**Mona Vale Anglican Church**

**www.monavaleanglican.com.au**

**The Book of Daniel, Terms 1 and 2 2016.**

Chapter 1 God honours convictions February 7th

Chapter 2 God controls nations February 14th

Chapter 3 God delivers February 21st

Chapter 4 God humbles the proud February 28th

Chapter 5 God has the last word March 6th

Chapter 6 God tames lions March 20th

Chapter 7 Four Great Beasts May 8th

Chapter 8 The Ram and the Goat May 15th

Chapter 9:1-21 Daniel’s prayer May 29th

Chapter 9:22-27 The seventy sevens June 5th

Chapter 10 Angels and Demons June 12th

Chapter 11-12 The Big God wins. June 19th

In an uncertain and chaotic world Daniel shows us how we can live faithfully for God. Our God is bigger than all our fears. We may think that this world is out of control, but our big God remains in control of the present and the future.

Daniel teaches us how to trust God in the face of unreasonable laws, unjust demands and hatred from those among whom we live.

Daniel opens our eyes to see the future, in some ways the book acts as a prelude to the book of Revelation. In these studies we will look into the future and recognise how Daniel’s faith in our big God helps us deal with our fears in this uncertain world.

The book of Daniel divides into two halves:

Chapters 1-6 are historical accounts

Chapters 7-12 share visions of the future.

*There is a timeline at the back of these studies covering the kings and their reigns.*

**Introduction to the book of Daniel**

Welcome to our series of studies on the book of Daniel. The one key thing I hope you take away with you is that God is still in control. He is our Big God, he is reliable and so we can trust him even when things look bleak.

The best thing to do as we start this series is to read the whole book at one sitting. It doesn’t take long (30 to 45 minutes), but it puts the whole book in a helpful perspective.

You will see that this is a book of two halves. The first 6 chapters recount stories of Daniel and his friends under pressure as they live as strangers in a strange land. Forced to leave their homeland, how do they live lives faithful to God under an oppressive and antagonistic regime? As each crisis enfolds, God demonstrates that he is in control and overrules the intentions of powerful rulers.

However, there is a shift from chapter 6 to chapter 7, we are presented with 5 visions, apocalyptic visions of the future. Visions that find initial fulfilment in the history of the people of God in the second century BC. And also visions that have implications beyond this initial fulfilment in Christ Jesus. At the beginning of the studies on chapter 7 I will discuss how we can interpret apocalyptic visions, but see clearly that despite the differences in literary style between chapters 1-6 and 7-12, the overall message of the book is God is in control!

Why is this so important? The people of God are in exile, the Psalmist captures their pathos when he writes “By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion. There on the poplars we hung our harps, for there our captors asked us for songs, our tormentors demanded songs of joy; they said, “Sing us one of the songs of Zion!” How can we sing the songs of the Lord while in a foreign land? If I forget you, Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its skill.” (Psalm 137:1-5) In their suffering and oppression; in their despair at being forcibly removed from the land God had promised them; in situations where compromise was an ever-present temptation, Daniel’s message arrives like the breath of God: God is all-powerful and in control and has a future for his people.

The book of Daniel is set in the 6th Century before Christ. Daniel 1:1 is dated in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim (605 BC), there are 2 further references to the first years of Cyrus, as well as to his third year (539 and 537 BC respectively).

The first two verses describe the greatest crisis ever faced by the people of God in the Old Testament, the Babylonians, under Nebuchadnezzar (see 2 Kings 25), capture Jerusalem in 587/6 BC (after previous attempts in 597 and 607 BC.) They remove most of the leaders to their own Empire to use their skills and resources. In 539 BC Cyrus the Persian enacted a different policy and returned the exiles to their own homelands. There are some historical issues that we will need to face in accepting a date for the book in the 6th Century BC, but I will attempt to address these in the chapters where they occur.

When we read the Old Testament we must be careful not to read it just as a moral tale. For Christians Christ is the centre of the Biblical revelation. But we must remember that reading the Old Testament with Christ in mind does NOT mean that we can find new meaning in the Old Testament but the coming of Christ has illuminated the richer meaning of the OT that was not clear to the people who originally heard it. Jesus illustrates in Luke 24:25-27; 44-45).

