

ENDURING IN BABYLON

Devotional | March 19, 2023

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Discuss: How does biblical prophecy make you feel: woeful or hopeful? Why?

Key Text: Read *Daniel 8:1-12:13*

In this final lesson in our series “Living in Babylon,” we’ll do an overview of Daniel’s final visions recorded in Daniel Chapters 8 through 12 regarding the prophetic course of Israel’s destiny.

Daniel 8:1-27 – Daniel saw a two-horned ram that was able to defeat and crush all its enemies (8:1-4). But Daniel then saw a one-horned male goat attack and destroy the ram (8:5-7). At the height of its power, the goat’s horn is broken and replaced by four smaller horns (8:8). Another creature – a little horn – comes from the goat and invades and occupies most of the Holy Land. This little horn arrogantly challenges God (8:9-12). An angel asks how long it will take for Daniel’s vision to come to pass, and how long until the temple will be purified so the daily sacrifices can be offered in it again (8:13). A superior angel answers: 2,300 days (8:14). The angel Gabriel (8:15-19) explains that the two-horned ram represents the Medo-Persian Empire that would conquer Babylon (8:20). The one-horned goat represents Greece, which will break into four sections following the death of Alexander the Great (8:21-22). The little horn represents the brutal Syrian king, Antiochus Epiphanes IV who defiled the Jewish Temple in 167 B.C. This evil king symbolically points ahead to the satanically energized Antichrist who will rule during the future Tribulation (8:23-26). This prophetic vision of Gentile nations conquering Israel was so overwhelming to Daniel that he became physically sick (8:27).

Daniel 9:1-27 – This chapter records two time periods—one past (historical) and one prophetical (future)—and both periods involve the number 70.

1. The Historical (9:1-19)

Daniel knew from Scripture that Israel’s 70-year captivity which Jeremiah had prophesied (Jer.29:10-14) was almost over (9:1-2). Daniel confesses Israel’s sin (9:3-11), reviews Israel’s suffering (9:12-14), and asks God to forgive Israel and restore them to their land (9:15-19).

2. The Prophetical (9:20-27)

The angel Gabriel was sent from God to help Daniel understand God’s future plan for Israel (9:20-23). Gabriel assures Daniel that God will, indeed, successfully accomplish His plan for Israel during the specified number of years of seventy sets of seven, which is a total of 490 years, beginning with the command to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem (9:24). These years will fall into three time periods. The 1st Period of 7 weeks (49 years) starts in 444 B.C. with the decree allowing the Jews to return to their land and rebuild the city (9:25), 2) The 2nd Period of 62 weeks (434 years) goes to the time of the Messiah (9:26). The “missing” seventieth week is the 3rd Period of 7 years and will be fulfilled in the end times, a reference to the coming Tribulation recorded in Revelation 6-19 (9:27). The “*prince who is to come*” (9:26) refers to the Antichrist who will make a covenant with the Jews for seven years, then after 3 ½ years break the covenant and usher in the awful Tribulation. That final seven-year period climaxes with Christ’s return, His defeat of His enemies, and the establishment of His kingdom on earth (Mat.24:29-31; Rev.19).

Daniel 10:1-21 – Daniel undergoes a three-week fast due to his fearful visions (10:1-4). A blazing angel (Gabriel) from heaven appears and speaks with a voice that sounds like a multitude. Daniel feels faint with fear. Daniel’s companions see nothing, but they flee in fear (10:5-8). Gabriel gently lifts and comforts Daniel—the angel had come to explain Israel’s future to Daniel (10:9-14). Gabriel tells Daniel that it took him three weeks to arrive because he was hindered by a demon (symbolized by a Persian leader) on the way there (10:13a), and he would be hindered by a demon (symbolized by a Greek leader) upon his return to heaven (10:15-20). But Michael, God’s militant Archangel, helped Gabriel as he came and would help him as he returned to heaven (10:13b, 21).

Daniel 11:1-45 – In Chapters 11-12, the angel Gabriel describes for Daniel the future reigns of the kings of Persia, Greece, Egypt, and Syria, concluding by predicting the future reign of the Antichrist himself. Daniel learns that three Persian kings will succeed Darius the Mede, followed by a powerful fourth ruler who will use his wealth to go to war against Greece (11:1-2). The angel then refers to Alexander the Great, who will suddenly die soon after building his vast empire, resulting in the empire being divided into four divisions (11:3-4). The daughter of the king of Egypt will be given in marriage to the king of Syria to secure an alliance. Egypt will defeat Syria and carry Syria’s treasures back to Egypt. Syria will then defeat Egypt despite its fortifications. Egypt and Syria will reach a stalemate. Syria’s king will give his daughter to Egypt’s king in marriage to overthrow the kingdom from within (11:5-20). Evil Syrian king Antiochus Epiphanes will secure his kingdom by deception. He will besiege and capture powerful strongholds, defeat the king of Egypt, and violently set himself against Israel by desecrating the Temple (thus causing daily sacrifices to stop), flattering those who violate God’s covenant, and murdering many Jews (11:21-35). The coming Antichrist will blaspheme God and sweep like a flood through Israel, Egypt, and Libya (11:36-44). But ultimately, God will crush the Antichrist near Jerusalem (11:45).

Daniel 12:1-13 – During the Great Tribulation, Israel will suffer as never before, but Michael the Archangel will assist Israel. All those whose names are written in God’s book will be delivered (12:1) In the last day, all will be resurrected, some to everlasting life and others to everlasting punishment (12:2). The righteous will shine like stars (12:3). Daniel’s prophecies are sealed until the end times (12:4). The end times are separated into three time periods: A period of 1,260 days (12:5-10), which likely refers to the final 3 ½ years of the seven years of Tribulation, an additional 30 days (12:11) and another additional 45 days (12:12). This likely refers to the time when the Antichrist sets up an image of himself inside the Temple to display himself as God, utterly desecrating the Temple making it abominable and desolate. Now the angel encourages Daniel to live in faith until his death when his soul would enter heavenly rest and receive his eternal inheritance (12:13). We learn from Daniel 12 that we are to seek to win others to Christ (v.3) and grow in holiness (v.10) as we wait patiently for Christ’s return (v.13).

Discuss: What impacted you the most about today’s lesson?

For Further Study:

Free online commentary on the Book of Daniel at www.enduringword.com

Answers to questions about the end times at www.gotquestions.org

“Surviving the End Times—What Do I Need to Know?” article at www.gotquestions.org