

(109) Adult Sunday School Class

Daniel, chpts. 8-12

Chronicles, pp. 173-181



## Part 2 of 2

As was mentioned last week, the book of Daniel is composed of two major sections. First half, chapters 1-6, contain stories mostly about Daniel and his three friends standing strong for their faith. The second half, chapters 7-12, broadens the message through a series of visions given to Daniel that God wants His people to live faithfully, even in difficult times.

Daniel's visions are bewildering and the angel Gabriel comes to explain. But even so, Gabriel's explanations provide insight but don't answer all the questions. In one of the visions, reference is made to God as the "Ancient of Days," and then to another person who is "like a son of man" who is given authority, glory, and sovereign power (7:1-14). It is worth noting the New Testament Gospels connect this vision with the return of Jesus (see Matt. 24:30, 26:64, Mark 13:36, etc.).

In other visions, Daniel sees suffering ahead, along with cosmic battles between angels and demons. Daniel's visions have one main point: suffering lies ahead for God's people, but the suffering will not last. Scholars believe many of Daniel's visions are two-fold, inferences to Daniel's future (our past) but also to our future in the end times. In the concluding chapter, the angel tells Daniel, "everyone whose name is found written in the book will be delivered" (12:1-2); a clear reference to resurrection and eternal life (a rarity in the Old Testament).

These stories and visions serve to encourage us to stand firm for our Lord regardless of the pressure exerted on us by our culture or circumstances, just as Daniel and his friends did not compromise their faith even at the risk of losing their lives.

The message of book of Daniel is that God is sovereign and His Kingdom will ultimately triumph over all powers, a triumph that includes our resurrection from the dead (a timely Easter message).