“He said to them, ‘How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?’ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself……. He said to them, ‘This is what I told you while I was still with you: everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.’ Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures”.

We know that there are some awesome passages in the OT that predict the coming of Christ. Isaiah 7, 11, 53 and Psalm 2 are just a sample, but even when they were written they were understood by the people of the time. It’s not as though we see Jesus everywhere, but we read it expecting to encounter Jesus. We are careful in not twisting the meaning of a passage to find some vague connection to Christ, but we read it in the light of the New Testament since later revelation discloses the truth of the OT more fully.

An example of this becomes clear if we ask ourselves one question: ‘Do we follow the example of Daniel’? Since Daniel adopts a vegetarian diet in chapter 1, should we do likewise? Before we leap to answer , ‘no’! the Bible does teach ethics, it is not merely a history book, it is intended to shape our emotions and our actions. In 1 Corinthians Paul writes about the crossing of the red sea and the wanderings in the desert; ‘These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come’ (verse 11).

We must be careful, then to understand the passage as the original readers would have understood it. But we cannot leave it there – for us who follow Christ, he is at the centre of the entire Bible, and it is through him that we will apply what we read to our own situation.

**Study 1 God honours convictions. Daniel 1**

1. In our society, what pressures do Christians face to compromise our convictions or our loyalty to Jesus Christ? What pressures have you faced?
2. Imagine that China has taken over Australia. You are being taken by boat to Beijing where you will be enrolled in a three year programme to learn Chinese customs in preparation for service in the Chinese government. What pressures would you face? How would you stay loyal to Jesus?
3. Why are verses 1 and 2 the greatest crisis in the history of Israel? Read psalm 137 and ask yourself how you would feel and why?
4. What actions do you see God taking in Daniel 1? How did God show that he is bigger than any force, person or power?
5. Daniel accepts some aspects of life under foreign rule. Why does he make his stand on food and drink (verse 8)? A glance at Leviticus 11 may provide you with some clues.
6. What is the principal Paul advocates in 1 Corinthians 8?
7. How can we discern in our culture where it is ok to join in and where we need to draw the line? What kind of pressures cause us to ‘give in’ to our society?
8. How does verse 21 remind us of the context in which we live and the hope we have in Christ? How does our hope for the future impact our present life?
9. What does it mean for you to live a distinctly different life (see Matthew 5-7 where Jesus uses the phrase ‘do not be like…’.) in your family? In your neighbourhood? In our society?
10. If you were asked why you were a member of MVAC how would you answer?

**Study 2 God controls nations. Daniel 2**

1. How would you describe the chaos in your life right now?
2. What chaos in our world is most disturbing to you?
3. Describe the chaos experienced by Nebuchadnezzar and his advisers in chapter 2:1-13.
4. What do verses 20-23 tell us about the nature of our God? How does this encourage you?
5. What do you notice about ***how*** Daniel prayed? How does this contrast with/align with your prayers?
6. How do you respond when some authority in your life makes unreasonable demands? If our government asked us to do something contrary to the Word of God and conscience, how should we respond? (Give an example if you can).
7. What strikes you about the dream and its interpretation in verses 31-45? Put your artistic abilities to work and draw the statue. Who is ‘the rock’ and when will it crush all other kingdoms? What does that do to your perspective on life?
8. How did Nebuchadnezzar respond? (verses 46-47)
9. How should we respond to human authorities in our world. (see Jeremiah 27:1-7; Matthew 22:15-22; Acts 4:19-20; Romans 13:1-7)?
10. What is the main point of this chapter (see verses 11-12; 27-28 and 47)? How does this chapter provide us with an answer to the chaos in our world?

For an explanation of the symbolism of the statue see appendix 2.

