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Daniel, Special Messenger for the End Times

At the start of the 20th century, people in the Western part of the earth have strong hopes for a better future. They believe that science and new inventions will end hunger and war. Then no one will be poor anymore. They hope that peace will happen at this time.

Of course, the end of the 20th century showed that this hope was wrong and foolish. This helps us understand why we did not enter the 21st century with a lot of hope for a better future.

To nonbelievers, life on this earth looks bad. Life does not promise to get better. Humans are greedy. They want to hurt other people. They want to control other people too. They want to use the poor to get rich. People behaved this way in the past. They behave the same way now. Many of the inventions we made have both helped us and hurt us at the same time. Those things made it easy for humans to do more bad things to other people.

We should not be surprised. The Bible shows us the truth about humans: “ ‘Nothing can hide its evil as well as the human mind. It can be very sick, and no one really understands it’ ” (Jeremiah 17:9, ERV). Jesus also tells us: “ ‘Nations [countries] will fight against other nations. Kingdoms will fight against other kingdoms. There will be times when there is no food for people to eat. And there will be earthquakes in different places’ ” (Matthew 24:7, ERV).

Our answer to all this trouble is the book of Daniel. Daniel is our study for this quarter. It is a book that has a lot of meaning for us. We are living in the “**ayt qatz**,” or “ ‘the time of the end’ ” (Daniel 12:9, ERV). The book of Daniel gives us powerful proof for our belief in God. It also gives us powerful proof for our belief in Jesus, His death on the cross, and His Second Coming.

Daniel chapters 2, 7, 8, and 11 show us the kingdoms that will rule on the earth: Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, Rome, and God's everlasting kingdom. Also, Daniel told us that the kingdom of Rome will continue until the end time. In Daniel 2:33, 41, the statue's feet and toes show us the divided countries of Europe and the Roman Catholic Church. So, we can see that Daniel's prophecies, or special messages, have come true. Someone living in Babylon, Greece, or the early days of Rome could not know that Daniel is correct about human history. But today we know.

Yes, we can see that Daniel was correct about all these kingdoms. So, we have even more reasons to trust him about God's future kingdom. This future kingdom will start after the Second Coming.

For sure, the book of Daniel is a powerful book. It makes our faith strong. As Seventh-day Adventists, we find reasons in the book of Daniel for our church's work and why we are here on this earth. In Daniel 8:14, we read: "One of the holy angels said to me, 'It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings. Then the temple will be made holy again' " (NirV). This verse shows us the same thing that Daniel 7:22, 26, 27 show us. After God's work as our Judge is done, God shows favor to His people. Then God sets up His everlasting kingdom. The kingdoms on this earth will not continue forever. But God's kingdom will continue forever.

Yes, the book of Daniel shows us the "big picture" of human history. But the book also shows us how close Jesus wants to be with each one of us. King Nebuchadnezzar's dream and the story about Daniel in the lions' den show us that God is always near to us. As Daniel told evil King Belshazzar, God is the " 'One who has power over your life and everything you do' " (Daniel 5:23, ICB).

The book of Daniel was written hundreds and thousands of years ago. This story continues to be the same now as it was back then: a powerful story about Jesus and His love for us.

The book of Daniel shows us how close Jesus wants to be with each one of us.

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