

CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS
SEPTEMBER 28 2024

A glorious end!

Scripture Story: Daniel 10–12.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

As we tackle these texts, it is important to start with the forest before we get to the trees. It is tempting to jump into a word study and attach dates to phrases and be done with the prophetic study. However, it is of paramount importance to be able to have the students see the overarching themes of grace and love that come through in our interpretations of prophecy. It is only in this context that words have impact.

In Daniel 10 we learn that Daniel had a vision that was very troubling to him, a vision that he could not understand, and that left him feeling very distraught. After this vision experience, Daniel began to fast and pray for several weeks—seeking to know the meaning of what he saw. The moment he began to pray to the Lord about the disturbing vision, a heavenly messenger was dispatched to go to Daniel and to reveal to him its meaning. But the messenger was delayed—caught in a battle—and could not get to Daniel right away. After about three weeks, from the time Daniel began to pray for help, the "man" from heaven finally reached Daniel in answer to his prayer.

In chapter 11 the messenger begins to explain the meaning of the vision to Daniel. By this time the kingdom of Babylon had been overthrown by Medo-Persia, and Cyrus was in his third year as king of Persia. The angel tells Daniel that Persia would have three more kings after Cyrus, and then a fourth king would reign, who would be richer than all the others and would use his wealth to gain power. Following this fourth king would come another even more powerful king. This king would not rule for very long, but his kingdom would be divided into four. The divided kingdoms would not be as strong as the first.

For many years to follow, kings, princes, and mighty men would rise and fall in their quest for power. Then a time would come when the sanctuary of God would be defiled by a king who would think to exalt himself above God, and who would persecute those who opposed him. But God's people will stand for the truth and will teach others to do the same. The work and influence of this king, who thought to set himself above God, will extend to the time of the end.

Finally, as we learn in chapter 12, Michael will appear. Then there will be a great time of trouble on the earth. But God's people, whose names are written in the book of life, will be delivered.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Understand that earthly kings may rise and fall, but in the end God's kingdom will prevail and will rule over the earth forever. *(Know)*
- Trust the power of God to deliver and save His people from harm. *(Feel)*
- Choose to serve the God of heaven rather than earthly powers. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

The Trinity, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, No. 2

"There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three coeternal Persons. God is immortal, all-powerful, all-knowing, above all, and ever present. He is infinite and beyond human comprehension, yet known through His self-revelation. God, who is love, is forever worthy of worship, adoration, and service by the whole creation. (Gen. 1:26; Deut. 6:4; Isa. 6:8; Matt. 28:19; John 3:16; 2 Cor. 1:21, 22; 13:14; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Peter 1:2.)"

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? *section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.*

Have the class members work in groups of two or three. Each group should reflect on the questions in the *What Do You Think?* section of the student lesson, and jot down at least one Bible example as a response to each question. Have class members supply references for their answers as much as possible. (It would be good for the teacher to have a couple of examples already prepared.) After several minutes, have someone from each group share their responses with the class. Then ask class members at random to share *current* examples from their own experiences or someone they know that could also serve as answers to the questions in the *What Do You Think?* section.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

Have you ever had to drive somewhere and you didn't know how to get there, so you had to get directions? Getting directions is pretty easy. If you cannot get them from someone you know, you can use a GPS system or go to MapQuest or some other website that gives driving directions. Sometimes state troopers will give good directions. Many automobiles are equipped with navigational systems to make it easy for drivers to find their way.

When someone you know gives you directions, it may sound something like this: "Go south on New Life Avenue. Keep straight until you see the Home Depot on your left. Then make a left-hand turn onto Golden Way. Go through three traffic lights and turn right on Preparation Road. When you get to the end of the road, turn left on First Street. Go to the next block and you will see the big white house on the right-hand corner. The address is 1001 First Street."

Bible prophecy is a lot like getting directions. Prophecy tells us where we are going, which way to go, and what landmarks to look for on the way. It also tells us how to know when we have reached our destination.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

We are on our way to meet Jesus. And He has left directions for us to follow. He's given us a road map. Through the prophets the Lord has given us a clear picture of what lies ahead, what twists and turns we will have to make, what stops we will come to along the way, and what obstacles to look out for. By knowing all these details, we can be prepared and well equipped for our journey.

