

LESSON TEXT: Hermeneutics
Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

What is *hermeneutics*? That's not in the Bible, is it? **Yes, it is!** The word comes from the Greek language and means "to interpret, to give the meaning, to translate." Jesus used this word in Luke 24:27 (see also 1 Cor. 12:10; 12:30; 14:5,13,26,27). When studying the book of Daniel it is **imperative** that one make a brief study of the rules for interpreting Scripture. They are the **same rules** as those for **interpreting or understanding any book written in human language**. The Bible **IS** in human language (1 Cor. 2:13).

You may have heard all your life, "Welllll...that's just your interpretation and everyone sees the Bible differently." Let me assure you that God expects all people to understand His word alike! Jesus expected all the Jews to understand the Messianic prophecies alike! There should not be many conflicting interpretations of the Gospels, the Epistles, the book of Revelation, or Daniel--or any other book of the Bible. There should be just **one, heremenutically-correct, interpretation!** This does not mean that any one Christian has arrived at the perfect and absolute interpretation of the Bible. It **does** mean we must all be honestly, truthfully, and **diligently striving** to arrive at the **one meaning God intended**. We can do it! It is not impossible! We must **agree** to apply **correct hermeneutics** (rules of interpreting human language); we must be willing to **work** at it; we must be willing to give up preconceived and prejudiced notions about what we "feel" the Bible **must** mean. Our Restoration Movement which has brought many to the holy quest for Christian unity. The Christian church exists because of hermeneutics!

"When Michelangelo painted the figures on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel he distorted them, knowing they would look life-like and in true proportion when viewed from the floor sixty feet below.

We, however, do no service to truth when we distort it, even if it is only a tiny distortion."

1000 Windows, by Robert C. Shannon

QUESTIONS:

1. Does God expect us to **understand** the Bible? (Deut. 29:29; Ezra 7:10; Neh. 8:1-8; Psa. 119:34-105; Lk. 16:29-31).
2. There are four fundamental principles for interpreting the Bible--do you know what they are? They are the same fundamental principles for understanding any communication in human language! Should all people understand the Bible alike? Why? Should we apply hermeneutics to understanding cook-books?
3. What did Paul mean in his admonition, Rightly handling the word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15). The Greek word is *ortho-tomounta* (lit. correct-cutting).
4. What is a **symbol** (Gr. cast-together)? What is a figure (Gr. *peromoios* lit. alongside-alike)? Do people use symbols and figures in communicating apart from the Bible? How are we to interpret what they stand for? (Jn. 16:25; Heb. 9:9; 1 Cor. 10:11).
5. What is **apocalyptic** language? (See Isa. 13:10; Joel 2:10,31; Amos 8:9; Matt. 24:1-35). Do modern, non-biblical writers use *apocalyptic* language? Is Daniel *apocalyptic*? Have **you** ever used *apocalyptic* language?
6. What did Paul mean when he said that Christians should have their faculties for understanding God's word trained by practice? Heb. 5:11-14
7. Does God expect us to understand the book of Daniel? Why? Are we supposed to all arrive at the same understanding of this book? May we?
8. What relationship does Daniel have to the book of Revelation (compare Daniel, ch. 7 with Revelation ch. 13:1-2).

"It was at a missionary committee meeting in England that the chair-person startled the people by claiming he had founded a growing Christian group in India. They knew he had never been outside of England. He explained that when he was 5 years old, he had been impressed by a story of missions in India. He didn't want to just put his penny in the box. The pastor had a friend who was a missionary. The little boy bought a Bible, put his own name on the flyleaf, and mailed it to India. The missionary gave it to a poor man who had walked miles to ask for a Bible. Twenty years passed, and a visitor to a remote Indian village found the people there were Christians. No missionary had ever visited them. But they showed him a well-used New Testament with a boy's name on the flyleaf."

LESSON TEXT: Daniel 1:1-21
Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

A famous heiress kept her priceless collection of jewels in the vault of a large bank. One of her prize possessions was a very valuable string of pearls. It is a scientific fact that pearls lose their original luster if not worn once in a while in contact with the human body. Once a week, a bank secretary, guarded by two plainclothes policemen, wore these priceless pearls to lunch. This brief contact with the human body kept them beautiful and in good condition. Human faith is a lot like the pearl. It must be used in order to be useful. It must be worn out among the masses of mankind where faith and hope are needed.

