king in Dan 5:17-23. What do you notice about Daniel's response?

Before explaining the writing on the wall, he reprimands the king for how he had not humbled himself before the true God, even though he knew what had happened to his grandfather when he exalted himself. Daniel also charges Belshazzar with foolishness, for he had exalted himself above the true God, and worshipped false idols, and had not sought to glorify the One who gives us life and our positions in life.

REFLECT: *Daniel reprimanded the king for his sins. Is there a place for us to be like this toward each other? When and how should we go about it? (cf. Matt 18:15-17; James 5:19-20)*

In Dan 5:24-28 Daniel gives the interpretation of God's writing on the wall. What's the verdict?

Belshazzar, unlike his grandfather, would not be shown mercy. His kingdom would come to an end, and he would be deposed from his throne by the Medes and Persians. Judgment was imminent (cf. 5:30).

Read Dan 5:29-31. How does Belshazzar respond to the Lord's word through Daniel?

There appears to be no remorse or repentance; it's like he never took Daniel's words seriously. Also, though he honoured Daniel, this could simply have been his way of looking good before his guests.

Why did Nebuchadnezzar receive mercy and Belshazzar receive judgment?

Firstly, God has a right to show mercy to whomever He chooses (Rom 9:15-16). However, from Daniel's words in Dan 5:18-23, it appears that Belshazzar received judgment because he had not learnt any lessons from God's merciful dealings with Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon.

What can we learn for ourselves from this story of Belshazzar?

God is merciful, but if we don't heed His warnings, and humble ourselves and repent of sin, we will receive judgment. This is especially true in relation to the way we hear and respond to Christ's Gospel.

Summary: God brings judgment on all who refuse to listen to Him, humble themselves and repent.

8. In the Lion's Den: Daniel 6:1-18

Review: *Why did Belshazzar, the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, receive God's judgment? (Dan 5:18-23)*

He did not heed the lessons that Nebuchadnezzar had been taught in regard to honouring the true God. Instead, he treated the true God with contempt, and lived for pleasure, and continued to worship idols.

Nebuchadnezzar, on the other hand, was spared judgment. Why? (Dan 4:33-37)

After being humbled by God, he looked up and acknowledged and honoured the true God. He repented.

Discuss: *Christians throughout the world are persecuted, and we can even have a taste of it in our own society. Why is this, when genuine Christians are the loveliest people out? (cf. John 15:18-21; 3:19-20)*

Considering the Text: Daniel 6:1-18

When Babylon fell and many would have died, what happened to Daniel? Why? (Dan 5:30-6:2)

Daniel was spared, and king Darius appointed him to be one of the commissioners over Babylon. Why this happened becomes clear as we read on. God wanted to glorify Himself through Daniel (Dan 6:26).

REFLECT: *You may have been spared death. What should our response be when we are? [We ought to think how God hasn't finished with us yet, and we ought to devote our life to His service; Phil 1:21-24]*

King Darius wanted to elevate Daniel even higher than the other leaders. Why? (Dan 6:3)

Daniel possessed exceptional qualities. God had given him wisdom and knowledge, but more than all, he was a worshipper of God and sought to live a godly life. This will always make a person exceptional.

REFLECT: *Should we view ourselves as exceptional (consider who we have dwelling in us- Rom 8:9-11)? [For God's glory, we have been made exceptional through Christ and by God's Spirit. We are blessed with the fruit of the Spirit, and gifts of the Spirit, and with wisdom, insight and knowledge. Praise God!]*

In Daniel we see power, riches, godliness co-existing. What do you make of this? When can it work? We may think it is impossible to have power, riches and godliness co-existing (cf. Matt 6:24). However, they can co-exist, if we ensure that we view any power and riches that we have as gifts from God that are to be used for His glory and service. Sadly, for most, power and riches lead to ungodliness.

Daniel's fellow leaders are jealous of him. In order to remove him from his office, what must they resort to? What does this imply about Daniel's life? (Dan 6:4-5) What's the lesson here for us?

They had to resort to finding something in regard to his worship of God, for his public life was blameless. We are called to be the same - consider 1 Peter 2:12.

What did the other leaders know about Daniel, which they would use to get rid of him? (Dan 6:6-9)

They knew he prayed to God. As a result, they would get the king to forbid prayer in order to trap Daniel.

REFLECT: *Do our friends and work-mates know that we pray to the God of heaven? Daniel's work-mates did! Practically, how could others know that we pray? [Discuss]*

What was Daniel's response to the king's command? What does this show? (Dan 6:10)

Daniel continued to pray. He put devotion to God above all things. He honoured God before any king.

What can we learn from Daniel in regard to prayer?

We should pray reverently, at set times of the day when we are alone with the Lord (free from distractions and disturbances), and we should give thanks to God in our prayers (not just bring our requests). Note: We are not to pray facing Jerusalem, but we are to pray to God through Jesus (cf. John 16:23-27).

Daniel's faithfulness to God is costly. What is the cost? (Dan 6:11-18)

Daniel is charged with breaking the king's command, and he is cast into the lion's den.

As a follower of Christ, do we bear a cost? What is it? (Matt 16:24-25; Luke 14:26-27)

We must die to our own life and follow Christ. We will also endure persecution and hostilities for Christ.

What do you notice about Daniel's enemies and king Darius? (Dan 6:11-18)

Daniel's enemies are scheming and devious. Darius is tricked by them, and tries everything he can to free him. Also, Darius must have been impressed with Daniel, including the God Daniel worshipped (6:16).

REFLECT: *Who should Daniel remind us of? In what way? [The Lord Jesus was perfect, more than Daniel and any other, but He was falsely accused and condemned by those who schemed against Him].*

Daniel didn't know how things would turn out. What was critical for Daniel to grasp?

God is in control. He will never leave us or desert us. But we are to remain faithful to Him - always.

Summary: All who live godly in Christ will be persecuted (2 Tim 3:12). Godliness comes at a cost.

9. God – the Great Rescuer: Daniel 6:16-28

Review: *Daniel was an outstanding man, even to God (Dan 9:23). Why do you think that was (cf. Dan 6)? He was humble and blameless, he trusted God and sought His glory, and was faithful – even unto death.*

What do we learn from Daniel in regard to prayer? (Dan 6:10)

We should pray reverently, at set times of the day when we are free of distractions, and we should thank God in prayer; not just bring our requests. Nothing should stop us praying; not even the threat of death.

Discuss: *Why do bad things happen to us? Why do we have to go through difficult trials? Why didn't God stop Daniel from even being thrown into the lion's den? [Discuss]*

Considering the Text: Daniel 6:16-28

Daniel was unjustly thrown into the lion's den because of how he continued to pray to God, Nothing is recorded about Daniel's response to his sentence (Dan 6:16-17). What can we infer from this? Daniel didn't seek to justify himself, or plead his case. It appears he accepted the verdict and went to his fate without protest. Does this remind you of someone else? (cf. Jesus and Isa 53:7, 1 Peter 2:22-23).