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story *section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.*

- Daniel 10:5, 6 gives a description of the "man" who spoke to Daniel. Who could this man be? Ask class members to give a few possible answers and to tell why.
- Discuss the meaning of the "book of life" with the class. Name some other books that are mentioned in the Bible. Tell what purpose they serve. (See Philippians 4:3; Daniel 7:10; Revelation 20:12.)
- What does the fearfulness of Daniel and the other men tell us about the power of holy beings? What is the source of their power?
- What should be our response or reaction when we are aware that we are in the presence of God?
- From the moment that Daniel prayed for help, the messenger was sent forth to meet with him in answer to his prayer. Do you think that the Lord responds to us in the

Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

RABBI 101

Your Story

- Students are always interested in your story. Allow them to step into your life with anecdotes that make sense to you and are true to the reality that you live every day.
- It is important to use simple language and be honest.
- Never give an answer you don't believe or is not your own. Take these lessons and internalize them so the truth you are relaying is truth that has transformed your own life.
- Using helpful tools, such as quotes from sources other than the Bible or simple demonstrations and illustrations, can help to give emphasis to some of the important points that you want to make.
- Be prepared to have your own answer ready for each question that you present to the class.
- The class wants to know you and the God you have experienced!

same way? Does the Lord always give an immediate answer to our requests?

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today's story: Exodus 14:13, 14; Zechariah 4:6; Revelation 12:10, 11.

Sharing Context and Background

1. The prophetic books of the Bible, such as Daniel and Revelation, provide unique insight into the fate of the world in light of the saving action of Christ on the cross. The symbolic metaphors, historical allegories, and vivid descriptions of the closing events in these prophetic books stymie all too often those individuals who take the time to study them. And because of this, many of the prophecies found in Daniel, as well as Revelation, are often seen as abstract and impossible to understand. Daniel 10–12 are probably some of the hardest to comprehend. What do you think is the overall theme of these chapters and what is their prophetic message? Who is the message for? *(See Daniel 10:14; 11:31-33; 11:36, 37; 12:1-3. It may be helpful to read these texts in different Bible versions.)*
2. "The Old Testament doesn't tell us everything there is to know about Michael. In order to fill out the picture, we need to go to Jude 9 in the New Testament, where Michael is identified as the archangel with the power of the resurrection and to Revelation 12:7, where we find that he was leader of the heavenly host against Satan and his rebel forces in heaven before the creation of man. Clearly, these two New Testament texts can be referring only to Jesus Christ.

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Key Text**
  Invite the students to share the key text with the class if they have committed it to memory.
- **Flashlight**
  Read the Flashlight *statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week's story found in the book* Prophets and Kings. *Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from* Out of the Story.
- **Punch Lines**
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week's story. Have them share the verse that speaks most directly to them and allow them to explain why they chose it.
- **Further Insight**
  Ask them how the quotes in Further Insight *convey the point of the story in this lesson.*

Therefore, we can safely assume that the Old Testament references to Michael should be understood as referring to Christ also."

"In Daniel 10, He is involved in a local, limited problem. In Daniel 12, He is involved" "in a final and universal conflict, the conclusion of the battle between good and evil. Wherever found, all the Michael passages in the Bible have this characteristic: they involve conflict, and Michael is portrayed as the leader in the battle on the side of God."

"The final picture of Michael appears at the end of time in the final controversy (Daniel 12:1). In all of these cases, He protects the people of God. So He did in the sixth century B.C., and so He will do at the end of time" (William Shea, *Daniel: A Reader's Guide*, p. 238).

3. The prophecies, such as those found in the book of Daniel, were written to help us remember some specific truths about God:
   a. God is in charge;
   b. God will fulfill all of His promises regarding salvation;
   c. there are only two types of people: God's people and God's enemies. In the last days, the activities of these two groups will support this division. Discuss the differences between the activities of the people of God and those of His enemies in the last days.
4. In Daniel's vision (chapters 10–12) the struggle that moves the world to eternity is couched in language that reveals the fact that evil will ultimately have a terrible end. On the other hand, victory always comes for God's children, because He acts in their behalf. If we claim God's victory in Christ at the cross, that victory becomes ours. We may not feel it, or see it in the midst of our struggles, but victory for the people of God is certain! Knowing that we have the assurance that God's people will prevail in the end, why do you think God allows this great controversy between good and evil to continue or to seemingly be prolonged?