Daniel was one of God's "pearls." God had critical need to keep Daniel's faith in good condition. The Hebrew people had been thrust into the midst of a totally alien and heathen culture in Babylon. The survival of a Messianic remnant would depend on strong leadership. It would demand a messenger for God whose faith had been put to the test. The remnant must have a leader who could demonstrate it was possible to be true to God and his word, living and functioning in a work-a-day, head-on, real-life confrontation with heathenism. Daniel did it!

Daniel's experience is not altogether unimaginable for today! Something similar happened to John Noble, taken prisoner by the Communists in 1945! But **today**, every Christian lives in a work-a-day, alien, heathen world. The question is, Will Christians let God keep their faith lustrous and useful by putting it to the test in contact with the world? Or, will Christians try to hide their faith?

"Dare to be a Daniel, dare to stand alone.
Dare to have a purpose firm;
dare to make it known."
---a hymn by P. P. Bliss

QUESTIONS:

1. How could Daniel be so docile about being thrust as a prisoner of war into education in Babylonian culture and government service? Would you? Has God given guidance in this matter? 1:1-7 Jer. 27:1-22; 29:4-14; 1 Cor. 9:19-23
2. Could Daniel's situation be applied to Christians? 1:1-7 Does Christianity need a Christian culture to exist? What about Christians in first century Roman culture? What about Christians in Islamic cultures?
3. What does Daniel's skill, in light of the opportunity it gave him to serve God, say to you about perfecting whatever vocational skills you have? 1:4
4. What was wrong with the king's rich food and wine? Didn't Hebrews eat rich food and drink wine? If Daniel was willing to learn Babylonian culture, why not eat their food? 1:8
5. Are there things good and bad in modern culture which the Christian must sort out? Where is there guidance on this problem? Is it a matter of taste? Is there a standardized code for such sorting? 1:8-16
6. Why did Daniel suggest the 10-day trial period for eating vegetables? Is there a principle in this Christians could use? 1:12-16
7. Did God give the Hebrew youths wisdom, or did they learn it during the 3 years of training? Or both? Where does the Holy Spirit give us wisdom today? 1:17-21

WORDS OF WISDOM

- "Bloom where you are planted" –
Nancy Reader Campion's Aunt Grace
"When we cannot act as we wish, we must act as we can." --Terence
"The art of life lies in a constant readjustment to our surroundings." --Kakuzo Okakura
"If you live in the river you should make friends with the crocodile." --Punjabi proverb
"If the wind will not serve, take to the oars." --Latin proverb

LESSON TEXT: Daniel 2:1-49
Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

The venerable historian Edward Gibbon who wrote *The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire*, once said, "Men write histories; goodness is silent. History is, indeed, little more than the register of the crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind." Mr. Gibbon apparently had not read the book of Daniel!

Goodness is not silent! God writes history before it happens! And God's revelations of history tell the world (the listening world) that Goodness is in control of history. Albert Einstein said, "I believe in Spinoza's God, who reveals himself in the orderly harmony of all that exists, not in the God who concerns himself with fates and actions of human beings." Einstein evidently did not believe Daniel's book. Daniel represents God as not only the author of order and harmony, but also concerning himself with the fate and actions of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon (2:36ff), and many other human beings.

Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon controlled in a life-and-death situation all the known civilized world. It threatened to obliterate the redemptive work of God from the face of the earth. God revealed to Daniel, through the heathen emperor's dream, that God's kingdom would survive not only Babylon, but three more successive threatening world-empires and beastly individuals. Daniel predicted God's kingdom (the NT church) would be the last **universal** kingdom to encompass the civilized world. Chapter 2 of Daniel is one of the places where he plugs in to the book of Revelation. You will not want to be absent from Bible school this Sunday!