Read Dan 6:18-20. What is remarkable about king Darius' response?

This pagan king had a high regard for Daniel's welfare, and he even had a high regard for the God of Daniel, calling Him the living God, and hoping that He may deliver Daniel from the lions.

REFLECT: *Darius received his view of the true and living God from Daniel's life. Non-Christians get their view of God from us. What are the implications of this for us? [Discuss]*

Read Dan 6:21-23. Although we may all be familiar with the outcome of Daniel in the lion's den, what should we be impressed with?

Our God is an amazing God who chooses to use His awesome power to rescue us lowly and helpless humans from things far more powerful than us.

REFLECT: *The Old Testament, including the book of Daniel, is full of rescue stories. Why is this? What are we meant to be seeing and what was it all leading to? [Our God is able to rescue us, and ultimately He would rescue us from the power of sin and death through His Son Jesus Christ]*

There are parallels between Daniel's deliverance and our deliverance from sin. What are they?

For Daniel, God sent an angel to rescue him; for us, God sent His Son to rescue us (Col 1:13).

Daniel was rescued from death; we are rescued from the consequences of our sins - eternal death.

Daniel was delivered because he trusted in the Lord. We are delivered when we trust in Jesus Christ.

Daniel, and also his friends, went through terrifying trials – a real test of faith. However, in each case what do we see God doing? Why? (Dan 3:25; 6:22)

Daniel and his friends were never alone. God was with them through His holy servants. This would have reassured them and given them strength to cope. Note: Even Jesus had an angel to comfort and strengthen Him when He suffered great anguish in the garden of Gethsemane (see Luke 22:41-44).

REFLECT: *In the New Testament, this theme of God's people not being alone is very strong. Consider the following verses and reflect on them: John 14:16-18, 23; 2 Cor 4:8-9; Heb 13:5-6*

The account of Daniel in the lion's den has verse 24 in it. Why?

It is clear that the lions were hungry and ferocious, as we read of what happened to Daniel's enemies. In other words, Daniel was miraculously rescued from the lions. It was a supernatural rescue from God.

REFLECT: *Dan 6:24 is pretty gruesome. Yet, the fate of all those who do not trust in Jesus is more gruesome (cf. Matt 13:41-42, 25:41; Rev 20:10-15). Many today, who even call themselves Christians, are denying the existence of hell, and play down God's judgment. What do you make of this? [Discuss]*

Read Dan 6:25-28. What did Daniel's rescue result in?

It resulted in glory to God. God is praised and worshipped by a pagan king, and he calls his whole kingdom to honour God. Indeed, all the people of the then known world heard about the true and living God.

What things does Darius highlight about God in Dan 6:25-27?

God is the living God (in contrast to dead idols); He endures (lives) forever, unlike deified humans who die; His rule and His dominion can never be broken; He is able to rescue and deliver and perform signs.

REFLECT: *In the rest of Daniel we will be dealing with prophecies. In Dan 1-6, where we have historical accounts, what have you learnt? [God rules over all; He desires to be glorified among the nations]*

Summary: Our God is able to rescue us; in particular, He has rescued us from our sins by His Son.

10. The Ancient of Days and the Son of Man: Daniel 7:1-18

Review: *What can we learn for ourselves from the story of Daniel in the lion's den? (cf. 6:10,19-22,25-27)*
We should always pray (even under the threat of death); God is able to rescue (if it's His will); we will never be alone when we have trials; God seeks to be glorified through us by His saving work in us.

Discuss: *Daniel 7-12 is primarily prophecy. It's also called apocalyptic writing (like the book of Revelation) because of the mention of dreams/visions, strange images (beasts, etc), and the special use of phrases (eg, seventy weeks) and symbols (eg, heads/horns). Many struggle to read such Scriptures. Why? What are we meant to see? [We are not so much to understand all the details, but the big picture – our God reigns.]*

Considering the Text: Daniel 7:1-18

Read Dan 7:1-3, 16-17. What do the four great beasts stand for and where do they come from?

They stand for four kings/kingdoms that would arise from the earth (one after the other).

REFLECT: *Why is the word "beast" used to describe the four kings/kingdoms, rather than the word "human"? (this may be a bit tricky, but consider how we were made and why we were made in Gen 1:27-28)*

We were made in God's image to know God and shine God, and we were made to rule His world on His behalf. When we live and rule as we were made, we are truly human. When we don't, we are "beastly".

Read about the first king/kingdom in Dan 7:4. Which one do you think it is?

The first kingdom, described as a lion with the wings of an eagle, appears to be Babylon.

What do you think the latter part of v.4 is referring to? (think back to Nebuchadnezzar in Dan 4)

The latter part of the verse seems to refer to the humbling and exalting of Nebuchadnezzar. He was a "beastly" king, and was humbled. When he acknowledged God and became a worshipper of Him, then he truly became a "human"; he began to live and rule as God had intended when He made us in His image.

The second kingdom is mentioned in Dan 7:5. Which kingdom is this one and how is it described?

The second kingdom described is the Mede/Persian kingdom. It conquered the Babylonian kingdom. The bear raised up on one side probably highlights how the Persians were greater than the Medes. The three ribs probably represent the three major conquests of this kingdom; Lydia 546, Babylon 539, Egypt 525BC.

The third kingdom is described in Dan 7:6. Which kingdom is this one and how is it described?

It is Greek Empire. A leopard with wings aptly describes the speedy conquest of the Greek Empire under Alexander the Great. The four heads represent the four divisions which the empire fell into after his death.

Read Dan 7:7-8. What do you think this fourth kingdom is? How is it described?

The fourth kingdom is the Roman Empire. It was terrifying and crushed all other kingdoms. Its "iron teeth" probably refers to its superior iron weapons. The ten horns probably represent ten of its kings, or the comprehensiveness of its rule (next week we will consider the "little horn").

REFLECT: *What does history affirm about the kings/kingdoms described in Dan 7?*

[The vision God gave of the four kingdoms was accurate and apt].

We now come to Dan 7:9-12. Who is described and how is He described?

In contrast to the four kingdoms, Daniel sees the Lord God Almighty. He is described as the Ancient of Days (the only place in the Bible where God is given this title). It signifies how God is eternal. He is also described as the great judge who is seated on the throne of heaven and earth, and the picture of a "river of fire" flowing from the throne indicates God's judgment on all earthly kings/kingdoms.

REFLECT: *What does this image of God meant to instil in us? [God rules the world; not the nations or kingdoms of the world. He will one day judge the world, and we need to be ready for it by turning to Him].*

In Dan 7:13-14 another is revealed. Who is this one, and what would He do?

