



CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

SEPTEMBER 19 2020

God is in control

Scripture Story: Daniel 8 and 9.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

Daniel 8 records a prophecy that involves symbolic imagery such as beasts, horns, and the future actions of the powers they symbolize. “The action begins with the ascendancy of the Medo-Persian ram (verses 3, 20), followed by the Greek goat (verses 5, 21). The Greek goat’s great horn is Alexander, whose reign is followed by the breakup of his empire into four kingdoms symbolized by the four horns (verses 8, 21, 22).” (William Shea, *Daniel: A Reader’s Guide*, p. 222).

“The little horn of Daniel 8 is Rome. The true fulfillment of the little horn of Daniel 8 can only be the Roman Empire and its successor, the Roman Church. . . . Inasmuch as the Roman Church was a continuation of the Roman Empire, a single prominent horn appropriately represents both of them” (Mervyn Maxwell, *God Cares: The Message of Daniel for You and Your Family*, pp. 160, 161).

The certainty of God’s Word brought both perplexity and comfort to Daniel. Daniel was perplexed at how or why God would allow trouble, tragedy, and rebellion for so long. And though answers were not readily given, Daniel was comforted in the fact that God Himself would war and win against the little horn and bring His people through victoriously. Not only is God’s Word certain, His power is reliable.

Even though the future, and oftentimes the present, seems hard to comprehend, Daniel shows us that God is still in control. The fact that God showed Daniel such trouble was coming is reassurance that nothing, not even tragedy, catches God by surprise. Not only

does He know about it, He has a plan to rectify it, in His time.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Know that nothing, not even their problems, catches God by surprise. (*Know*)
- Feel secure in the reliability of God’s plan and power. (*Feel*)
- Respond to life’s problems by trusting in God. (*Respond*)

III. EXPLORE

- Gift of prophecy*
- Sanctuary (Christ’s ministry in heavenly)†
- Bible/Holy Scriptures‡

* Fundamental Belief No. 18.

† Fundamental Belief No. 24.

‡ Fundamental Belief No. 1.

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.

An alternate activity for this lesson is to pass out index cards to each student and ask them to come up with a definition for the word “vaticinate” (vā-tī’æ-nāt), without the use of a dictionary. After the students have

finished composing them, collect all the definitions. Shuffle them and add to the pile the correct definition, which is “to prophesy or foretell.” Read all the definitions aloud and have students guess which one is the real definition. Afterward, say: “The prophet Daniel vaticinated or prophesied about the last days. Today we are going to look at some of his prophecies.”

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

Becky strapped herself into the plane like a pro. No one could tell this was her first flight, or that on the inside she was terrified. She grabbed her safety card from the back of the seat in front of her and read it with deliberate attention. She located the nearest exit, which sat just rows behind her. She listened intently to the speech the flight attendants gave and tried to commit to memory all the safety procedures in case of emergency.

Everyone, including the flight attendants, had taken their seats. The baggage was stowed, and the plane began its ascent into the cloudy sky. It was not nearly as bad as she thought. Becky was afraid for nothing. The beverages came and the in-flight movie began to play. Becky was having the time of her life. She even chatted a little with the person next to her.

Just then, a bell sounded overhead and the captain’s voice interrupted the movie. The captain warned that he saw a storm up ahead. For the next 20 minutes, it would be a bumpy ride. Those around Becky looked at her to see how she would take the news. She assured them she was calm. She was reassured by the fact the pilot was able to see the storm before he got to it. Since it did not catch him by surprise, he was able to plan and prepare for it. Becky explained, “Since it did not catch him off guard, I will not let it catch me off guard either.”

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

The prophet Daniel received a warning much like Becky’s warning. God was telling Daniel through his visions that there were some storms ahead. There would be some turbulent times coming, but God was still in control. He is the Master Pilot, and none of the things to come would catch Him by surprise. God knew about them centuries before they would even

happen, and had already charted out solutions for problems that had not even occurred.

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.

- What was Daniel’s reaction to the vision God gave him?
- Why do you think he responded this way?
- What kingdom did the goat represent?
- What reasons can you give for God using symbols such as goats and horns to describe future kingdoms?
- Daniel’s visions made some pretty gloomy predictions about some coming kingdoms. If the prophecies were written out in plain language, rulers of those kingdoms might have purposed to destroy the Bible and such important prophecy. Sometimes God hides things from us and reveals it at just the right time. Read Daniel 8:26. God told Daniel to seal up the vision. Why do you think He told Daniel to do this?
- The goat had a horn that would start out small but would grow up to the heavens. *Underline* the things the little horn would do.
- What promises does God make in this passage?
- God promised that the little horn would be destroyed. What role did the little horn play in history?
- What do you think God means when He says He will reconsecrate the sanctuary?
- Why is the cleansing or reconsecration of the sanctuary necessary?
- What does this passage teach us about God?
- How can we apply this knowledge in our lives today?