**Study 3. God delivers through the fire. Daniel 3**

1. What pressures have you felt in your life to honour another ‘god’ or ‘idol’ in your place of work, neighbourhood, school or culture?
2. How have you seen people ‘build statues’ to draw attention to themselves and get people to see how great they are? What are the ‘statues’ (idols) of our own society and how might we be tempted to ‘worship’ them?
3. How did Nebuchadnezzar discover that the three men did not worship the image? Have you ever experienced anything like this in your own life? Do you have any concerns that someone might speak against you because of your faith?
4. Daniel 3:7 tells us that ‘all the nations and peoples of every language fell down and worshipped the image’ but the three men stood alone. How have you had to stand alone? How might you have to stand alone for Christ in the future?
5. How did God rescue them? Are we guaranteed to be delivered from pain, suffering, persecution just like these three? If not, why not? If so, why do Christians suffer terribly at the hands of oppressors? At this point it might be helpful to access material about the persecuted church. Read something from “The voice of the martyrs”, “Barnabas Fund”, or “Open doors”. Spend time individually and as a group praying specifically for the persecuted.
6. In the end Nebuchadnezzar made an amazing declaration, ‘no other god can save in this way’. How does God save us today in a way no one else ever could? (see Jesus’ parable in Luke 12:16-21)
7. What have you discovered about God and his purposes in Daniel 3 that would enable you to hold on to your loyalty to God when facing the fire?
8. What situation(s) are you facing, or could you face where your loyalty to Jesus might be tested? How will you handle it?
9. What does the three men’s reply in verses 16-18 tell you about our God? Why is that so encouraging?

**Study 4 God humbles the proud Daniel 4**

The chapter begins with a statement praising God from Nebuchadnezzar himself, and it ends with a similar praise. Scholars have noted that the 7 year period where Neb was unfit for rule is not mentioned outside the Bible, but we do not have many details about his realm, and it is not the kind of thing a king would want preserved for posterity anyway. Interestingly a document discovered at Qumran called the prayer of Nabonidus (the last king of Babylon and Belshazzar’s father) sheds some light on the matter. Nabonidus fell ill for 7 years, at the end of which he was said to have been cured by an unnamed jewish ‘diviner’.

1. In this chapter God gives a clear warning to Neb. If God were to give you a warning, what would he say and how would he do it?
2. For what does Neb specifically praise God (verse 3)?
3. Why is this judgment about to fall on Neb (verse 17)? How would you paraphrase this verse?
4. What was going to happen to Neb?
5. What was Daniel’s advice?
6. For what did Neb praise God in verses 34-35?
7. What did God teach Neb through the dreams and the consequences?
8. Over what kind of things are you most tempted towards pride? Give an example from the culture around us. How can you embrace humility in these areas?
9. God disciplined Neb immediately until he acknowledged that the Most High is sovereign over all the kingdoms of earth. When in your life have you experience what you may later realise was the discipline of our loving Father? What did you learn from it?
10. Look at Neb’s descriptions of God. What strikes you as most meaningful in your life at this time? Why?
11. What changes is God prompting you to make in your own life as a result of this chapter?
12. How would you warn a Christian friend in love if you saw them making wrong decisions? How does pride blind us from seeing the reality of who God is and what a right relationship with him looks like? What are some of the worst examples of pride you have seen?

**Study 5 God has the last word Daniel 5**

On to our stage marches proud and arrogant Belshazzar. But the big question is: who is he? Until recently he was thought to be one of the errors in the Biblical account of history that leads people to doubt its accuracy. No such king is mentioned, and the last king of Babylon is Nabonidus (see the timeline in appendix 1). There are now many textual witness to the fact that Belshazzar was the son of Nabonidus, and was actually coregent and in charge of Babylon during his father’s ten year absence. This incident occurs at the very end of the exile, and although similar to chapter 4, has some significant differences..

1. Why are people inclined to mask their fear of death by indulging in the sensual pleasures of this world? How might you be tempted to do this in your own life?
2. Just as Belshazzar blasphemed God by using holy goblets from the temple (see Daniel 1:1-2) designed for worship, how do people dishonour or blaspheme God today in similar ways?
3. How did the Queen describe Daniel? What would others say about you – what kind of reputation do you have with people outside the church?
4. How was Daniel different in his dealings with Belshazzar as distinct from Nebuchadnezzar?
5. What was Daniel’s explanation for why the King became like an animal (verse 21)?
6. Of what exactly was Belshazzar guilty (verse 23)?
7. How is Belshazzar’s leadership such a contrast with Jesus in the way they relate to God? (see John 17:1-5)
8. What warning do you think God would give you today? What will you do about it?
9. What are the 5 concerns that Daniel brought to the King in verses 22-23. Of all that Daniel says to Belshazzar what did you hear as the most stinging? Why?
10. How could God use you to warn others as Daniel did?
11. What has this account taught you about God and your relationship to him?