We have here a prophecy concerning the Lord Jesus. He is "the Son of Man" (the first reference in the Bible to Him being the "Son of Man", which was a favourite title Jesus used for Himself). The Ancient of Days gives Him an eternal kingdom by which He will rule all peoples and nations forever. The Son of Man would rule as the perfect man – He would never misrule the world, as others had done.

What is the reference to the "Son of Man" coming up to the Ancient of Days about?

It refers to Jesus' ascension (Acts 1:9). After His death and resurrection, He ascended and was exalted to the highest place and given power and authority (cf. Psalms 2:6-12; Philippians 2:6-11; Hebrews 12:2; Revelation 5:6-13).

Who will live in Christ's eternal kingdom? (Dan 7:12, 18)

The "saints of the highest one"; that is, those who follow Jesus. We will live forever with Him – what hope!

Summary: The Ancient of Days reigns; He has made His Son the king of God's eternal kingdom.

11. The End is Glorious: Daniel 7:19-28

Review: *In the vision given in Daniel 7 what are the kings/kingdoms likened to? Why? (Dan 7:3-7)*

They are likened to beasts, because they do not behave humanly; true humans live under God, ruling for His glory and reflecting His image. When we don't live like that, we are not human, but "beastly".

In contrast to the kingdoms of the earth that are temporary, how is God described? (Dan 7:9-10)

He is the Ancient of Days (the eternal one), who sits on the great throne, and judges the nations.

What do we learn in Dan 7:13-14?

One like a "Son of Man" will approach the throne of the Ancient of Days, and He is worthy to receive the rule of God's eternal kingdom. We know that this "Son of Man" is none other than the Lord Jesus.

Discuss: *Followers of our Lord Jesus will be persecuted (2 Tim 3:12). Satan is at war with us (Rev 12:17). The world, including the kingdoms of this world, hate us (John 15:18-19). But what must we never forget? (Matt 5:10-12)* Ours is the kingdom of heaven – we have a great and an eternal reward.

Considering the Text: Daniel 7:19-28

One of the difficulties of prophecy as we read it in our time is to know whether it has been fulfilled, or is still to be fulfilled, or is a combination of the two. What is Daniel 7?

Much of the prophecy in Dan 7 has been fulfilled; ie, the rise of the four earthly kingdoms. However, there are aspects about the fourth kingdom that are still to be fulfilled; eg, consider Dan 7:23-27.

Daniel probably understood much of the vision in ch.7. It is similar to the dream he interpreted for Nebuchadnezzar in Dan 2; four kingdoms are mentioned, as well as Christ's rule over God's eternal kingdom (Dan 2:36-45). What part of the vision in Dan 7 is he particularly interested in? (Dan 7:19-22)

Daniel is particularly interested in the "horn" that made great boasts and that warred against God's people. This also intrigues us, for it is generally believed amongst Christians that this is still to be fulfilled.

In Dan 7:23-27, Daniel is given the interpretation of his vision; in particular, on the fourth beast (or kingdom) and the rise of the boastful "horn". What are the main things we learn?

The fourth kingdom is different to all others – it is worldwide and oppressive. A king will arise from this kingdom who will be arrogant, speaking out against the Lord, and warring against believers. His time will be limited ("time, times and half a time" equates to 1 year + 2 years + 1/2 year = 3 1/2 years). But God will bring an end to his rule, and will bring in His eternal kingdom where Christ reigns, and we with Him.

Reading the interpretation in Dan 7:23-27 can be confusing. However, we have the benefit of the New Testament. This is because biblical revelation is "progressive". What do we mean by that?

The New Testament (NT) makes the Old Testament (OT) prophecies more clear. This is because the NT fulfils many OT prophecies, and for those that are still to be fulfilled, Jesus and His apostles give greater clarity on them; ie, greater revelation is given in the New Testament (in that sense it is "progressive").

One passage in the NT that gives greater clarity to the words we read in Dan 7:23-27 is found in Rev 13:1-10. Firstly, what notable parallels exist between the two passages?

A beast (kingdom) would come out of the sea with ten horns (ie; ten kings). One of its kings would blaspheme God and make war with God's people for 42 months (ie, 3 1/2 years).

What extra information do we glean from Rev 13 to help us understand Dan 7?

The power behind this fourth kingdom and the boastful king is the dragon, or Satan (Rev 13:2b). The world will worship him (Rev 13:8). Christians will be imprisoned and killed during this time (Rev 13:10).

Who do you think this "arrogant king" is?

It is commonly understood that he is the anti-Christ of 1 John 2:18, the "man of lawlessness" spoken of in 2 Thess 2. This is the one that the Lord Jesus will overthrow with His power (see 2 Thess 2:7-8).

Despite the rise of this arrogant king, what do we read in Dan 7:27? (cf. also Rev 15:2-4)

Those who follow Christ will be victorious, and they will reign with Christ in God's eternal kingdom.

What's the purpose of Daniel's vision and other prophecies that we read of (like in Revelation)?

Prophecy is given, not to give us all the details of what is to come, but to change our perspective. We are to see in these prophecies above everything else that God is in control, and that those who follow the Lord God and His Son Jesus Christ, will rule forever with Christ in the eternal kingdom. So it is to be!

Summary: **No matter what Satan or earthly kingdoms do, it's Christ's kingdom that will endure forever, together with His people who follow Him. Our end is glorious!**

12. Fulfilled Prophecy – It Affirms the Bible: Daniel 8:1-27

Review: In Daniel 7 we came across prophecy that refers to the "end of time" and the second coming of Christ. What should we do as we try and understand Old Testament prophecies like this? Why?

We should use the New Testament to give clarity to the Old Testament prophecies. This is because in the Bible we have "progressive revelation"; ie, we have clearer revelation through Christ and His apostles.

Despite the rise of the "boastful horn" what are God's people assured of? (Dan 7:25-27)

Those who follow God's Son Jesus Christ will live forever and rule with Him in God's eternal kingdom.

Discuss: How can we be sure that the Bible is the Word of God, and inspired of God? [Discuss]

One major thing that affirms the Bible to be the Word of God is the fulfilment of prophecy.

Considering the Text: Daniel 8:1-27

Daniel 2:4-7:28 was written in Aramaic (the common language of Babylonia). Dan 8:1-12:13 was written in Hebrew (the explicit language of the Jews). What does this (or may this) indicate?

It indicates that Dan 2:4-7:28 was intended for all – Jews and Gentiles. Consider how in this section of Daniel, pagan kings testify of God, and prophecies address the second coming of Christ and His rule over God's kingdom. But Dan 8:1-12:13 specifically focuses on the Jews up until the first coming of Christ.

Read Dan 8:1-19. Daniel found it difficult to understand his vision, so what did God do? What can we learn here in regard to God's intention for us with respect to understanding visions/prophecies?