"God governs in the affairs of men; and if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, neither can a kingdom rise without his aid."—Benjamin Franklin

QUESTIONS:

1. Whence did Nebuchadnezzar's dream come? 2:1,28. Why did he insist that his wise men tell him **what** he had dreamed? Are we to rely on dreams and visions for revelation from God today? cf. 1 Jn. 4:1-6; Jude 8
2. If the wise men could not tell the emperor what he dreamed, how could they interpret it if the emperor told them his dream? 2:3-11 would the emperor's test be a good one to employ on alleged prophets today?
3. Why did this Hebrew prisoner-of-war, Daniel, concern himself with saving the necks of his enemies? 2:12-24 why not just let the king give them what they deserve?
4. What are the latter days Daniel refers to in 2:28-30? He will use the phrase (with modifications) again (see Dan. 8:17,19,26; 9:26; 10:14; 11:27,35,36; 12:6,9,13). In **context**, what did the author intend?
5. If Nebuchadnezzar is the head of gold of the image, who, or what kingdoms, are represented by the silver, bronze, and iron and clay? 2:31-41. (study the parallel beasts in Daniel 7:1-27).
6. What does the failure of iron to mix with clay **symbolize** concerning the fourth kingdom? 2:42-43. Did that really happen to the fourth kingdom?
7. If the kingdom of God is to smash to pieces this image in the days of the fourth kingdom, does it coincide with anything we know now--or is it all yet to be future? What is the **kingdom of God?** 2:44-45
8. Was Daniel's revelation written to confuse you or strengthen you? Which does it do? Why? 2:46-49

"God manages perfectly, day and night, year in and year out, the movements of the stars, the wheeling of the planets, the staggering coordination of events that goes on in the molecular level in order to hold things together. There is no doubt that He can manage the timing of my days and weeks."

--Elisabeth Elliot

"There is no impossible situation that God cannot handle. He won't necessarily handle it your way, but He'll handle it!" --Charles R. Swindoll

LESSON TEXT: Daniel 3:1-30
Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

In chapter one, the great Babylonian czar was brought face to face with four Hebrew men, worshipers of Jehovah, whose wisdom outclassed that of his heathen scientists ten to one. In chapter two, Nebuchadnezzar, ruler of the world, learned the Hebrew's God knew all of history, from beginning to end.

In chapter three this same great potentate is confronted with incontrovertible, empirical evidence, which he witnesses with his own eyes, that Jehovah is able to save his believing people from certain death. Three Hebrew men who have refused to bow down before an idol are thrown into a fiery furnace. But they are preserved by a fourth person who has appeared in the furnace from nowhere! Nebuchadnezzar sees this fourth person and brings out the other three who do not even have the smell of smoke on their clothing, so complete is their preservation.

This experience is, of course, to strengthen the faith of the nation in exile. God wants the Jews to believe he will keep his promise to deliver them from the furnace of Babylonian exile and fulfill his Messianic promises.

But the experience was also for the benefit of Nebuchadnezzar and his heathen subjects. God wanted them to acknowledge Jehovah's sovereignty. God is not willing that even Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians be lost. God continued to reveal himself to this emperor (chs. 1-4) until he came to an elementary confession of faith in Jehovah (Dan. 4:34-37; 5:21).

Don't give up trying to bring every man to faith in Christ. Keep on presenting evidences for faith; keep on living what you believe, and God will take care of the results. If Nebuchadnezzar can be brought to acknowledge the one true God, perhaps your boss, your neighbor, or even your nation's political leaders may!

All the evidence in the world would not have convinced Nebuchadnezzar of Jehovah's existence and power had the Hebrews, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego not manifested their faith in God. ---PTB

QUESTIONS:

1. What about Nebuchadnezzar's image—what did it look like? Why did he erect it? What is meant by his order to worship it? 3:1-5
2. Why threaten non-worshipers of the image with a fiery furnace death? 3:6 (see Jer. 29:22). Would a Hebrew associate this kind of death with being cursed by God (see 1 Sam. 31:8-13).
3. Do you think some of the Jews worshiped the image while others did not? 3:7-12
4. Why were Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego singled out for refusal to worship the image? 3:12
5. Nebuchadnezzar believed in the gods—but what is the one thing he **didn't** believe about the gods? 3:15 Has modern man changed much?
6. The 3 Hebrew men believed God **could** deliver them from death in the furnace if he wished, but what if he didn't wish?—what did they believe about God then? 3:16-18 (see Heb. 11:32-40) **what about your faith in God?**
7. Who was the fourth man in the fiery furnace? 3:24-25
8. Is Nebuchadnezzar coming to faith in Jehovah-God? 3:28-30. Read on in chapter 4!