**Study 6 God tames lions Daniel 6**

This is the last of the stories concerning Daniel’s activities in the foreign court. The identity of Darius presents us with another issue – who is he? We know that Cyrus was King of Persia at the time Babylon fell (539 BC). No Darius is mentioned. Darius 1 became king later (522BC). The most plausible solution is that Darius is Gu/Ugbaru, the general to whom is attributed the conquest of Babylon. But we cannot be certain. However, as in the case of Belshazzar, we may discover records in the future that bring clarity. There are plenty of events and names that are lost in antiquity. It is certainly possible that this general could have been known as Darius, and indeed Daniel introduces us to this man as Darius, and that is how we will proceed.

1. What do you most admire about Daniel? Why?
2. How did Daniel distinguish himself according to verse 3?
3. What did the other satraps try to discover about Daniel? What did they find out? (verses 4-5).
4. What was their plan to get rid of him?
5. How did Daniel respond to the decree (10)?
6. How did the accusers present their case to the king? What was the king’s response?
7. How did Daniel explain his survival in verses 22-23?
8. What happened to Daniel’s accusers?
9. Does this chapter teach us that God will deliver us from life threatening situations whenever we face them? Why or why not?
10. If you were investigated in an attempt to discredit you, what do you think would be discovered?
11. Would your loyalty to Jesus be something you are known for so that it could be used against you?? Why? Why not?
12. How do you handle it when people accuse you falsely?
13. Daniel prayed three times every day. How regular is your prayer life? What is your habit of prayer?
14. If being a Christian was outlawed in Australia, could you be arrested for going about your every day routine?
15. How can you encourage fellow believers to stand firm in the Faith in our challenging culture?

**Some thoughts on interpreting apocalyptic literature. (see also appendix 3 Principles for applying ancient apocalyptic).**

We move from court narrative in chapter 1-6 to a different style of literature in chapters 7-12. It is called apocalyptic from the Greek word ‘apokalypsis’ and simply means ‘revelation’. In common use apocalyptic can mean an impending sense of doom, a feeling that the world is coming to an end. This gets us close to the idea, but doesn’t quite get us there. A violent end to history is certainly on the minds of those who write apocalyptic literature, BUT instead of imparting a sense of doom and gloom, books like Daniel and Revelation inspire joy and optimism. Apocalyptic announces the end to human corruption and the oppression of God’s people. This ‘end’ is brought about by our God. Apocalyptic celebrates the victory of God over all his (and our) enemies. It’s why I often summarise the book of Revelation as “Jesus wins”!

So we move from the present circumstances of God’s people in exile to their ultimate liberation. We move from human evil to the spiritual forces behind all evil; from deliverance from a lion’s den to deliverance from death itself.

Having said all this, Apocalyptic is more than that. It uses strange pictures of beasts and riders; strange timetables that are difficult if not impossible to identify. Apocalyptic is like poetry in that it uses metaphors and symbols which teach by analogy. They throw light on difficult ideas by relating them to something we know from experience. Apocalyptic speaks accurately but not precisely, we don’t always know the exact correspondence. It is a mistake, therefore to interpret apocalyptic images too finely, to press for details the writer never intended, sadly this has led many to all kinds of fanciful interpretations and bizarre claims. As you work through the remaining chapters, please be careful as you read and don’t push what is probably our natural desire for detail beyond what is necessary. Sometimes we need to live with uncertainty. As with the interpretation of the kingdoms and beasts, we may hear different interpretive opinions but the overall message is quite clear.

Often the imagery is more difficult for us to discern than it was for the original readers. So observing the connections with prior revelation and with ancient Near Eastern literature can help us unlock some of the mystery we are faced with. Much of the imagery is given to evoke powerful feelings in the original hearers and in us. A brief summary of the major themes can steer us in the right direction.

* The horror of human evil, particularly as it is concentrated in the state
* The announcement of a specific time of deliverance
* Repentance that leads to deliverance
* The revelation that a cosmic war stands behind human conflict
* Judgment as certain for those who resist God and oppress his people
* The equally certain truth that God’s people, downtrodden in the present, will experience new life in the fullest sense[[1]](#footnote-1).

I have recommended Andrew Reid’s book, ***Daniel –*** ***Kingdoms in conflict*** to all Growth Group leaders. Chapter 17 may be helpful to you as you come to grips with apocalyptic literature.