God sent the angel Gabriel so that Daniel (and us) may understand the vision. God's intention, when giving us prophecy, is not to confuse us or to give us impossible riddles, but to help us understand.

In Dan 8:20 we have the explanation of the ram. Who is it? What is the symbolism in Dan 8:3-4?

The ram stands for the Medo-Persian kingdom. The two horns represent the Medes and Persians. The longer horn indicates that the Persians were greater than the Medes in their alliance. They dominated all.

In Dan 8:21-22 we have the explanation of the goat. What do we learn? (cf. also Dan 8:5-8)

The goat stands for the kingdom of Greece, and the large horn stands for its first king – who we know as Alexander the Great. He smashed the Medo-Persians, and his conquest was swift, which is indicated in Dan 8:5. At the height of his power Alexander died (in 323BC), which is indicated by the large horn being broken. Four kings arose after him to rule four areas of Greece, but they did not have the same power.

Daniel's vision records a "small horn" arising from one of the kings that ruled part of Greece.

What do we learn about this "other king" in Dan 8:9-14 and Dan 8:23-26?

This king would be insolent and skilled in intrigue. Though initially small, he would become powerful through shrewdness, especially over Israel (ie, the "beautiful land"). He would make himself as god, and oppose the true God, even removing the daily sacrifice to Him, and desecrating His temple. He would have power over the Jews and even kill them. This would be for a set time before he is destroyed by God.

The vision is very specific about the length of time that the daily sacrifices will be halted before they are restored (these are the ones commanded in Exod 29:38-39). What is the time period? (Dan 8:14)

It would be for 1150 days (ie, one half of 2300, as there is a morning and an evening sacrifice).

Why would God allow the Jews to be defeated, and for His sacrifices to be halted? (Dan 8:12,19,23)

It was because of "transgression". God's people went astray again, and so God allowed a king to arise who would punish them. But afterwards, they would be restored in readiness for the coming of Christ.

History: The prophecy of the "small horn" describes perfectly Antiochus IV Epiphanes. From history we learn that he started off small, but became powerful through intrigue and deceit (he was not the rightful successor to the throne). In the last years of his reign, his great power made him view himself as the earthly manifestation of the Greek god Zeus. He particularly opposed the God of the Jews (the true and living God), and he extended his power over Israel (the Beautiful Land) and made a determined effort to destroy the Jews (168BC – 164BC). Antiochus conquered Jerusalem and dedicated the temple to his god. He set himself up as God and ordered the daily sacrifices to the living God to end. This continued for 1150 days until Judas Maccabeus recaptured Jerusalem and rededicated the temple to the Lord (Dec 165BC). Antiochus died suddenly in 164BC through disease; it would appear that God destroyed him.

What should we make of Daniel 8? What do we learn about God? (cf. also Isa 46:9-10)

God's word is true. The Lord God has inspired it, and knows the end from the beginning; like no other.

Summary: God's Word is true; fulfilled prophecies affirm it, as well as many other things. We can trust everything written in the Bible. It is inspired of God (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:19-21)

13. The Prayer of a Righteous Man: Daniel 9:1-19

Review: *In Daniel 8 we have a prophecy on the Medo-Persian and Greek Kingdoms, and the rise of an evil king who would oppose God and try and destroy the Jews. What does history tell us?*

The prophecy that God gave Daniel is spot on – it's exactly what happened in history. Antiochus IV Epiphanes was an evil king who sought to destroy the Jews in 168-164BC, before God took his life.

What are some of the things that help us affirm the Bible to be the Word of God? (2 Pet 1:19-21)

The fulfilment of prophecy affirms the Bible to be God's word, as well as archaeological discoveries, etc.

Discuss: *If we are a follower of Christ, we ought to be praying. Yet, do we pray as Jesus taught us in His example prayer to His disciples in Matt 6:9-13? What aspects of prayer are often lacking? [Discuss]*

Considering the Text: Daniel 9:1-19

In Dan 9 we read one of the great prayers in the Bible. What led Daniel to pray? (Dan 9:1-3)

He realised through the writings of the prophet Jeremiah that the Jewish people's exile in Babylon would only be for 70 years. So Daniel sought the Lord about this matter through prayer.

Read Jer 25:8-12 and Jer 29:1-11. These are the words Daniel would have read that prompted him to pray. What should all the Jewish exiles have known? What impact should this have had on them?

They should have known that their exile in Babylon would only be for seventy years. They should have known when it was time for them to return home; sadly, it seems only a few understood, such as Daniel.

Why do you think Daniel recalled Jeremiah's prophecies to mind in the first year of Darius?

Daniel would have known that the rule of Darius marked the end of the Babylonian Empire. That meant that it was time for the Jewish exiles to return home, for God had punished Babylon (see Jer 25:12).

REFLECT: *There are things that should prompt us to pray when we read in the Bible. What prayers should ascend to God's throne as Christians read the Bible? [Praising God for who He is; praying for our enemies (Matt 5:44), for lost souls, for workers (Matt 9:37-38), for rulers (1 Tim 2:1-2), etc]*

What do you notice in Dan 9:3 about the way Daniel prayed in the light of Jeremiah's prophecies?

Daniel approached the Lord diligently – he went without food to seek the Lord. He also came before the Lord in a humble and contrite manner, as he contemplated their sins and the holiness of God.

REFLECT: *We would do well to learn from Daniel. Many times we pray too casually, and forget who we are coming before. How should passages like Isa 6:1-5 and Heb 12:28-29 affect the way we pray?*

Read the start of Daniel's prayer in Dan 9:4-6. Daniel doesn't just tell God that it was time for the exile to end. Instead, what two things stand out in his opening words to God?

Firstly, Daniel adores God for who He is; the great and awesome God, who is faithful and loving toward those who love Him (despite how we are, He never changes). Secondly, he confesses their sin, their rebellion, and their refusal to listen to God. He was conscious that they were in exile because of their sin.

What is surprising about what we read in Dan 9:5-6? What does this teach us about Daniel?

Daniel includes himself ("we have sinned") as he confesses the sins of his people. Thus, we learn that Daniel didn't consider himself to be separate from God's sinful people, or better than them. He was not self-righteous. We ought to be the same. NB: Not even Daniel was perfect before God (cf. 2 Chron 6:36).

What does Daniel specifically highlight about God in Dan 9:7-14?

God is righteous (v.7), but He is also compassionate and forgiving (v.9). God is just and had brought on His people all that He said He would do due to their rebellion, and because they hadn't repented, they were still bearing the consequences of their sins.

In Dan 9:15-19, Daniel requests the Lord's forgiveness. What is the basis of his appeal?

Daniel appeals that they were God's people whom He had redeemed from the land of Egypt (v.15). Daniel appeals that they be forgiven and restored for the glory of God's name (vv.17,19). Daniel appeals for forgiveness, not on the basis of their merits, but on God's great compassion (v.18). What a prayer!