III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Discuss the following questions with class members as a closing activity. How is God's character revealed throughout the book of Daniel? What is the significance of using the rise and fall of nations to reveal God's character and to demonstrate His power? Other than the nations and rulers that are mentioned in the Bible—specifically in the book of Daniel—does God appoint or select specific people (or nations) to leadership positions in today's society? Explain your answer.

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

"Every day you and I are faced with the same experience Daniel had. We are confronted by situations that discourage us and shake our faith, and we have to choose how we will respond. We can wallow in despair and depression, or, like Daniel, we can pray despite our disappointments. Sometimes the answers won't come right away, but that's because there's a spiritual war—a 'great war,' as Daniel puts it—being fought around us. So, we must have patience and trust." "Daniel was well loved in heaven, but even he had to wait for an answer. Prayer is a weapon we can use when we feel powerless. Through prayer we can fight alongside our God and His angels. God doesn't need our help, but He chooses to include us. Take time not only to pray about the battles you face every day but about the battles others fight as well" (Seth Pierce, *Prophecies of Daniel Made Simple*, p. 112).



Remind the students about the reading plan, which will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series.

*A special adaptation of *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty and Ruin*) has been created by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press® Publishing Association. Get more info about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net.

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STUDENT LESSON

Scripture Story: Daniel 10–12.

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Photo by Alden Ho

keytext

"The king will do as he pleases. He will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will say unheard-of things against the God of gods. He will be successful until the time of wrath is completed, for what has been determined must take place."

(Daniel 11:36, NIV)

flashlight

"In this life we can only begin to understand the wonderful theme of redemption. With our finite comprehension we may consider most earnestly the shame and the glory, the life and the death, the justice and the mercy, that meet in the cross; yet with the utmost stretch of our mental powers we fail to grasp its full significance. . . . The plan of redemption will not be fully understood, even when the ransomed see as they are seen and know as they are known; but through the eternal ages new truth will continually unfold to the wondering and delighted mind. Though the griefs and pains and temptations of earth are ended and the cause removed, the people of God will ever have a distinct, intelligent knowledge of what their salvation has cost" (*The Great Controversy*, p. 651).

what do you think?

If you thought this lesson would be an easy one, think again! Ask yourself a few tough questions:

1. What is the purpose of prophecy?
2. How can it make a difference in my life today?
3. Why do you think Daniel wrote these visions down?
4. What do you think they meant to the children of Israel, especially while they were in the midst of the Babylonian captivity?
5. Why is this so important to the Adventist Church?

did you know?

As we near the close of this world's history, the prophecies recorded by Daniel demand our special attention, as they relate to the very time in which we are living. With them should be linked the teachings of the last book of the New Testament Scriptures. Satan has led many to believe that the prophetic portions of the writings of Daniel and of John the revelator cannot be understood. But the promise is plain that special blessing will accompany the study of these prophecies. 'The wise shall understand' (verse 10), was spoken of the visions of Daniel that were to be unsealed in the latter days; and of the revelation that Christ gave to His servant John for the guidance of God's people all through the centuries, the promise is, 'Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein.' Revelation 1:3" (Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, p. 547).

INTO THE STORY

"I, Daniel, was the only one who saw the vision; those who were with me did not see it, but such terror overwhelmed them that they fled and hid themselves. So I was left alone, gazing at this great vision; I had no strength left, my face turned deathly pale and I was helpless. Then I heard him speaking, and as I listened to him, I fell into a deep sleep, my face to the ground.

"A hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. He said, 'Daniel, you who are highly esteemed, consider carefully the words I am about to speak to you, and stand up, for I have now been sent to you.' And when he said this to me, I stood up trembling.

"Then he continued, 'Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia. Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come.'