**Study 7 Four great beasts Daniel 7**

1. What are your initial thoughts and reactions to this vision?
2. Which four beasts came up out of the sea? What is disturbing about each of them? What is unique about the horn?
3. What does each beast represent? What was their ultimate fate and who controls that fate? (I think there is intentional ambiguity about identifying these beasts with particular nations. Yes the first one is probably Babylon, but it would be going too far to identify particular nations with the other three – the issue is that evil kingdoms will continue to arise until the final day. Most commentators assume similarity with the statue in chapter 2).
4. How is the Ancient of days described?
5. What happened to the beasts – particularly the one with the ten horns?
6. Who approached the throne? How is he described?
7. Who did Daniel ask for help?
8. Which beast was Daniel concerned with? Why?
9. What would happen to God’s people according to verses 21 and 25?
10. What is the ultimate end of the evil kingdom (26-27)? How does the book of Revelation show us the ultimate end of evil? (chapters 21 and 22)
11. There is much conjecture about the ten horns and the little horn. Many identify the little horn as Antiochus Epiphanes IV (see the timeline in appendix 1). This ruler certainly persecuted the people of God from 168-165 BC. But the phrase, ‘time, times and half a time’ is more than likely NOT three and a half years. It is better to understand this phrase more vaguely, that is the rebellion of the little horn will get off to a false start and seem to gather momentum and last for ever, but then is suddenly cut off. There are a number of regimes throughout history to which this phrase can apply. I think that is a more helpful way to interpret the phrase and the little horn
12. Why should Daniel’s vision matter to us today? How should it affect our behaviour?
13. What is most scary about the future for you?
14. What will the ‘Ancient of Days’ and the “Son of man” do in the future? Why does Jesus use this title of himself as distinct from all the other titles that are rightfully his? (see Matthew 26:62-68).
15. How does this vision help you deal with your anxieties about the future? How does it strengthen your faith and commitment to Jesus?

**Study 8 The Ram and the Goat Daniel 8**

In chapter 8 the main protagonists are clearly identified for us. The ram with the two horns is the kings of Media and Persia. In the vision one grows larger than the other referring to the fact that the Persian part swallowed up the median part. The goat with the single horn is Greece with Alexander as its first king. He died at a young age and his kingdom was divided up into four headed by his four generals (The Diadochi). Scholars generally agree that the focus now shifts to Antiochus IV Epiphanes – he is the horn that grew out of one of the four. The book of Maccabees tells us that he ordered temple sacrifices to stop. And sacrificed a pig to Zeus in the temple! Again the number 2300 is best taken as symbolic, although it is possible to fit the dating well!

1. How does Daniel 8 connect to the vision of the animals in chapter 7 and the vision of the statue in chapter 2?
2. What physical features of the ram are mentioned? How is it described in verse 4?
3. How is the goat described in verses 5 and 8? What did the goat do to the ram?
4. Who do the ram and the goat represent? Why is this depiction fitting?
5. What did the horn that came from the goat do (10-12)?
6. What is the questions asked in verse 13? With what is it specifically concerned?
7. What is the subject matter of this vision according to verse 17?
8. What instructions are given to Daniel about the vision? What reason is given? (verses 17-19)
9. How would you describe the antichrist based on this vision?
10. Who will ultimately defeat him and how (see 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12)?
11. Who do the ram and the goat represent? Why is this depiction fitting?
12. Describe the horn, who is he and when does he live? What will happen to him in the end (see Revelation 19)? Who is the Prince of princes (verse 25)?
13. How can the ultimate defeat of all evil encourage us today when we face suffering, persecution and pain?
14. What does it mean for you to live now in the light of the future God has prepared for us? What does it mean to be ‘ready’ as Jesus commands us in Matthew 24:22?

**Study 9 Daniel’s prayer Daniel 9:1-21**

Daniel has been reading Jeremiah the prophet (chapters 25:11-12; 29:10) and realises that the period of 70 years are up. This prompts his prayer, he had probably also reflected on 1 Kings 8:33-35, 46-51).