We can be sure that God heard Daniel and answered him (as we shall see). Why?

Daniel prayed reverently and humbly for the glory of God, and in line with God's revealed word.

What encouraging words do we read in Jam 5:16?

The prayer of a righteous man (ie, a man who is right with God through repentance and confession) is able to accomplish much. In other words, God hears and answers their prayer (as we see with Daniel).

Summary: Prayer is God's gracious gift to us, but may we pray effectively, glorifying God, acknowledging our sins, and praying for His kingdom and His will to be done (cf. Matt 6:9-13).

14. A Prophecy on Christ's Atoning Death: Daniel 9:20-27

Review: *In Daniel 9:1-19 we read one of the great prayers in the Bible: the prayer of Daniel in regard to the return of the Jewish exiles from Babylon. What things stand out in this prayer? (cf. Dan 9:3-6, 9, 19)* He prayed humbly, magnifying God's greatness, faithfulness, righteousness and mercy. He also confessed the sins of His people, and for the sake of God's glory, he pleaded for God to have compassion on them.

God heard Daniel's prayer, and it was answered. What do we learn in Jam 5:16 about prayer?

Even one righteous person (a person who is forgiven and right with God) is able to be effective in prayer. We need, like Daniel, to believe and trust God, and pray with God's glory and honour in mind.

Discuss: *Daniel's prayer was birthed from knowing God's word (ie, he knew Jeremiah had prophesied that the Jews would be in exile for seventy years). How does God's word help you to pray? [Discuss]*

Considering the Text: Daniel 9:20-27

In response to Daniel's prayer, what did the Lord do? (Dan 9:20-22) What does this show us?

God sent the angel Gabriel; one of God's mighty angels who stands in the presence of God (Luke 1:19). He was sent to give Daniel insight and understanding in regard to the future. This shows us that God is willing to let us humans know His plans and purposes; how amazing is that! (cf. Gen 18:17-18).

In Dan 9:23 Gabriel expresses heaven's view of Daniel. Consider also Dan 10:11 and Ezek 14:14, 20. What's so amazing about God's view of Daniel?

We don't expect God to speak well of us, as we often sin and go astray. Yet, despite our sins, God does take notice of us, and highly esteems those who seek Him, trust Him, and try and follow Him.

REFLECT: *How do you view yourself? Even as a Christian, many of us view ourselves negatively. What do you make of the following verses (Psa 139:17-18; Matt 6:25-26; 1 Peter 2:9; 1 John 3:1)? [Discuss]*

How long did it take for Daniel's prayer to be answered? (Dan 9:23) What can we be sure of?

The command for Gabriel to come and tell Daniel God's response was immediate - Daniel hadn't even finished praying (Dan 9:21). We can be sure that God hears and acts immediately to our prayers.

Read Dan 9:24-27. The answer Gabriel gave Daniel seems to go beyond the return of the exiles from Babylon. What signs are there in Dan 9:24-25 that this prophecy is actually about the Lord Jesus?

V. 25 refers to the "anointed one" or "Messiah" (ie, Jesus). V. 24 refers to "making atonement for iniquity and bringing in everlasting righteousness". This is what Jesus did when He died on the cross. Sin was finally dealt with, and everlasting righteousness was made possible through His shed blood and faith in Christ. Also, in v.24b, it says that vision and prophecy would be "sealed up" (ie, completed). This was made possible through Christ coming and dying and rising again - He fulfilled the Scriptures.

In what way does Dan 9:26 also affirm that this prophecy is about the Lord Jesus?

V.26 refers to the Messiah being "cut-off and having nothing". This is what happened to Jesus. He was cut-off in the sense of being put to death, and He had no posterity (see Isa 53:8).

Assuming in apocalyptic writing a week equates to seven years (in Hebrew, "week" means "seven"), how long would it be before the Messiah (Jesus) would be "cut-off" (die for us)? (Dan 9:24-26) The Messiah would die 69 weeks (ie, 483 years) after the issuing of a decree to rebuild Jerusalem.

Jesus died somewhere around 30AD. 483 years before that date puts it around 450BC. Was there anything noteworthy that happened around that time, give or take a few years? (Neh 2:5-8)

Yes! Artaxerxes was ruling over Persia, and he issued a decree to Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem. He did this in the 20th year of his rule, which was around 450BC.

REFLECT: *It is so amazing that God should give Daniel such a precise date when Christ would come and atone for our sins. What response should we have to this? [Praise God that He knows all things, that He is sovereign and works out all things according to His will, and that His word is truth]*

What do you think Dan 9:26-27 is about, in the light of Jesus' use of Dan 9:27 in Matt 24:15?

In Matt 24:15, Jesus was speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem (see also Matt 24:1-3). This occurred in 70AD, when the Romans desecrated the temple and destroyed Jerusalem, and killed many Jews as history attests to. By Jesus quoting from Dan 9:27, it shows us how to interpret Dan 9:26-27. The "last week" (70th week) then refers to the Roman destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.

REFLECT: The Jewish exile would be 70 years long. Christ would come and atone for sin 483 years after Artaxerxes decree. But God has not told us when His Son will return again (see Matt 24:32-36). [Discuss]

Summary: Christ's first coming and His atoning death occurred just as God had prophesied. Wow!

15. Who is this One? Daniel 10:1-12

Review: In Daniel 9:23 the angel Gabriel describes Daniel as "highly esteemed". Why?

Daniel was a man who walked with God (as seen in his prayer life – Dan 6:10). He had faith in God, was humble, obedient (even when facing death), and he glorified God. Such a person God highly esteems.

In Dan 9:24-26a what amazing prophecy do we have? How can we tell this is the case?

It's a prophecy on when Christ would come to atone for our sins. He would die "69 weeks" (483 years) after the issuing of a decree to rebuild Jerusalem; this is what happened. We can tell this prophecy is about Christ because of the use of the phrase "anointed one" (or literally, "Messiah") in v.25, and the reference in v.24 in regard to how He would atone for sin and bring in everlasting righteousness.

Discuss: Many who believe there is a creator God believe that He is not personal, but distant and removed from us. What is your response to this? Also, discuss the passage from Heb 1:1-3.

Considering the Text: Daniel 10:1-12

Daniel chapters 10-12 form one long prophecy; the longest in the book of Daniel. What is this prophecy primarily about according to Dan 10:14?

It's about what would happen to Daniel's people (the Jews) in the future (indeed Dan 10-12 is actually an expansion on Dan 8). It's about what would happen to the Jews before the Lord Jesus came to save us.

The prophecy in Dan 10-12 begins in Dan 10:1 with a reference to a king named Cyrus. Who was this king of Persia? (Look up 2 Chron 36:22-23)

He was the Persian king whom God raised up to conquer Babylon, and whom God used to cause His temple in Jerusalem to be rebuilt, and to bring His exiled people back to Judah (to end their exile).

