

Studies in Daniel  
Introduction  
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**Introduction:**

I attended high school in the early 70's - graduating in 1972, and my high school days sound like something from a movie when I tell people what high school was like in Memphis, Tn in this days. In my home room, our home room teacher held a devotion every morning - and this devotion consisted of a reading from the Bible, followed by a few minutes of silence - a.k.a. a time for prayer of devotion - before the bell rang and everyone left home room for our first class. The way our room was situated, we sat in rows in alphabetical order from front to back. So on the first day of the semester, the person on the front row of the 'A' row would choose a passage from the Bible and read it for devotion, followed by the next person the next day, and so forth, until every student had read a devotion from the Bible - and then the rotation would start over. Interestingly, NO ONE protested - not even people kids who didn't attend church. It was just what you did in home room every day.

We didn't have any kind of lock down drills in those days either - with two exceptions. We had the periodic fire drill - and we would sometimes have Civil Defense Drills, where all the kids and the teachers would get down on their knees and under desks until the all clear signal sounded - and Civil Defense drills were to prepare us for one of two scenarios - tornadoes, and atomic attack - which of course, never came. I remember those times though.

And whenever I think about this times, and then compare them to today - 21st century America - there is quite a difference. For example, in my school days, we never, ever thought that we might face real, physical persecution as followers of Jesus. It just wasn't on anyone radar screen - and that was true even after I moved to California in 1981.

When we started our college study back in March of this year though, one of the requests given by two of the students, regarding what to study, had to do with studying something designed to equip them to suffer - because, they said, they felt like they would probably face real, physical persecution sometime in the near future. And so as we considered a book to study, we settled in on a topic that in part was designed to help them in this area. Were these students just being paranoid? I don't think so.

We are seeing push back against Christ and Christians today that my peers and I never would have dreamed of - 43 years ago. **For example**, I read of one instance recently, that took place after the scandal of Planned Parenthood hit the news feeds, where a group of Satanists actually showed up outside a Planned Parenthood location in the mid-West and as several women were knelt down praying, the Satanist group poured gallons of milk over them - which I would say is a form of persecution, against these praying women.

And then, on October 1st, something happened that struck quite close to home. On October 1st, there was another mass shooting - this time in Roseburg, Oregon - where nine people plus the gunman died and many more were injured; and eyewitnesses said the gunmen purposely targeted Christians - asking at least some of the people what their religion was. If they responded they were Christians they were shot in the head, but if they were silent or named another religion, they were shot somewhere else - and at least one young man was left alone. Now, that was a targeted act of violence - a hate crime directed at at least one of two Christians.

In the face of increasing acts such as these, the request of our college students, in wanting to be prepared for persecution, was well founded. The question is, how do Christians go about that? How do Jesus's followers prepare for potential persecution, so if and when it comes, they will be prepared for it, so as to stand firm in the faith?

I would say, **one way**, is to be as grounded in the truths of the gospel as is possible. So, to those ends, we're taking a trip through Romans in the college group - since Romans is the most complete explanation of the gospel in all of scripture.

In addition to being well rooted in the gospel, a **second path to preparation** is to be developing a focused, connected, vibrant, regular life of prayer, where we are growing in regular and intimate fellowship with God, by His Spirit. Prayer is to our life as Christians what breath is to the life of the body - and private, secret prayer, builds one up in God's grace - while both private and corporate prayer empowers us to face suffering, should it ever come our way. And I point to this because, as we read through volume two of Luke's gospel, the book of Acts, we see this fleshed out in the life of the early church. Prayer is EVERYWHERE!

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And so we prepare for suffering - for persecution - by being well grounded in the gospel, and through focused, intimate fellowship with the Father through prayer. BUT, there is a third path to preparation for us as individual Christians as well as for us as the church.

There is a **third path** for preparation however - and the **third path** is to take the time to learn valuable lessons from two of the books in the Bible, which were written for the express purpose of giving encouragement, and of building up the faith, of God's suffering people - and the books I have in view are **Daniel in the Old Testament** and **Revelation** in the New Testament. AND, having said this, now you know what my purpose is, in choosing to teach through Daniel in part and the Revelation in it's entirety.

**Daniel**, as we shall see, was written by **Daniel** - a statesman in Babylon during the Judaeen Captivity, to **bring hope** to the suffering people of God, *as they lived in captivity as a result of their nations rebellion against God.*

Many years later, **John** would write the **Revelation** for the same reason. John would write Revelation to the churches in Asia Minor, and to all the people of God in the churches, because some of these churches were **in the midst of persecution**, while others soon would be - and he wanted to **bring hope to them** and to all the churches, in light of the victory of God!!

**The book of Daniel** is considered an OT prophetic book in the English OT (though it appears in the Writings in the Jewish scriptures) and Revelation is considered a prophetic book in the NT - but this classification isn't the whole of the picture. What I mean is, Daniel contains prophecy - but, Daniel also contains another type literature, and the type literature I refer to is, **APOCALYPTIC** - **Daniel** is in part, apocalyptic literature. **Revelation**, on the other hand, is also known as the Apocalypse - because, it is in it's entirety, APOCALYPTIC literature. Why is this important?

It is important to recognize the type literature a book or passage falls under in order to properly understand the message of the book or passage. **For example**, when we are dealing with a **parable**, it is important to know that a parable is constructed in such a way so as to communicate a specific lesson to the hearers of the parable, in the form of a familiar story, usually taken from everyday life. Jesus used parables to hide truth from and to reveal truth to, certain people.