"While he was saying this to me, I bowed with my face toward the ground and was speechless. Then one who looked like a man touched my lips, and I opened my mouth and began to speak. I said to the one standing before me, 'I am overcome with anguish because of the vision, my lord, and I feel very weak. How can I, your servant, talk with you, my lord? My strength is gone and I can hardly breathe.'

"Again the one who looked like a man touched me and gave me strength. 'Do not be afraid, you who are highly esteemed,' he said. 'Peace! Be strong now; be strong.'

"When he spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, 'Speak, my lord, since you have given me strength.'

"So he said, 'Do you know why I have come to you? Soon I will return to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I go, the prince of Greece will come; but first I will tell you what is written in the Book of Truth.' "

(Daniel 10:7-21, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

Who is the person who "looks like a man"?

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_____

What is the "Book of Truth"?

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Why was Daniel the only one who saw the vision?

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What is God's response to Daniel's prayer of faith?

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Who is Michael? (See Daniel 12:1-4; Jude 9; Revelation 12:7.)

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At a closer look at the Bible it becomes clear that Michael is Jesus Himself. Why is it important that Michael is the central figure of Daniel's vision? How does this hopeful message help you trust God to give you victory through Jesus over every area of your life?

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punch lines

"If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing" **(1 Corinthians 13:2, NIV).**

"For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" **(2 Peter 1:21, NIV).**

"Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near" **(Revelation 1:3, NIV).**

further insight

"We need to study the working out of God's purpose in the history of nations and in the revelation of things to come, that we may estimate at their true value things seen and things unseen; that we may learn what is the true aim of life; that, viewing the things of time in the light of eternity, we may put them to their truest and noblest use."—Ellen G. White, *Education*, p. 184

"There are many who do not understand the prophecies relating to these days, and they must be enlightened."—Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, p. 194

Sabbath

Read Revelation 1:3.

The language of prophecy is sometimes hard to understand. However, there is always a point to prophecy. In it we get to see that God is a God who loves us and who always wins. It is exciting to know that there is a God who understands what this world is all about and can make a difference from the past to the future.

What is the purpose of prophecy? Prophecy reveals God and His character to us. As today's Bible reading tells us: "Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy" (NIV).

List at least two ways that you have been blessed this week by studying prophecy.

Sunday

Read 2 Peter 1:21.

The quote and the questions in the *Into the Story* and *Out of the Story* sections are specific for a reason. We are beginning to see the background information that is coming along with the prophecy.

What is Michael's role in this vision?

What does the vision hold for us today?

How is God revealed through this vision?

Monday

Read Daniel 10:13, 21; Daniel 12:1; Jude 9; Revelation 12:7.

In today's Bible passages Michael is called "one of the chief princes," "your prince," and "the great prince who protects your people" (NIV). Who is Michael in all of these passages? What is the hope-filled message to you about Michael who wins the victory in every battle?

Tuesday

Read Revelation 19:9; Isaiah 25:6-9.

In *Flashlight* we begin to see that redemption and salvation are such huge things that we will not fully understand them until we find ourselves sitting at the table with Jesus Christ. It will be a wonderful day when Jesus sits beside us and explains to us all those things we barely were able to understand in texts such as these. What a glorious moment that will be when we will sit with Jesus at that banquet table!

Wednesday

Read 1 Corinthians 13:2.

Today's Bible passage puts into the right perspective the role of prophecies. Their study and interpretation needs to be permeated by a spirit of Christlike love. The prophecies can bring us to a place of greater love and appreciation for what Christ has done for us, and a desire to share them with others. God said and did all of this for love; we have to read and study with the same object in mind: to love God and others and to live according to His plan for our lives.

Thursday

Read Isaiah 46:9, 10.

Have you spent time studying the prophecies in the Bible? Determine in your heart to make the study of the prophecies an enjoyable exercise as part of your personal devotional time. Don't be afraid to ask the tough questions and seek the answers with a fervent and loving heart!

Friday

Read Daniel 2:20-22, 28, 47.

What do the Bible prophecies tell you about God?

What application do they have for your life?

How can you surrender your will to God today and allow Him to develop in you the character of Jesus?

These are important questions that only you can answer for yourself.