1. Describe the tone of Daniel’s prayer. What was he asking specifically?
2. What did Daniel understand in verse 2?
3. What did he do with this information (3-4)?
4. How did Daniel describe God (verse 4)?
5. What sins had the people of Israel committed (7-11)?What did Daniel confess, on whose behalf was he speaking?
6. In spite of this, what had they **not** done according to verses 13-14?
7. What were the consequences of their sin? How do we know that they had been warned beforehand?
8. To which act of God did Daniel refer in verse 15?
9. What reasons did Daniel give for asking God to restore the people inverses 17-19?
10. What did he ask of God in verse 19?
11. How has Daniel’s prayer encouraged you to pray differently?
12. Which character traits of God did Daniel highlight? How can you praise God for who he is?
13. What part does confessing your sins play in your prayer life? How can you do that as a group?
14. How does Scripture itself help us in our prayers?
15. Who will you pray for this week according to God’s promises to us in Jesus about the coming of his kingdom in glory (Matthew 25:31-46)?

**Study 10 The seventy sevens Daniel 9:22-27**

1. Speculations on when end-time events will occur and how they will unfold are rife among Christian people. There are those who say there will be a literal 1,000 year reign of Christ on earth before the end, there are those who say that we are in the 1,000 years now. I remain firmly of the opinion that Christ could return at any time, even tomorrow. But that second coming will be it. That will be the end of history and we will reign with Christ for ever. Why is it important to understand what the Bible says about the future?
2. Describe these events? What events have already happened, what events are still to come?
3. Who will be involved in those events?
4. What is the central issue addressed here?
5. Why had Gabriel come to Daniel?
6. What had God decreed? Why?
7. What are the purposes of the seventy sevens? How does Jesus’ first coming relate to these?
8. How is the anointed one cut off (verse 26)? Is this a defeat or a victory?
9. What do these verses tell us about Israel’s past? What kind of glimpse do they give into the future?
10. How seriously does God take sin and rebellion in the lives of his people (Leviticus 26:14-46)? What does Galatians 6:7-8 say about it?
11. What comes to your mind when people mention ‘prophecies’ and/or ‘end times’? What purpose do prophecies have for believers?
12. What will happen to the ‘ruler’ who destroys the city and the sanctuary (verse 27).
13. How does the knowledge of the end times affect your attitudes and choices today (Matthew 25:1-30)?

**Study 11 Angels and demons Daniel 10**

1. When did Daniel receive this vision?
2. What did he see (5-6), what was his reaction?
3. How did the angel comfort and reassure Daniel?
4. What did the angel come to explain?
5. What was Daniel feeling (15-17)?
6. What did the angel do for Daniel and what was he preparing to do according to verses 20-21?
7. How would you describe Daniel’s experience in chapter 10?
8. How does it change your view of world events to know that there is a spiritual battle going on? How does that encourage you to pray ( see for instance Ephesians 6:10-20) ?
9. What do you think most people believe about angels and demons?
10. How does Daniel’s intense desire to hear God act as a model for our prayers?
11. How did Daniel struggle, and how did the angel encourage him at the end of the chapter?
12. What can we learn about angels and demons from this chapter (see James 4:7 and Revelation 2-3)?
13. The angel told Daniel to consider carefully the words he told him. How can we be more serious about hearing God’s word and allowing it to inform our decision making and priorities?

I remember when Frank Pereti’s books were all the rage. He suggested that we all have angels watching over us. It seems like sometimes our imaginations can run away with us, the problem is that it takes away our responsibility to live faithfully. After all Pereti’s books were fiction. That’s why we need to interpret God’s word carefully. On the other hand I stayed with a lady in Gulgong who was a churchwarden and we had great discussions because she refused to believe in anything ‘supernatural’ at all. What about the resurrection? What about so many of the things Jesus did? Her presuppositions were formed by a naturalistic worldview owing its basis to the world’s philosophy rather than the Bible.

**Study 12 The Big God wins Daniel 11-12**

1. An angel says that a king was coming. How is he described? What will happen to him?
2. Look at chapter 11:5-20, summarise the conflict between the kings of the North and South. How will Israel be affected? Have a go at drawing it.
3. How is the next king described in verse 21? What horrible thing does he do to the Jewish people?
4. What was the king’s attitude towards God?
5. What is Michael’s role in chapter 12:1?
6. According to 12:2-3, what are the two possible futures for those who ‘sleep in the dust of the earth’ (see also Matthew 25:31-46)?
7. What questions does Daniel ask in verses 6 and 8? What answers does he get?
8. What is the significance of the last words in 12:13?
9. How does knowing the end of the antichrist encourage you?
10. How do you know which destiny is yours (12:2-3)?
11. What are the characteristics of ‘the wise’ in 11:32-35 and 12:3,10? Where do they come from?
12. How has this Book challenged you to share Christ with those who don’t know him and help them grow in Christ?

