

Daniel 10-12

AIM OF STUDY:

Encourage one another to persevere to the end when Jesus returns.

MAIN TEACHING POINT:

Although we might find many of the details of the 4 vision obscure and difficult to understand there are nonetheless promises that we can hold onto, particularly those that point to the resurrection of all people to stand before God in judgement.

TIPS FOR LEADERS

In this study you might like to print out this sheet for everyone and simply work through it as a summary. When it comes to the Looking back over the book of Daniel section ask your group members to contribute what they have remembered from studying the book before looking at the points indicated on the sheet.

DANIEL'S FOURTH & FINAL VISION

This last vision concerned a great conflict and was given to Daniel in the 3rd year of the reign of king Cyrus of Persia. (Daniel 10:1)

This vision had a massive impact on Daniel himself (Daniel 10:2, 7-11, 15-19) and concerns what will happen to God's people in the latter days, "...for the vision is for days yet to come." (10:14) Most of the details found in Daniel 10 are introductory to the vision itself which takes up all of chapter 11 and part of chapter 12.

Once again the main actors and events in the vision are not identified directly. Although they will take place in the future for Daniel and are not named explicitly we can make some pretty good educated guesses about whom they are referring to. 11:2-4 give us the broader context to help us understand this conflict.

The 4 kings of Persia (11:2)

The kingdom of Greece (11:2)

Another kingdom which will arise and which will be broken up and parcelled out into 4 parts (11:3-4) -Alexander the Great who died young and then had the territory which he had conquered divided up between 4 successors.

King of the North = king of Syria

King of the South = king of Egypt

Later in the vision there is the explicit mention of a number of peoples and places : the beautiful land, Edom, Moab, Ammon, Egypt etc, but also mention of angelic beings such as Michael. 10:21, 11:41-42, 12:1

It seems as if the conflict described in the vision goes through a number of stages but comes to a head in 12:1a, where Daniel is told of, "...a time of trouble, such as never has been seen since there was a nation till that time."

It is in this context that Daniel receives reassuring news. See 12:1b-3. Here is one of the key Old Testament passages that speak of the resurrection of the dead.

*But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book. **2** And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. **3** And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.*

Daniel is told however that this will not happen yet. He is instructed to, “.... *shut up the words and seal up the book, until the time of the end.....*” (12:4)

The timing of the events described in this chapter and their outcome is not made clear to Daniel. (verses 12:6b-7).

In 12:8 Daniel lacks understanding and asks for it. The answer he is given in verses 9-12 possibly does little to help him understand, however the one speaking to him does reassure him in the end. (12:13)

If our baseline understanding is that all the promises of God find their ‘yes’ in Christ Jesus, i.e. the whole of the Old Testament points to the coming of Jesus and to his atoning work on the cross (2 Corinthians 1:20a), then the difficulties that we might have in interpreting this 4th vision with all its complexity should not throw us. It is not immediately clear how these verses point to Jesus as they seem to chart the events that will take place in the period between the two testaments. Such a vision would have been an encouragement to God’s people living in that period to stand firm in the face of troubled times and to wait for God’s deliverance. We who live at a later time find many of the things referred to in chapter 11 obscure and difficult to interpret as they speak of an event that took place in the intertestamental period.

A LOOK BACK OVER THE BOOK OF DANIEL

Share with each other what you’ve seen from the overall message of the Book of Daniel. The following may be useful if your group runs out of things to say:

- God remains faithful to his age-old covenant promises
- Daniel and his 3 friends remain uncompromising in their trust in God’s power to save as they live among the pagan nations. As such they represent a faithful remnant of God’s people through whom God will rebuild his people. God uses them at the same time to be a blessing to the nations.
- God is working out his plans for his people and this points to a time when people from every nation will be made right with Him through Jesus’ atoning death.
- The promise of the resurrection and final judgement

Share with each other what you have enjoyed from our series on the book of Daniel. In what ways have you been encouraged and challenged by studying this book?