

LESSON 3

The special features of the Prophecy of Daniel

Objective: To understand the special features of the prophecies of Daniel and take note of the message in order to properly organize our lives.

Bible References: Daniel chapter 12

Memory verses: Dan. 12:9,10 (NKJV)

And he said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand."

Introduction

We have already learnt the time and circumstances in which the book was written and the special qualities of the writer. Although all the writings in the Bible are God-inspired and give spiritual edification, the books of Daniel and Revelation have some specialties. These books cannot be understood as novels or history because the writings have some mystical qualities. But those who approach the books with a sincere and prayerful attitude can certainly learn spiritual mysteries.

1. Contents

The book contains several topics beginning from the creation of man till the end times. We can find revelations in the book about the history of the world like the rise and fall of the Babylonian empire, the rise of Medo-Persian empire, the Greek empire, the Roman empire, the governments of the end times, the rule of the Anti-Christ (the Great Tribulation), etc. There are prophecies on the future of Israel (9:24-26), atoning sacrifice of the Messiah (9:26,27), resurrection of the saints (12:2,3), judgement (12:2,3) and eternal kingdom of Christ (2:24).

2. Similarities with the Book of Revelation

The Book of Daniel is the 27th book of the Old Testament and the Book of Revelations is the 27th book of the New Testament. The writer of the O.T. book is "the most beloved man, Daniel" and the writer of the N.T. book is "the most beloved disciple, John". Both the books contain

prophecies about the future. The visions and messages given by God to Daniel are from records in a book kept permanently in heaven called Jehovah's Book (Isa. 34:16; Dan. 10:21; 12:4; 12:9,10). It may be seen from these passages that Daniel's book is closed and sealed till the end times and can be understood only by wise men who cleanse themselves and search diligently and not by any wicked men. Compare the above verses with Rev. 22:6-9. John is instructed not to seal the prophecies of the book. The beginning of the 'end times' is from the Day of Pentecost when the Church was established. So, we can conclude that Daniel's prophecies are now open as they are no more sealed. The Book of Revelation may be considered as an explanation and fulfillment of the prophecies of Daniel. The closing chapters of both the books have verses giving an indication of their special nature.

3. God's attributes as Almighty God

The Prophecies in the book of Daniel points to the attributes of an Almighty God through various events. Each of the chapters from 1 to 6 reveals one special attribute of God and the remaining chapters reveal God as a righteous Judge.

- i. God, the protector of His people (ch.1): The young Jewish men Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah were compelled to eat the food and drink the wine of the king's palace when they were being trained in Chaldean arts. They refused to do so as it was against the law of God and kept their separation and holiness. They decided to take only water and vegetables for their food. When the young men were tested after 10 days, they were found to be more healthy, beautiful, wise and clever (Dan. 1:8,12,17,20). If we keep our holiness as God's people, God will protect us and grant us health, wisdom and knowledge.
- ii. God who reveals secrets (ch.2): Nebuchadnezzar saw a dream and the Chaldean wise men were not able to tell the dream and its meaning. The king ordered all the wise men in the land to be killed. At that time of crisis, Daniel and his friends spent all night in prayer and God revealed to Daniel the king's dream and its meaning. God gave Daniel visions on several occasions later on and revealed to him great mysteries. If we live a spirit-filled life, we can also experience God who reveals secrets (Dan. 2:20-22).
- iii. God who saves from calamities (ch.3): We read in this chapter the story of Hananiah (Shadrack), Mishael (Meshach) and Azariah (Abed-Nego) who were thrown into the fiery furnace for not bowing down in front of the golden idol. But God Himself ('man like the

Son of God') descended into the fire and saved them. They were not hurt in any way (Dan. 3:24-27). Nebuchadnezzar and all Babylon came to know God who will save His people from calamities (Psa. 46:1).

- iv. God who humbles the proud (ch.4): Nebuchadnezzar boasted in his riches and power. God removed him from his throne and made him eat grass along with animals in the jungle (Dan. 4:29-33).
- v. God, the righteous judge (ch.5): The wicked life of the proud, drunken, idol worshiping Belshazzar came to a sudden, unexpected end. The Medo-Persian kings took control of the Babylonian empire (Dan. 5:30-31)
- vi. God Almighty (ch.6): Almighty God saved Daniel from the den of lions and His enemies were brought to shame. King Darius understood that God can close the mouth of lions and bring about signs and wonders on the earth and heaven (Dan. 6:22,26,27).

4. God, the ultimate Judge:

The word 'Daniel' means 'God is my judge'. Events described in all the chapters of the book reveal the truth that God judges people. Hence, the title 'Daniel' is most appropriate for the book.

- The first chapter describes how the judgement of God came upon His own people, Jews. As we have already studied, they were attacked three times. The nation and the city of Jerusalem were destroyed. The punishment was sent to them after clear warnings through prophets (Isa. 22:18, 19; 36:29,30; Rom. 3:19). The kings of Judah were individually punished, and all the people were taken captives to Babylon. Thus, began the period of the Gentiles.
- The judgement that is coming to world powers is revealed through the dream of Nebuchadnezzar in the second chapter.
- Third chapter describes the judgement that came on the tormentors of the godly young men, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.
- The judgement on the proud Nebuchadnezzar is given in the fourth chapter. He dreams of a great tree and as per the interpretation of the dream the king was driven away from men and his dwelling was with the beast of the field. Fifth chapter has details of the punishment of the wicked, immoral and drunken Belshazzar and the fall of Babylon. God judges the sinner.

- God fearing and blameless Daniel gets protection from God when thrown into the den of lions, but his enemies and their families were later thrown into the den of lions and lions had mastery over them. Sixth chapter describes how Daniel got favor from the king as a result of these events.
- Remaining chapters from seven onwards reveal God as the righteous Judge and the King of kings of the whole world.

We learn about the glory of God and His various attributes from the study of the Book of Daniel. Our God is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. He reveals secrets to His people and protects them. He is God Almighty who topples the thrones of the proud and lifts up the humble. He is the righteous judge. Our life will be blessed if we trust Him.

Questions

1. What is the meaning of the word ‘Daniel’? Explain how the title of the book matches its contents.
2. What are the similarities of the books of Daniel and Revelation?
3. Describe the attributes of God that we can learn from ‘Daniel’.
4. Write briefly the topics covered in the book.
5. Give examples and show that God of Daniel reveals secrets.