

BOOK OF DANIEL

THE POWER OF A LIFE DEDICATED TO GOD – COREY STARK

I. INTRODUCTION

A. There are many things in Scripture we may be unfamiliar with. However, hearing something new doesn't automatically mean that it's incorrect or unbiblical. We want to be like the Bereans who were *eager to learn* new things (not skeptical), yet diligent enough to *search the Scriptures* daily for themselves (Acts 17:10-11).

Acts 17:11 These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness [eager to learn], and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.

B. Yet academic bible study alone isn't enough! As we study the *written Word of God* we must not neglect cultivating our relationship with the *Living Word of God* by “coming to Him” and asking questions (Ps. 27:4).

Jn. 5:39 You search the Scriptures, for in them [Scripture alone] you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

II. THE BOOK OF DANIEL – OVERVIEW

A. The book of Daniel is twelve chapters. The first six chapters are historical episodes in Daniel's life (Dan. 1-6). The final six chapters are four visions that have their ultimate fulfillment in the end times (Dan. 7-12).

1. Daniel chapters 1-6 give us a picture of the values and lifestyle that the Lord is calling the Church to embrace in preparation for the unique dynamics of the end time drama that is revealed in chapters 7-12.

2. Daniel's values give us some keys for receiving divine understanding in preparation for the end times.

a. History of prayer: When Daniel receives his first vision concerning the end of the age (Dan. 7) he is around 65-70 years old. Thus, for fifty-plus years Daniel has prayed three times a day (Dan. 6:10).

b. Knowledge of the Scriptures: We know from an early age Daniel was familiar with and obedient to the Torah. He understood the dietary laws (Dan. 1), as well as studied and prayed through the promises in the book of Jeremiah, concerning the timing of Israel's release from captivity (Jer. 29).

c. Prayer with fasting: Daniel's last two visions (Dan. 9, 10-12), both display the role of prayer and fasting in the reception of divine insight and revelation Dan. 9:3, 22-23; 10:2-3, 11-12.

d. Valuing the prophetic: Daniel's dreams, visions and angelic visitations all gave profound understanding concerning the specifics of the end times within a broader biblical framework.

e. Asking and seeking: Daniel sought more understanding consistently throughout his life. Why would God reveal more if we never seek the meaning of what has already been revealed (Dan. 8:15-16)?

3. The most emphasized theme in Daniel's four visions (Dan. 7-12) surprisingly, is not Jesus, but the Antichrist. Why would God give so much information about the Antichrist? In the generation of the Lord's return many will be deceived by Satan or offended at Jesus because of the Antichrist's persecution. In Matthew 24 Jesus gives His *most detailed* teaching on the end times. In it, His primary emphasis was not about tribulation or persecution, but the need to avoid *deception* (Mt. 24:4-5, 11, 24).

Mt. 24:4 Take heed that no one deceives you. 5 For many will come in My name... and deceive many... 10 Then many will be offended... 11 Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many...

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III. THE LIFE OF DANIEL: THE POWER OF A LIFE DEDICATED TO GOD

A. The effectiveness of Daniel's life was undergirded by a lifetime of dedication to *prayer with fasting* (Dan. 6:10), while setting his heart to *walk in wholeheartedness* (Dan. 1:8) and *gain understanding* (Dan. 10:12).

Dan. 6:10 Daniel... knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.

Dan. 1:8 But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank...

Dan. 10:12 "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard..."

B. Daniel is the *only man* God used as an example of righteousness while still alive (Ezek. 14:13-14, 19-20).

Ezek. 14:13 "When a land sins against Me by persistent unfaithfulness, I will stretch out My hand against it; I will cut off its supply of bread, send famine on it... 14 Even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness."

C. In Matthew 24 Jesus makes three direct references to Daniel's prophecies, giving insight into the *abomination of desolation* (Mt. 24:15; Mk. 13:14; Dan. 8:13; 9:27; 11:31; 12:11), the *Great Tribulation* (Mt. 24:21; Mk. 13:19; Dan. 12:1) and the *Son of Man* coming on the clouds (Mt. 24:30; Mk. 13:26; Dan. 7:13-14). Daniel is the *only* OT prophet to have seen the abomination and Jesus calls us to learn from him (Mt. 24:15).

Mt. 24:15 "Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand)...

D. Gabriel appeared to Daniel twice (8:16; 9:21). Both times he spoke in such a way that God's plan would only be clear to those who were hungry to understand it and would seek it out, not to the wicked (Dan. 12:10). The need to seek understanding was emphasized in each of Daniel's four visions (7:16, 19; 8:15, 17; 9:3, 22-23, 25; 10:3, 11-14; 11:33, 35; 12:4, 8-10).

Dan. 12:10 Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.

E. Across the earth today, the Lord is raising up forerunners who will give others understanding of God's purpose and plan to expose the deceptive strategies of the enemy. Understanding the truth is essential in equipping God's people to prevail in victory, so that they are not deceived by Satan, confused by God's plan, offended at Jesus, fearful of the Antichrist, or seduced by the Harlot Babylon to compromise in the midst of the unique dynamics and unprecedented events that will occur in the generation of the Lord's return.

Dan. 11:32 The people who know their God will be strong and carry out great exploits. 33 And those of the people who understand [God and His plans] shall instruct many.