“Our only warrant for believing that God cares is that He has communicated this fact to us. It is the key fact about Himself which He has chosen to reveal to us, and it is the most comforting fact imaginable.” --Louis Cassels

“There are things to be seen and learned in apparent wastelands which cannot be seen and learned in places of comfort, convenience and company. God intends to keep us in a place where there is nothing else we can count on.”
--Elisabeth Elliot

LESSON TEXT: Daniel 4:1-37
Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

The Tower of Babel (i.e., Babylon) was an attempt to repudiate God's sovereignty. Human beings decided that **universal, human rule** (disregard of God's will) would supply everything they needed. All people, together, under one human ruler or government, could surely build a tower and find heaven as they wanted it. God thwarted that (Gen. 11) and began, from a family (Gen. 12), to form a kingdom which would, by God's grace, bring humans to heaven.

Thousands of years later, the Babylonians, led by Nebuchadnezzar, had the same dream. Nebuchadnezzar dreamed about himself as a tree, strong and great, reaching to heaven, providing sustenance for the whole world! This emperor saw himself as a god, as creator of great Babylon (4:30). He believed his universal rule would solve all the problems of mankind and create Utopia on earth.

Many a human political leader has dreamed Nebuchadnezzar's dream. At least the first half of the dream! Cyrus the Persian envisioned himself as the benefactor of mankind; Alexander the Great attempted to create Utopia by saturating the world in Greek culture; the Caesars of Rome tried to force all mankind into peace and prosperity; Napoleon wanted to emulate the Caesars; the British empire; the Nazi Third Reich; even American politicians have, to varying degrees, fantasized the same illusion. And, because of the very nature of this fantasy, all human forms of government do, in degrees, stand in opposition to the kingdom of God, the church. Because, you see, it's the devil's lie that humans, by their own devices, can be self-sufficient.

But, there is another half to Nebuchadnezzar's dream! In the first half, God revealed to the king what the king thought of himself. In the second half God revealed what the Divine will was! God knows there is no king or human kingdom capable of reaching to heaven and providing ultimate human need. British imperialism failed, Nazism failed, Communism was a miserable failure, even American democracy fails. Divine grace alone succeeds which is available only in Christ's kingdom---the church.

QUESTIONS:

1. Why do you think Nebuchadnezzar wanted to publish this dream? 4:1-2
2. Why was he so terrified of the dream? 4:4-5
3. Why would he dream of himself as a tree? 4:10ff (see Isa. 2:13; 10:18-19; Jer. 22:7,23; Ezek. 17:1ff; 31:3ff).
4. Why was Daniel alarmed? 4:19
5. What was wrong with Nebuchadnezzar's thinking of himself as a **great** tree? 4:20-25 (see Isa. 14:4-21)
6. How does God expect a heathen king to practice righteousness? 4:27. Does he expect rulers to do so today? Even secular and atheistic rulers?
7. How did Nebuchadnezzar react to Daniel's call for repentance? 4:28-30
8. What happened to Nebuchadnezzar when he began to boast? 4:30-33. Would God still do that to arrogant rulers today?
9. Do you think Nebuchadnezzar came to believe in Jehovah-God? 4:34-37

"A proud man is always looking down on things and people; and, of course, as long as you're looking down, you can't see something that's above you." -- C.S. Lewis

"Whenever vanity and gaiety, a love of pomp and dress--expensive diversions and elegant entertainments, get the better of principles and judgments of men and women, there is no knowing where they will stop, nor into what evils--natural, moral, or political--they will lead us."
--John Adams, 2nd President of the USA