REFLECT: God used a pagan king to achieve His purposes. Read also Isa 44:24-28, 45:1-5, 11-13. What does this teach us about God? [Discuss] – There is no one like the Lord; He truly is sovereign.

What state was Daniel in when he received this prophecy? (Dan 10:2-3)

Daniel was mourning, as well as fasting and seeking God. In other words, he was in prayer.

REFLECT: John received his vision when he was in the spirit on the Lord's day (Rev 1:10). Daniel received his visions while in prayer (Dan 9:21). What can we deduce from this? [Discuss] God often makes known His will to us when we are in fellowship with Him; ie, praying or reading His word.

After mourning and praying for three weeks, God sent someone to Daniel to communicate with him future events concerning the Jews. What is impressive about this person? (Dan 10:5-6)

Although He looked like a man, He was no ordinary man. He seemed to be more than an angel, for at best an angel's clothes shine brightly (Luke 24:4), but this being's face was like lightning, and his body glowed.

Commentators are divided over who the person is in Dan 10:5-6. However, many well-known commentators (like Matthew Henry) believe it is the Lord Jesus, because of the similarity between Dan 10:5-6 and Rev 1:12-16. Compare the two accounts. What is common? What do you think?

Both Daniel and John describe a being who looked like a man, who was dressed in linen/robe, who had a belt/sash of gold around Him, whose face shone brightly (like lightning/sun), whose eyes were like flaming torches/blazing fire, whose body glowed like bronze from a furnace, and whose voice was majestic. In Revelation 1 it clearly is the Lord Jesus. Dan 10 appears to be the Lord Jesus too. Amazing!

REFLECT: In the Old Testament we have some very interesting encounters between people and a being who seems to be human and divine. Discuss the following: Gen 18:1-2, 9-14; Gen 32:24-30; Josh 5:13-15

In Dan 10:7-9, what impact did the vision have on Daniel and his friends? What does this show?

Daniel's companions never saw the vision, but they sensed His presence, and a holy dread came upon them so they fled. Daniel, on the other hand, lost all strength and fell to the ground (similar to the apostle John's response in Rev 1:17 before the Jesus). Again, it seems to affirm that Daniel was seeing Jesus.

What was the response of the man as Daniel fell before Him? (Dan 10:10-12; cf. also Rev 1:17)

He was full of grace. Just like the apostle John experienced in Rev 1:17, the man touched Daniel with His hand, He commended him as a man of "high esteem", and He said those familiar words "do not be afraid".

Why had this amazing person come to Daniel? What do we learn from this? (Dan 10:11-12)

He had come in response to Daniel praying for understanding in regard to what would happen to the Jews. We learn how God is pleased to interact and communicate with us; especially through His Son Jesus.

Summary: God communicates and interacts with us, especially through His Son Jesus (Heb 1:1-2).

16. Spiritual Warfare: Daniel 10:12-21

Review: *What did Daniel get to see (Dan 10:1; 2 Chro 36:22-23)? What does this tell us about the Bible?* He saw the fulfilment of the Lord's word to Isaiah and Jeremiah concerning Cyrus ending Judah's exile (the word came to Isaiah about 150 years before it came to pass). This shows us how true God's Word is.

In Dan 10:5-6, God sent a messenger to Daniel to tell him things about the future. Who do we think it was (cf. Rev 1:12-16)? What picture do we have here of His future ministry (cf. Heb 1:1-2)?

We believe the Lord Jesus appeared to Daniel! We see a picture of Jesus' ministry in the future. Not only would He reconcile us to the Father, but He would be the great messenger of God to reveal God's character and God's Word to us; that's one of the reasons why He is called the Word of God (John 1:1).

Discuss: *Many Christians in our society are naïve when it comes to spiritual warfare. Why? [Discuss]* We are unaware of it, or we dismiss it because we don't overtly see demonic possession/manifestations.

Is Satan less active in our society, compared to others? [Discuss]

He is active amongst us, just as he is in any society. For us, he often works more subtly, convincing us that there is no God through such things as evolution, and sidelining us with worldly pursuits/pleasures.

Considering the Text: Daniel 10:12-21

Why had Daniel been sent a very special messenger? (Dan 10:12-14)

The special messenger had been sent in response to Daniel praying for understanding in regard to what would happen in the future with respect to his people; the Jewish people.

What can we learn about praying rightly, and God's response to prayer, according to Dan 10:12?

When we pray, we ought to be humble and seek God's face, and have a heart to understand His will. When we do this, we can be assured that God hears us from our very first words. He delights to hear us and answer us. But do we pray rightly? (cf. how Jesus taught us to pray in Matt 6:9-10).

In Dan 10:13 we find that before the messenger came to Daniel, He was busy doing something. Who do you think the "prince of the kingdom of Persia" is? What was the messenger doing?

We understand that the "prince of the kingdom of Persia" was a demon who exercised spiritual authority over the Persian realm. Daniel's messenger was engaged in spiritual warfare, and was helped by Michael.

Look up some Bible verses to work out Michael's identity. (Dan 10:21, 12:1; Jude 9; Rev 12:7-8)

Michael was Israel's (spiritual) prince. He helped preserve and protect them. He is also the archangel who fights against Satan and his demons under Christ's authority. It was Michael, with God's angels, that cast Satan out of heaven. Michael will also pronounce Christ's second coming (1 Thess 4:16).

Read Dan 10:15-17. Compare Daniel's response here with his response to Gabriel in Dan 9:20-23. What is different? What makes us think that the messenger in Dan 10 is indeed the Lord Jesus?

Daniel never calls Gabriel "lord", or never falls before him. Yet, in Dan 10:15-17, Daniel's messenger is so awesome that Daniel can barely breathe, and he barely has strength to stand (cf. 10:17). Daniel addresses Him as "my lord" (the word in Hebrew is "Adonai", which is often translated as "God").

Assuming the messenger to Daniel was Jesus, what grace do you see in Him? (Dan 10:15-19)

He touched Daniel's lips to give him strength to speak, and touched him again to strengthen his body. He addressed him as a "man of high esteem", and besides saying "don't be afraid", He bestowed on him the blessing of peace. What grace and what words of grace from One who is truly awesome (cf. John 1:14).

Again, assuming that it was the Lord Jesus speaking to Daniel, what do we learn of Jesus' activities in our world, as we read Dan 10:20-21?

He is active in our world, engaged in spiritual battles with the demonic realm and also with human powers and forces in order for God's will and purposes to be accomplished and be fulfilled.

We have a glorious picture of Christ engaged in warfare in Rev 19:11-21. What do we learn?

The Lord Jesus doesn't just order His angels around, but He leads them and goes before them into battle against demonic and human forces. He will Himself overthrow the anti-Christ (2 Thess 2:8) and Satan.