A **narrative** is a story taken from the life of Israel or from Jesus life and so forth. Narratives - and the four gospels are entirely narrative - teach solid truth, but the truth is found inside the story - and every part - every specific word - won't carry the same weight as some of the other parts. So, we seek for the key lessons in narrative - and often there are more than one. Once we know that a parable is a parable, or a narrative is a narrative, then we are free to look for the key lesson or lessons - and we are also safeguarded from trying to place too much detailed meaning on all the parts.

**Paul's letters**, on the other hand, fall into an entirely different category than a parable or narrative. So with one of Paul's letters, we deal with proposition after proposition after proposition - where all the parts are important to the whole - with significant doctrinal truths appearing in the first part of the letter with applications of the doctrine coming later. So in Romans, after Paul's introduction, chapters 1: 15 to 8: 39 is the doctrinal portion, chapters 9 to 11 are also doctrinal but deal with one single problem that was heavy on Paul's mind; and then chapters 12, 13, 14, and most of 15 tell us how to apply the doctrinal portion.

The type literature is important to the meaning. Daniel is in part APOCALYPTIC and in part historic narrative, while Revelation is totally apocalyptic. Apocalyptic literature has several characteristics:

1. Revelation within a narrative framework;
2. Revelation is given in whole or in part by an otherworldly being - like angels;
3. Reveals transcendent reality which is both temporal (eschatological salvation here) and spatial (it also involves another supernatural world);

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**The goal** of APOCALYPTIC is to interpret present earthly circumstances in light of the supernatural world and in relation to the future, and to influence the understanding and behavior of the audience through divine authority.

**One writer** (Thomas Long) says “**APOCALYPTIC draws back the curtain and allows the reader or hearer to see the eschatological victory of God, which has already been achieved over whatever forces are crippling the faith community. It’s a 911 genre for times of emergency**’

**The key to understanding this type of literature is to realize what the function of the text is. In apocalyptic literature, the author has something to communicate. BUT, it is more centered on HOPE for the FUTURE, than information about the future. It is generally NOT a chronological account of the future - but a literary shock treatment - and this comes through bold and graphic images to take our attention AWAY from the problems we currently face and give us HOPE that God will win a resounding victory over ALL evil.**

Keeping all this in mind, let me give an overview of the book of Daniel. **Daniel 1: 1-3** gives us the background of the book. Let’s read those verses together.

We learn from these verses that the events recorded in this book took place during a **time of captivity** for some people - from the royal family and from the nobility - from Israel - and this means it is a **time of suffering**. Can you imagine what it might be like to be captives?

Daniel calls this “a time of indignation” in 8: 19. Why is this time called a time of indignation?

In Moses Law, in chapters 27 and 28 of Deuteronomy, Moses had pronounced a list of blessings if Israel obeyed the Lord and a list of curses if they didn’t, after they entered the land of Canaan. By the time of the book of Daniel, what has happened is that after many, many years of disobedience and idolatry, and after having seen the ten northern tribes of Israel carried away captive by the Assyrians, the two southern tribes of Judah and Benjamin - the house of David - have now begun to be carried away captive - not by the Assyrians but by the Babylonians - because even though they have had four righteous kings in addition to a number of unrighteous kings, their iniquity is now full and God has begun to judge them.

The result of the captivity was that these Jews had been captured and taken away from their land and their city and they had been transported to a far away country - and were slaves and captives of a pagan King. In that situation, what the message would you need to hear?

*I would need to hear a message of hope - but not just any old hope.*

I would want to know that God had not totally forsaken me;

I would want to know that the LORD, Yahweh, had not totally left our people;

I would want to know that Yahweh yet had a plan for our people and for me, as the future unfolded.

I remember back in 1998 when I was sick and thought I was really going to die - how I needed HOPE - and a part of that hope touched on whether God had thrown me off or whether he still had a plan for me other than death. Isn’t that what you would want? Hope in these ways?

And that is exactly what Daniel’s prophecy is all about! What God does, in and through Daniel, is that He gives HOPE to His people. And he does by putting Himself on DISPLAY by DISPLAYING four of His own qualities.

In the prophecy as a whole, we see :

A. A Display of the Overarching POWER of God. We would call this, God’s sovereign rule or control. And God shows through His actions AND through His visions, that He is in TOTAL control. Let me show you an example, from Daniel 4: 4, 13-17; 28-37. GOD did that to this KING. So, who REALLY is the KING?

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The second reality God personal quality God puts on display for Daniel is:

B. A Display of God's PROVISION: Look at Daniel 1: 17-20

In addition, Yahweh shows Daniel:

C. A Display of God's PROTECTION: Daniel 6

But finally, we see in Daniels book how God gave to Daniel and to His people in captivity:

D. A Display of God's PURPOSE for Final and Complete SALVATION - and this is the these of chapters 2, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11. In these chapters we have visions - and these visions laid out for Daniel God's plan for TATAL SALVATION not just of elect Israelites but for all peoples!!

Look with me at one example of this, in chapter 7. I want to look at this quickly, because we will go into the detail of this vision on another night. Verses 9-14 are very interesting! Who are these verses about?

The Ancient of Days and who else?

One like a Son of Man...and what happens between the Ancient of days and the Son of Man?

What is given to the Son of Man?

What do you think this means?

So, this is an overview of Daniel. Daniel is a book of prophecy but it is also APOCALYPTIC.

It was given to Daniel during captivity of the house of David in babylon.

God puts His overarching power, His provision, His protection and His Purpose for Total Salvation on display for Daniel and for His people;

And he does this to give His people hope that He - God the LORD, is NOT finished with them yet - but will indeed win final victory - just as He promised the Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and Moses, and David. For God is the LORD and he reigns - and HIS PLAN - his SALVATION is sure and will never be thwarted.

Amen.