When a victorious Roman general arrived back in Rome, he was given a hero's welcome and a triumphant parade of victory. But a philosopher was hired to ride beside him in the victory parade. As the victor acknowledged the cheers of the crowd, the philosopher kept whispering in his ear:
"You are mortal. You are mortal."
--1000 Windows, by Robert C. Shannon

LESSON TEXT: Daniel 5:1-31
Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

The Great Wall of China was decades in building, and finished at the expense of vast treasure and 1000s of human lives. It was intended for a defense against the marauding hordes of the north, who had so often laid waste to the land. However, historians tell us that within a short time of its completion it was pierced and proved inadequate, not because it was not massive and well enough built, but because of the human element--in each case the enemy bribed the guards.

Babylon was thought to be impregnable--unconquerable, but it too, fell. Not because of weak fortifications but because of the human element. An enemy (the devil) bribed Belshazzar with the idea of hedonism. Belshazzar paid no attention to God's sovereignty in life which had been demonstrated to his father, Nebuchadnezzar. Belshazzar was willing to listen to the lie that life should be one huge playboy club.

The great citadel of human salvation, freedom and dignity--the church--is being attacked with the same bribery today. A seductive self-ism is being propagated and practiced within certain segments of Christendom even now. It is no better than the philosophy advocated by Hugh Hefner who said: "Any doctrine is evil if it teaches that self-denial is preferable to self-gratification." And the atheist philosopher Ayn Rand wrote, "Man exists for his own sake, the pursuit of his own happiness is his highest moral purpose...he must not sacrifice himself to others nor sacrifice others to himself." Ernest Hemingway said, "What is moral is what you feel good after; what is immoral is what you feel bad after."

Jesus was not against pleasure. He said, "I have come that you may have life, and have it abundantly." He meant the abundant life in the here and now and forever after. But Jesus insists that this kind of rich, full, great life can only come through **self-sacrifice** (not self-indulgence). He taught, demonstrated and confirmed once for all by his resurrection "Whosoever shall seek to save his life is going to lose it; but whosoever will lose his life for my sake will save it." Let the church of Christ take heed--it cannot indulge in selfishness and please the Lord.

QUESTIONS:

1. What was Belshazzar's purpose in drinking wine from the vessels of the Jewish temple? 5:1-4
2. What was so terrifying about a hand writing on the palace wall? 5:5-6. Should people be terrified of God's written word (the Bible) today?
3. Why couldn't Belshazzar's wise men read this writing--wasn't it in human language? 5:7-9
4. If the queen-mother knew about Daniel's power, why didn't Belshazzar know about it? 5:10-16
5. Why did Daniel refuse the rewards offered by Belshazzar--he accept those offered by Nebuchadnezzar. 5:17
6. How could Daniel condemn Belshazzar for **not** following in his father's acknowledgment of Jehovah? 5:18-23. Does God expect all earthly rulers to acknowledge his sovereignty?
7. What balances were used to weigh Belshazzar? 5:24-28
8. Did Daniel's prediction come true? 5:24-30. Who were the Medes and Persians? (They are mentioned in Daniel chs. 2 & 7; see also Isa. 13:17; 21:2; 44:28; 45:1-25; Jer. 51:11-14).

"History fails to record a single precedent in which nations subject to moral decay have not passed into political and economic decline. There has been either a spiritual awakening to overcome the moral lapse, or a progressive deterioration leading to ultimate national disaster."

General of the Army, Douglas MacArthur, spoken during the Korean War

"Every master of slaves is born a petty tyrant. They bring the judgment of heaven upon a country. As nations cannot be rewarded or punished in the next world, they must be in this.

By an inevitable chain of causes and effects, Providence punishes national sins, by national calamities."

--George Mason (1725-1792)...Father of the Bill of Rights, the first 10 amendments to the U.S. Constitution

"Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires." --Romans 13:14

LESSON TEXT: Daniel 6:1-28
Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

“We hold these truths to be **self-evident**, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain **unalienable Rights**, that among these are **Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness**. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it.” The Declaration of Independence of the United States of America

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.” First Amendment to the U. S. Constitution

The venerable founders of our nation (with a very few exceptions) were God-fearing, believing, Christians. George Washington, twice a savior of this nation and its liberties, prayed, read his Bible, trusted in the atoning blood of Christ, practiced the teachings of the New Testament, and encouraged his troops and fellow government officials to do so. **Do not ever let anyone sell you on the falsehood that our freedoms came from unbelievers.** Nor will human rights ever be protected by unbelievers! Thomas Jefferson, the deist, tried to squelch freedom of the press.