***Appendix 1: Some dates relevant to the book of Daniel.***

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Babylon** | **Media** | | **Persia** |
| Nebuchadnezzar (605-562) | Cyarxes (625-585) | |  |
| (Jerusalem sacked (586) |  | |  |
| Amel\_Marduk (562-560) |  | |  |
| Neriglissar (560-556) |  | |  |
| Nabonidus (556-539) | Astyages (585-550) | | Cyrus the great (550-530) |
| Belshazzar (549-539) |  | | Defeats Astyages (550) |
|  |  | | Captures Babylon (539) |
|  |  | | Jewish Exiles return (538) |
|  |  | | Cambyses (530-522) |
|  |  | | Darius 1 (522-486) |
|  |  | | Xerxes 1 (486-465) |
|  |  | | Artaxerxes 1 (465-424) |
|  |  | | Xerxes 2 (423) |
|  |  | | Darius 2 (423-404) |
|  |  | | Artaxerxes 2(404-358) |
|  |  | | Artaxerxes 3 (358-338) |
|  |  | | Arses (338 – 336) |
|  |  | | Darius 3 (336-331) |
|  |  | |  |
|  | **Macedonia** | |  |
|  | Alexander the Great (336-323) | |  |
|  | Invades Asia Minor (334) | |  |
|  | Defeats Darius 3 (331) | |  |
|  |  | |  |
| ***The Ptolemies*** | | ***The Seleucids*** | |
| Ptolemy 1 Lagi (323-285) | | Seleucus 1 (312-280 | |
| *Palestine under the Ptolemies* | | Antiochus 1 (280-261) | |
| Ptolemy 2 Philadelphus (285-246) | | Antiochus 2 (261-246) | |
| Ptolemy 3 Euergetes (246-221) | | Seleucus 2 (246-226) | |
|  | | Seleucus 3 (226-223) | |
| Ptolemy 4 Philopater (221-203) | | Antiochus 3 the great (223-187) | |
| Ptolemy 5 Epiphanes (203-181) | | *Gains control of Palestine (198)* | |
| Seleucus 4 (187-175 | |  | |
| Ptolemy 6 Philometor (181-146 | | Antiochus 4 Epiphanes (175-164) | |
|  | | *Persecutor of the Jews* | |

***Appendix 2: Interpreting the Statue of Daniel 2***

The traditional view:

Head of gold Nebuchadnezzar

Arms and chest of Silver Medo-Persian empire

Belly and thighs of bronze Greek empire

Legs of iron Romans empire

Some others have proposed the following:-

Head of gold Nebuchadnezzar

Arms and chest of Silver Medes

Belly and thighs of bronze Persian empire

Legs of iron Greek empire

It may be that we are not intended to be as precise in identifying the kingdoms as we would like, but the imagery teaches us that God is sovereign, he is in control despite present conditions.

***Appendix 3 Principles for applying ancient apocalyptic. (from Tremper Longman, Daniel, 191-194)***

1. Be cautious. These pictures that Daniel gives us are always relevant to us, but occasionally Christians become obsessed with them. Hal Lindsay’s book, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, is one such example.
2. Recognise that this type of literature uses imagery frequently. God is the ‘Ancient of Days’ sitting on a throne on judgement. Literally God is not an old man, nor does he sit on a physical throne. The key to understanding is to find the point of connection, and that sometimes means we will be left with ambiguity, but that is ok.
3. Numbers are used symbolically in apocalyptic.
4. Put yourself in the (shoes) tongs of the original readers, what would they have understood from what we are now reading. The basic themes are understandable without a lot of research. God is in control despite the circumstances and apparent power of the ungodly, and he will bring an end to all evil.

Tremper Longman has written an excellent article on the issue of interpretation, I have a copy if you would like to read it.

1. Tremper LongmanIII, ***Daniel***: Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, (1999), 178-179 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)