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## Daniel, Prophet of the End



As the nineteenth century disappeared into the twentieth, a sense of optimism pervaded the West. Through science and technology, humanity was advancing toward a golden age, a future of wonderful possibilities when war, pestilence, poverty, and hunger would finally be ended. That was the hope, anyway.

Of course, the twentieth century proved this hope not only wrong but also foolish and naïve. This helps explain why, when we entered the twenty-first century, it was with no great sense of optimism about a better future.

From a worldly perspective, the world still seems in pretty dismal shape and, worse, holds little prospect for improvement. Humans seem just as inclined toward greed, oppression, violence, conquest, exploitation, and self-destruction now as our ancestors were in ages past. Meanwhile, many of our great technological advances, though sometimes serving humanity well, have aided us in our greed, oppression, violence, conquest, exploitation, and self-destruction.

None of this should be surprising, of course, not with such texts as “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?” (*Jer. 17:9, NKJV*) or “For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places” (*Matt. 24:7, NKJV*).

And yet, amid all this despair and calamity, we have the book of Daniel, our study for this quarter, a book that’s especially relevant for us who are living in the *ayt qatz*, “the time

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of the end” (*Dan. 12:9*). And that’s because in the sacred pages of Daniel we have powerful, rational, faith-affirming evidence not only for our belief in God but also in the Lord Jesus Christ and His death on the cross, as well as the promise of His return and all that His return entails.

Think about it. All through Daniel (*chapters 2, 7, 8, 11*), we have been given, from various angles, the following sequence of empires: Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, Rome, and God’s eternal kingdom after the Second Coming. From our perspective today, living when we do, we can see that all the worldly kingdoms have come and gone as predicted. Or, in the case of Rome, it came and remains, at least for now, just as Daniel wrote. It is depicted in the feet and toes of Daniel 2:33, 41 and is manifested in the still-divided nations of Europe, as well as the Roman church itself. Thus, we have an affirmation of biblical prophecy as broad and as solid as the history of the world that someone living in the time of Babylon, or Greece, or even in the earlier days of Rome, could not have had.

*Daniel remains what it was when penned thousands of years ago: a powerful revelation of the love and character of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Living where we are on the prophetic timescale, we also can see that Daniel was correct about all these kingdoms; thus, we have even more reasons to trust him regarding the only one yet to come: God’s eternal kingdom—after the Second Coming.

Yes, the book of Daniel remains a powerful, faith-affirming document, especially for Seventh-day Adventists, who find within its pages texts seminal to our church, especially Daniel 8:14, “And he said to me, ‘For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed’ ” (*NKJV*). This text is parallel to Daniel 7:22, 26, 27, which shows that after the great heavenly judgment, given “in favor of the saints of the Most High,” God’s eternal kingdom will be established. In contrast to the fleeting, earthly empires, it will last forever.

And yet, alongside the “big picture,” we see just how close Christ can be to us, individually. From King Nebuchadnezzar’s dream to Daniel’s deliverance from the lions’ den, the book shows us God’s immanence, or His nearness to us; as Daniel told wicked King Belshazzar, He is the God “who holds your breath in His hand and owns all your ways” (*Dan. 5:23, NKJV*).

In short, the book of Daniel, our study for this quarter, remains what it was when penned thousands of years ago: a powerful revelation of the love and character of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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# How to Use This Teachers Edition

**“The true teacher is not content with dull thoughts, an indolent mind, or a loose memory. He constantly seeks higher attainments and better methods. His life is one of continual growth. In the work of such a teacher there is a freshness, a quickening power, that awakens and inspires his [class].”**

—Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, p. 103.

To be a Sabbath School teacher is both a privilege and a responsibility. A privilege because it offers the teacher the unique opportunity to lead and guide in the study and discussion of the week’s lesson so as to enable the class to have both a personal appreciation for God’s Word and a collective experience of spiritual fellowship with class members. When the class concludes, members should leave with a sense of having tasted the goodness of God’s Word and having been strengthened by its enduring power. The responsibility of teaching demands that the teacher is fully aware of the Scripture to be studied, the flow of the lesson through the week, the interlinking of the lessons to the theme of the quarter, and the lesson’s application to life and witness.

This guide is to help teachers to fulfill their responsibility adequately. It has three segments:

- 1. Overview** introduces the lesson topic, key texts, links with the previous lesson, and the lesson’s theme. This segment deals with such questions as Why is this lesson important? What does the Bible say about this subject? What are some major themes covered in the lesson? How does this subject affect my personal life?
- 2. Commentary** is the chief segment in the Teachers Edition. It may have two or more sections, each one dealing with the theme introduced in the Overview segment. The Commentary may include several in-depth discussions that enlarge the themes outlined in the Overview. The Commentary provides an in-depth study of the themes and offers scriptural, exegetic, illustrative discussion material that leads to a better understanding of the themes. The Commentary also may have scriptural word study or exegesis appropriate to the lesson. On a participatory mode, the Commentary segment may have discussion leads, illustrations appropriate to the study, and thought questions.
- 3. Life Application** is the final segment of the Teachers Edition for each lesson. This section leads the class to discuss what was presented in the Commentary segment as it impacts Christian life. The application may involve discussion, further probing of what the lesson under study is all about, or perhaps personal testimony on how one may feel the impact of the lesson on one’s life.

**Final thought:** What is mentioned above is only suggestive of the many possibilities available for presenting the lesson and is not intended to be exhaustive or prescriptive in its scope. Teaching should not become monotonous, repetitious, or speculative. Good Sabbath School teaching should be Bible-based, Christ-centered, faith-strengthening, and fellowship-building.