Daniel would have made a good American. He was absolutely within his right to worship God even when king Darius forbade it. Darius had no right to forbid this unalienable liberty. **Unalienable** liberties come from God. No man has the right to forbid them. But, on the other hand, we do not find Daniel lobbying for legislation from Darius to force the Persians to worship as the Jews did. Belief in Christ can never be forced, legislated or regimented. It must be in a matrix of freedom, appealing to human dignity, through the power of truth, by the instrumentality of logic and persuasion.

**“Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s,
and to God the things that are God’s” --Jesus Christ, Matt. 22:21**

QUESTIONS:

1. How honest was Daniel in his government position if his heathen colleagues could find no fault in him? 6:1-5 do we have to be honest with those who are not honest with us? (see Eph. 6:5-8; Col. 3:22-25).
2. Do human rulers have the right to make an edict like that which Darius made about prayer? 6:6-9. What should believers do about it when they do? Would you be prepared to suffer the consequences?
3. If Daniel had such an excellent spirit why would he disobey the king’s order about prayer? 6:3,10. It was only for 30 days--couldn’t Daniel be a little more tolerant?
4. Are there advantages to laws which cannot be revoked? 6:11-15. Disadvantages? Who should make absolute laws? When should non-absolutes be revoked?
5. Why did Darius become so upset over carry out his law against Daniel? 6:14-18.
6. Why did God spare Daniel from the lions? 6:19-24. Does God spare every believer from the lions? What are we to conclude from this?
7. Just 50 years later (in the days of Esther), Jewish freedom to worship is threatened by the Persian government again--how often do we have to protect this **unalienable freedom**?

“He is the best friend to American liberty, who is most sincere and active in promoting true and undefiled religion...Whoever is an avowed enemy of God, I do not hesitate to call him an enemy to his country.”

--Dr. John Witherspoon, President of Princeton University, 1775

“As to religion, I hold it to be the indispensable duty of all government to protect all conscientious professors thereof, and I know of no other business which government has to do therewith...”

--Thomas Paine, in *Common Sense*

LESSON TEXT: Daniel 7:1--8:27
Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

George Washington said in his inaugural address to Congress, April 30, 1789: "It would be peculiarly improper to omit, in this first official act, my fervent supplication to that Almighty Being, who rules over the universe, who presides in the councils of nations, and whose providential aids can supply every human defect, that His benediction may consecrate to the liberties and happiness of the people of the United States...No people can be bound to acknowledge and adore the invisible hand which conducts the affairs of men more than the people of the United States. Every step by which they have advanced to the character of an independent nation seems to have been distinguished by some token of providential agency...We ought to be no less persuaded that the propitious smiles of Heaven can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right, which Heaven itself has ordained." Benjamin Franklin said it even more eloquently before the Constitutional Convention of 1787.

In Daniel chs. 1-6 we have seen how God rules in the lives of **individuals**--both believers and unbelievers. In chapters 7-12 we will see incontrovertible evidence (fulfilled prophecies) that Almighty God, the God of the Bible, rules in affairs of **nations** and in all of **history**. We will see: (a) God's control of 600 years of history in minute detail, chs. 7-8; (b) all for the purpose of redemption by Christ (the Messiah), chs. 9-10; (c) God's plan is to carry this out through Jews who would be faithful in great suffering until he brings the OT dispensation to and end, chs. 11-12.

You will not want to miss being in Bible School the next three weeks. We will be discussing subjects you hear a great deal about in prophecy-preaching in every era: (a) the fourth beast; (b) the little horns; (c) the 2300 days; (d) the contemptible one; (e) the 70 sevens; (f) the anointed prince; (g) the time of the end; (h) the 1290 days and the 1335 days; (i) the latter end of the indignation.