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: Daniel 8:26; Psalm 77:13; 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4; Romans 8:35-39; Isaiah 55:8, 9.

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

Daniel had a disturbing vision about a ram and a goat. The vision opened with a mighty ram with two horns. He was very powerful. Nothing could withstand



Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

Think Time

Good things come to those who wait. This is true in life and in the classroom. Studies show that when teachers give at least three seconds of wait-time after a question is asked and after a student answers, great things happen. There are less “I don’t know” answers or no answers at all.¹

Ask students, “As a result of this lesson, what changes will you make this week?” And then wait at least three seconds in silence giving someone an opportunity to speak. After a student speaks, continue to wait at least three seconds before responding. Students will feel more comfortable and will potentially contribute more in class.

RABBI 101

The goat symbolized the empire of Greece. The great horn represented Alexander the Great. At his death, his kingdom was given to his four generals, hence the four horns. Out of the four winds of heaven came a little horn that set himself up against God and His people.

This little horn symbolized the the Roman Empire and its successor, the Church of Rome. This religious and political power would not only war against humanity. It would war against God and His people. It would defile God’s sanctuary, trample God’s people, come against the Prince of princes, and throw truth to the ground.

Gabriel reassured Daniel that the sanctuary would be reconsecrated in 2300 days, which in prophetic time was 2,300 years. The time period of 2300 prophetic days, or 2,300 literal years, extended from 457 B.C., the decree of Artaxerxes to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, to A.D. 1844, the time Jesus began the second part of His ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, that is, the work of investigative judgment.

As Daniel continued to study, he realized that the Jews should be freed from Babylonian captivity soon. It was supposed to last only 70 years, but the last vision made it seem like oppression would go on for thousands of years.

Gabriel gave Daniel a clearer understanding that the things he saw were for the end times. Gabriel also shared God’s solution for the problem, the Messiah. He not only shared *that* the Messiah would come but *when* the Messiah would come! See Daniel 9:24-27.

God still had everything in His control. Even

him. He conquered to the west, the north, and the south. The ram’s power, however, came to an end when a ferocious goat, with a giant horn, came on the scene. The goat trampled the ram and grew to be very great. The goat’s giant horn was broken, but was replaced by four horns. Out of one of the four winds of heaven came a little horn that grew great in power. In prophecy, horns represent kings (Daniel 8:20).

Gabriel told Daniel that the ram with the two horns represented the empire of the Medes and Persians.

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Key Text**

Invite the students to share the key text with the class if they have committed it to memory.

- **Flashlight**

Read the Flashlight statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week’s story found in the book Prophets and Kings. Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from Out of the Story.

- **Punch Lines**

Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week’s story. Have them share the verse that speaks most directly to them and allow them to explain why they chose it.

- **Further Insight**

Ask them how the quote in Further Insight conveys the point of the story in this lesson.

though there were some rough times ahead, none of these situations would catch God by surprise. He would bring justice in His time. God also promised to destroy the power of the little horn permanently.

Besides presenting the great conflict that involves the attack of the little horn against Christ's kingdom, the prophecy focuses on God's solution through the plan of salvation.

The prophecy described in Daniel 8 presents Jesus as "out Great High Priest, the heavenly Prince, our Intercessor and Mediator. We receive from Him today the sanctification of our lives. Finally one day, according to the promise of the prophecy of Daniel 7, those lives will be transformed into the glorified lives of the saints in the new earth" (William Shea, *Daniel: A Reader's Guide*, pp. 223, 229).

III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Give each student a piece of paper and instruct them to write at the top of the paper a situation they want to completely trust God to work out. Below the situation's description, have them pen a prayer of surrender, letting God know they are going to stop worrying about this problem and place it in His hands. Lead the

students in a season of prayer in which each student can share a sentence prayer of surrender aloud.

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

We are indeed living in the last days of earth's history. Although the last days will be marked by conflict, the Bible promises that they will end with God's victory over the forces of evil. Then He will redeem His saints and enter them into His kingdom of glory. Yet for a little while the people of God will experience turbulence ahead. God, our Pilot, does not promise to lead us *around* every storm, but He does promise to lead us *safely through* the storm. God's warning of storms ahead affords us an opportunity to be prepared and proves that God has prepared also.

God's Word is certain and His power is reliable. He will bring us out, not only of the trouble in the last days, but out of the problems we face today. "Take to Him everything that perplexes the mind. Nothing is too great for Him to bear, for He holds up worlds, He rules over all the affairs of the universe. Nothing that in any way concerns our peace is too small for Him to notice" (*Steps to Christ*, p. 100).

⁴Robert J. Stahl, "Using 'Think-Time' and 'Wait-Time' Skillfully in the Classroom," *ERIC Digest*.



Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series.

*A special adaptation of *Prophets and Kings (or Royalty and Ruin)* has been created by the Ellen G. White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net.