What comfort should we gain from this image of Christ? (cf. also 1 John 5:18)

Christ can and will protect us, His people, from Satan and his demons. We have nothing to fear.

The Bible speaks a lot about spiritual warfare. What are we meant to do? (Eph 6:10-13)

We are meant to be aware of spiritual warfare, and take our stand against it in Christ's power/strength.

Summary: Christ fights for His people and protects them from Satan. May we stand in His power.

17. Fulfilled Prophecies Before the Coming of Jesus: Daniel 11:1-45

Review: *In Dan 10:13, 20-21 we have a glimpse of spiritual warfare that is occurring about us. What are we to do as we live in this world and as we encounter spiritual warfare? (Eph 6:10-13)*

We are to rely on the Lord's strength and help; we are to put on our spiritual armour to stand against the evil one; we are to be aware of the spiritual battle we are engaged in (it's real; we are not to be naïve).

Discuss: *History! Why should Christians see history as "His Story"? [cf. what we have seen in Daniel]*

God knows the future (declaring the end from the beginning), He is in control of all things through His great sovereign power, and He is accomplishing His purposes and His will, which no one can resist.

Note: Before we look at our next study (Dan 11:1-45), we need to realise that the prophecies here were perfectly fulfilled in the centuries leading up to the first coming of Christ. If we knew history, we would be amazed at the details given here; given well before they happened. It affirms again that the Bible is true.

Considering the Text: Daniel 11:1-45

How are we to understand Dan 11:1-45? (cf. what the messenger to Daniel said in Dan 10:14)

This prophecy is about what would happen to Daniel's people (the Jews). A major part of it involves what would happen to the Jews in the time leading up to Christ's first coming (NB: Dan 8 was also about this).

In this study, we will read a portion of God's word and then make some comments from history.

Read Dan 11:1-4 Comment: Three Persian kings would arise (Cambyses, Pseudo-Smerdis, Darius I). Then Xerxes I would arise and oppose Greece (v.2), but the Greek king, Alexander the Great (v.3) would conquer him. He would die soon after (323BC), and his empire would be divided into four kingdoms (Egypt/Palestine, Syria, Macedon/Greece, Thrace/Asia Minor) and be given to four of his generals to rule.

Read Dan 11:5-13 Comment: Two of the kingdoms would become prominent; Egypt in the south (v.5), and Syria in the north (v.6). They would wage war against each other, and act treacherously. The southern kingdom would maintain the upper hand, but the northern kingdom would continue to persist.

Read Dan 11:14-19 Comment: The northern kingdom, under Antiochus the Great, would eventually gain the ascendancy over the southern kingdom (ruled by Ptolemy V) with a strategic win at Sidon (v.15). Antiochus would then take the rule (in 197BC) of Palestine (the "Beautiful Land", v.16), where the Jews lived. But a Roman commander (Lucius) would oppose Antiochus' military expansion (v.18), and while attempting to plunder a temple in Elymais (v.19), Antiochus would die (187BC).

Read Dan 11:20-28 Comment: Antiochus' son would be the successor (Seleucus IV), but he would fall through the conspiracy of Heliodorus, his finance minister (v.20). Seleucus' son, Demetrius I, should have succeeded his father, but Seleucus' younger brother, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, would take the throne by craftiness (v.21). He would be a contemptible ruler, skilled in intrigue. He would wage war against Egypt and have victory over them (vv. 25-26), and in his arrogance, he would set himself against the Jews (v.28).

Read Dan 11:29-39 Comment: Antiochus IV Epiphanes would experience setbacks as he sought to dominate the southern kingdom (v.29). Being furious, he would vent his anger at the Jews. He would honour those Jews who turned away from their faith, but for those who were true, he would desecrate their temple by setting up the pagan god Zeus (168BC), and he would abolish the daily sacrifices (vv.29-31). But for those Jews who would remain faithful, Antiochus would arise against them and put many to death (v.33). The faithful Jews would receive some help from Maccabeus (v.34), with the altar of the temple being rededicated in 165BC. God's people would be refined (v.35) through all this. Antiochus would go from bad to worse, thinking himself greater than God and blaspheming the true God (vv.36-37).

Read Dan 11:40-45 Comment: Antiochus would be opposed by the southern kingdom, but this time the rising Roman Empire would come against him. Antiochus would die suddenly in 164BC, and the remaining prophecy seems to be fulfilled by the rise of the Roman Empire, who had a great fleet of ships (v.40). They would conquer many nations and rule over Palestine (v.41), and would be the ones occupying the land at Christ's coming. NB: The "the time of the end" (v.40) seems to be referring to the old covenant.

Some consider Dan 11:36-45 as referring to the antichrist. Why? (cf. 2 Thess 2:3-4; Rev 13:1-6)

Like Antiochus, the antichrist will oppose the living God and set himself above the true God. Perhaps we should view Antiochus as a type of antichrist; he was a forerunner to him, just as Hitler was, and many others (consider how the apostle John says that there have been many antichrists – 1 John 2:18).

Summary: No matter what, God is ultimately in control. He knows all things and He rules over all.

18. Be Wise: Daniel 12:1-4

Review: *In Dan 11, we have a prophecy that has been fulfilled, as history attests to. The details given here, hundreds of years before they happened, are astonishing. What should we conclude from this?*

Daniel, like the entire Bible, is God-breathed (2 Tim 3:16). God has spoken, and we can rely on His word.

Discuss: *We read in Dan 11 that the Jews would suffer before Christ's first coming. Although they would suffer severely from the superpowers about them, what would God ensure (cf. Rom 1:3)? [Discuss]*

God would ensure that the Jews would remain, for through them He would send forth His Son.

Considering the Text: Daniel 12:1-4

Read Dan 11:29-39. Remembering back to the last lesson, what is this prophecy about?

This prophecy is about Antiochus IV Epiphanes (165BC). He would seek to kill God's people (the Jews) and desecrate God's temple (vv. 31-33). He would magnify himself and blaspheme the true God (v.36).

Read Dan 11:40-45. What do we believe this prophecy is about?

This prophecy is about how Antiochus would be opposed by the southern kingdom (Egypt), but also by the rising Roman Empire; a new "king of the north" (v.40). This new empire would take over the rule of Palestine (v.41). They would be the ones occupying the land at Christ's first coming.

REFLECT: *The interpretation of Dan 12:1-4 is the subject of much debate. What should we use to help us understand prophecies in the Old Testament? [Discuss]* We should use the New Testament.

Read Dan 12:1. Firstly, what people are being prophesied about here? (cf. also Dan 10:14)

This prophecy is about would happen to the Jewish people in the future.

What would happen to the Jewish people, according to Dan 12:1?