"If every nation gets the government it deserves, every generation writes the history which corresponds with its view of the world."

--Elizabeth Janeway, in *Between Myth and Morning*, 1974

QUESTIONS:

1. Why does the Bible symbolize great world governments as beasts? 7:1-14. (See Isa. 27:1; 51:9; Ezek. 29:3; 32:2; Rev. ch. 13, etc.).
2. Does God really permit great empires to devour much flesh and does he give them dominion? 7:5-6. Did God give China its dominion?
3. How did the dominion of the rest of the beasts get prolonged in the little horn of the fourth beast? 7:12 (see Rev. 13:1-2).
4. How does the time for the saints to receive the kingdom fit into the judgment of the little horn of the fourth beast? 7:15-28
5. Who is the ram? 8:3. Who is the he-goat? 8:5. Who is the little horn? 8:9.
6. What are the 2300 days? 8:14. What time of the end do they signal?
7. Who is the king of bold countenance? 8:23-25.
8. What does God promise in spite of all the beastliness of chs. 7-8?

"Allow the state to invade the areas of thought, of education, of the press, of religion, of associations, and we will have statism... Those who fear statism, as all who are rooted in American history and tradition fear it, must resolutely oppose it where it is most dangerous, precisely in the realm of the mind and the spirit of men. For if once we get a government strong enough to control men's minds, we will have a government strong enough to control everything."

--Henry Steele Commager, in *Freedom and Order*, 1966

"There are no necessary evils in government. Its evils exist only in its abuses. If it would confine itself to equal protection, and, as Heaven does its rains, shower its favors alike on the high and the low, the rich and the poor, it would be an unqualified blessing."

--Andrew Jackson, in a message to Congress, 1832

LESSON TEXT: Daniel 9:1---10:21

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

During war-time British soldier was caught creeping back to his quarters one night from the nearby woods. Taken before his C.O., he was charged with holding communications with the enemy. The man pleaded he had gone into the woods to pray by himself. That was his only offence. "Down on your knees and pray now!" roared the officer, "You never needed it so much!" Expecting immediate death, the soldier knelt and poured out his soul in eloquent prayer. "You may go," said the officer simply, when he had finished, "I believe your story. If you hadn't drilled so often, you could not do so well at review.

No wonder Daniel is called a man of excellent spirit. To read his prayer in this 9th chapter is to be shamed with the thought of one's own lack of humility and fervency in prayer. Daniel drilled so often he was able to do excellently at review time.

While reams of paper and hours of speech have been expended on discussing Daniel's prophecy of the 70 weeks, far too often his magnificent prayer has been neglected. It is one of the most beautiful prayers of all the Bible. It should rank alongside the 23rd Psalm. If you have ever felt like Jesus's disciples when they begged, Lord, teach us to pray, you may find most of your answer when you analyze Daniel's prayer in 9:1-19. Incidentally, his prayer is crucial to understanding his prophecy.

We will be studying the great prophecy of the Messiah in 9:24-27, and you will want to be in Bible School this Sunday for that! It will help you with answers to so much false teaching in the religious world today. But most importantly, read Daniel's prayer about 7 times this week.

Bless us, Lord--not because we deserve it, but
because we so desperately need it.
And bless us for Your name's sake."
--a prayer by Malcom Cronk

QUESTIONS:

1. Why was Daniel concerned about the number of years of captivity? Was it some selfish concern--or was he concerned about God's integrity? 9:1-2
2. Why did Daniel spend so much time confessing sin? 9:3-16. Is that much guilt good for people? Should we be this desperate in our prayers?
3. Why did Daniel pray everything for the Lord's sake? 9:17-19. Shouldn't believers ask the Lord for anything for their own sake?
4. What are seventy weeks? 9:24-27. When do they start? When do they end?
5. To whom is the period of 490 given? 9:24-27. What 6 things are to be accomplished by the time this 490 is over?
6. Who is the prince? 9:25. Who is the anointed one? 9:25. How is he to be cut off? (see Isa. 53:8).
7. What city is to be destroyed? 9:26. Who will destroy it? Why?
8. What is the abomination that makes desolate? (See Matt. 24:15; Lk. 21:20).
9. What is going to befall Daniel's people in the latter days? 10:14. What does it have to do with the prince of Persia and the prince of Greece?
10. Does God send his angels to fight for his people? 10:18-21. Today? (See Heb. 1:14 and the book of Revelation).

Did you know? The Jewish Talmud forbids Jews from teaching the book of Daniel!

"In *Ketubot* we read that the prophets shall not make known the end and Rabbi Jonathan says in *Sanhedrin* Blasted be the bones of those who calculate the end. Rabbi Jonathan ben Uziah is even rebuked by a voice from Heaven (a Bat Kol) because he reveals my secrets and *he is prevented from teaching on the book of Daniel because The date of the Messiah is in it.* (emphasis ours). It could...mean that study of this passage by later readers might suggest that the Messiah had already come."

--quoted from *The Hebrew Christian, Vol. LIII, No. 2,*
Summer 1980

LESSON TEXT: Daniel 11:1--12:13

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

Post over these last two chapters of Daniel these words, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). God will not have anyone who has not been tested! His purpose in the exile and tribulations of the Jews was to sift them and purge them--to direct their minds and aspirations away from worldliness to the **spiritual realities** the Messiah would accomplish.

Harry Truman once said: "If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen." Essentially that is what God said to the Jews through the persecutions and tribulations of the Syrian tyrant, Antiochus IV (Dan. Chs. 11-12). Do you realize Jesus spoke more about trouble and crosses and persecution than he did about human happiness? Check it out for yourself in the four Gospels! You may as well mark it down in your little black book--whoever will live godly in this world **will** suffer persecution, 2 Tim. 3:12.

Jesus said to his disciples, "The world hates you...Remember, a servant is not greater than his master...If they persecuted me, they will persecute you," John 15:18-20. God uses all this persecution by wicked men to put his children to the test. If you're not being tested, you're not his child, Heb. 12:1-17; 1 Pet. 4:12-14!

The word **tribulation** in the NT means, pressure, tension. Tribulation does not always come in the form of physical persecution. It may be in the trauma of giving up worldliness. Jesus said "every man enters the kingdom **violently**" Luke 16:16. Every Christian trying to be true to Christ certainly suffers constant **tension** between self and surrender to God's word. That is what God was doing with the Jews in the days of Antiochus IV (ca. 175-164 B.C.). That is what he wants to do with our lives every day. We must decide if we are willing to count the cost. Jesus said, if anyone was not willing to pay the price, they shouldn't enlist, Luke 14:25-33!

QUESTIONS:

1. Who is the fourth king after the king of Persia? 11:1-2. (See the book of Esther). What did he have to do with troubles coming upon the Jews?
2. Who is the mighty king of 11:3? Why didn't his dominion go to his posterity--and how did Daniel know this?
3. The kings of the south (Ptolemies in Egypt) and of the north (Seleucids in Syria) were constantly at war 11:5-28. What did that do to the Jews in Palestine?
4. Did all the Jews remain faithful to God's word during the Syrian troubles? 11:14,30,32,34.
5. What results accrued from these troubles to those who believed in God? 11:32,35; 12:1-3; 12:10,12. What would they understand? 11:33; 12:10
6. What time of the end is predicted by Daniel? 11:35,45; 12:4,7,9,11,12,13. What does shattering...the holy people have to do with it (cf. Dan. 9:24-27).
7. The parents of Anna the prophetess (see Lk. 2:36-38) probably lived in the days of the Syrian holocaust by Antiochus. They must have taught her to look for the Messiah (Read Luke chs. 1-2 in connection with Daniel 11-12 and Heb. 11:32-40).

"It takes a world with trouble in it to train men for their high calling as sons of God, and to carve upon the soul the lineaments of the face of Christ."

--J. S. Steward

"The highest joy to the Christian almost always comes through suffering. No flower can bloom in Paradise which is not transplanted from Gethsemane. No one can taste of the fruit of the tree of life, that has not tasted of the fruits of the tree of Calvary. The crown is after the cross."

--Alexander Maclaren, in *Gospel Light*