The Jewish people would go through a time of great distress (never seen before). But Michael the archangel (Jude 9), the great prince and guardian over the Jewish people, would arise to help them. Not only that, those Jews whose names are written in "the book", would be rescued (there was hope).

As we ponder the meaning of Dan 12:1, let us now consider Matt 24:15-23. What is this about?

This part of Jesus' prophecy is about the destruction of the temple/Jerusalem (Note: Jesus didn't just prophecy about what would happen just before He returned; cf. Matt 24:1-3). Before this destruction, the temple would be desecrated (v.15), and those in Judea are urged to flee (vv.16-20), for there would be a time of great distress like never seen before (vv.22-23). Note: We know through history that this happened in 70AD when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the temple, and killed countless Jews.

Is there any link between Dan 12:1 & Matt 24:15-23? If so, how should we understand Dan 12:1?

Both passages are about a great distress that has never been seen before. It seems then Dan 12:1 is about what would happen to the Jews just after the first coming of Jesus; ie the destruction of Jerusalem. However, this distress would be limited (Matt 24:22); this is probably where Michael came in (Dan 12:1).

What is the reference to "the book"? (cf. Rev 3:5; 20:11-15)

This is probably a reference to those whose names are written in the "Lamb's book of life". Those in this book follow the Lord Jesus. They would be rescued from the destruction of Jerusalem for they would listen to the words of Christ and flee Jerusalem (Matt 24:15-18), while many Jews would die.

Read Dan 12:2. What may this be about? (cf. Matt 27:50-53)

If Dan 11 & 12 is about the first coming of Christ, then Dan 12:2 would be about the awesome events around the death and resurrection of Jesus. After Jesus conquered the grave, those who had previously died and were right with God, ascended into heaven. The rest remained for judgment. NB: In Dan 12:2 we have the phrase 'everlasting life'. This is the only time it occurs in the entire Old Testament.

Read Dan 12:3. How should we understand this verse in the light of the New Testament?

We are to be wise. The wise trust God's word, and put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Their lives shine brightly through the light of Christ in them (Matt 5:14-16). They also seek to lead others to Christ so that they may be saved. What a lovely description we have here in Dan 12:3 in regard to a Christian.

How should we understand Dan 12:4?

Though over time people would continue to come and go, and knowledge would increase, God's word would remain. The words God had spoken to Daniel would be fulfilled, and would not need to be adjusted.

Summary: We are to be wise, trusting God's Word and trusting in His Son Jesus Christ. Those who do have their name written in the book of life, and will have eternal life, and will shine brightly.

19. The Final Conclusion: Daniel 12:5-13

Review: *What does the messenger who gave Daniel the final prophecy encourage us to be/do? (Dan 12:3)* He encourages us to be wise by heeding the Lord's word, so that we might shine brightly in this world. He also encourages us to lead people "to righteousness" (rightness with God). We do this now by proclaiming the Gospel of Christ, so that people may trust in Jesus and obtain God's righteousness (Rom 3:21-24).

Discuss: *With this study we will finish Daniel. Reflect on what you have learnt so far. [Discuss]* God is in control; He is able to rescue; He desires to be glorified; He knows the end from the beginning; kingdoms will come and go, but God will establish His kingdom that will be ruled by the Messiah (Christ).

Considering the Text: Daniel 12:5-13

In Dan 12:5-7, what does Daniel see? Who is this messenger who spoke to him? (cf. Dan 10:4-7) Daniel sees two other beings standing on either side of the Tigris (probably angels). Daniel's messenger stands above them; above the waters of the river. Considering His glory in Dan 10:5-6, and His elevated position and the way He spoke to God the Father in Dan 12:7, we believe this was the Lord Jesus.

One of the beings (angels) asked Daniel's messenger (probably the Lord Jesus) when the things that had been prophesied would be fulfilled. What was the answer? What does this mean?

It would occur in "time, times and half a time"; ie the last bit of the prophecy would occur over 3 1/2 years.

The prophecy itself and the answer given perplexed Daniel and so he asked the messenger a further question. What did the messenger tell Daniel to do? What did this mean? (Dan 12:8-9)

He told him to go his way, for the prophecy was sealed up for the time of the end (probably the end of the Old Covenant); ie, the words that Daniel had received did not involve him, but people of a future time.

What does the messenger tell Daniel in Dan 12:10?

Before the fulfilment of the prophecy given, there would be two types of people. One group would be purified. This stands for those who trust in God and follow Him. They also would have an understanding of the prophecy given to Daniel. However, the other group would not turn to the Lord. They would continue in wickedness, and not understand the things written by Daniel or the other prophets.

REFLECT: *The words given to Daniel in Dan 12:10 apply to the people of our own day. In what way?*

[Those who follow Jesus are being made holy, and have a growing understanding of Bible prophecy. Those who don't follow Jesus continue in sin, and are ignorant of Bible prophecy (cf. 2 Pet 3:3-4).]

Before the prophecy ends, what further information does Daniel glean? (Dan 12:11)

1290 days would occur between two events; the abolishment of the regular sacrifice (ie, the morning and evening sacrifices) and the abomination of desolation in the temple. 1290 days is basically 3 1/2 years.

Compare Dan 12:11 with Dan 9:26-27 & Matt 24:15. What is Dan 12:11 probably referring to?

It's probably referring to the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in 70AD. As we have seen at the end of Dan 11 the messenger prophecies of the rising Roman Empire, and at the start of Dan 12, we have a reference to the slaughter of the Jews by the Romans when Jerusalem fell, but God's people (Christians) being rescued. Jesus, when prophesying about the destruction of the temple refers to Daniel's references to the "abomination of desolation" (see Matt 24:15). Thus, in this last section of Daniel, the messenger wants Daniel to inform his readers that these events would occur over a 3 1/2 year period (or 1290 days).

What are we to make of Dan 12:12?

This may be a reference to Jewish Christians persevering during the destruction of Jerusalem, not just for 1290 days, but for a few extra days. These are the ones who would listen to Jesus (Matt 24:16-18).

What encouragement is Daniel given in the final verse of the book of Daniel? (Dan 12:13)

Daniel is encouraged to go his way. He is promised rest and that he would rise again. His rising might be referring to Dan 12:2, where all the Old Testament believers would rise after Christ's resurrection and join Him in glory, or it may refer to the final bodily resurrection at Christ's second return.

Just as Daniel was promised rest, we are promised rest too. What do we learn in Heb 4:9-11?

In Christ we have inherited "rest". Eternal life will no longer involve striving, but resting.

What does the NT say about our bodily resurrection? (cf. 1 Cor 15:50-57; 1 Thess 4:13-17)

This will not occur until Christ's second coming. Only then will we all receive our eternal bodies.

Summary: There awaits all who are in Christ an eternal rest and a glorious resurrection. May we, like Daniel, remain faithful serving our God until He calls us home. Amen!