

# ALL CHRISTIANS' FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

## *Bible Study Outline*

**TOPIC:** Have You Got What It Takes?

**TEXT:** *Daniel Chapter 1*

**Instructions:** *Let the above passages be read to enable everyone to participate fully. The teacher should provide additional background information on certain follow-up questions. Always try to use relevant but brief Bible references to illustrate your points, and be careful not to dominate the discussion.*

**Introduction:** Several years ago our daughter decided that a semester of college away from home would be fun. We loaded all her stuff in a borrowed van and made the six-hour trip to her new home. After we hauled everything to her dorm room I kissed her goodbye and headed back. Tears streamed down my face as I left the campus. I was proud of Kim as she stepped into adulthood, but my joy was edged with the pain of letting her go.

**GROUP DISCUSSION:** Describe your own transition into adult responsibility or a time when you had to let go of someone you loved. What was the most difficult part of the process?

**PERSONAL REFLECTION:** Think back to when you first were on your own. What new adjustments did you have to make? Daniel was torn from his home and family when he was only twelve or thirteen years old. He and a few other young men were taken eight hundred miles away to Babylon. They were enrolled in an intensive three-year training program designed to transform them into loyal Babylonian bureaucrats. A crisis of conscience erupted when the first meal was served. *Read Daniel 1*

1. Trace Daniel's emotions through this chapter. How would Daniel feel in verse 3 in verse 8 in verse 15 and in verse 20? Explain.
2. What specific tactics were used to give Daniel and his friends a new Babylonian orientation (verses. 3-7)? Explain.
3. How do these tactics parallel the pressures Christians face today in a secular society?
4. Why were the food regulations of the Old Testament law so important to Daniel (v. 8-10)? Do you think he was making a big issue out of a minor problem? Explain.
5. How can Christians today determine which activities we will engage in and which we won't?
6. What steps did Daniel take to provide a creative alternative to the king's plan (v. 11-14)?
7. What can you learn from Daniel's attitude and actions about how to respond when your biblical values are challenged?
8. What combination of factors produced the exceptional ability of Daniel and friends (17-20)?
9. What aspect of Daniel's character or conduct in this chapter impresses you the most? How can you cultivate that same quality in your own life?

**Prayer Point:** *Ask God to give you courage and wisdom to obey him when you feel pressured to compromise.*

# ALL CHRISTIANS' FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

## *Bible Study Outline*

### **TOPIC:** A Disturbing Dream

**TEXT:** *Daniel 2:1-30*

**Instructions:** *Let the above passages be read to enable everyone to participate fully. The teacher should provide additional background information on certain follow-up questions. Always try to use relevant but brief Bible references to illustrate your points, and be careful not to dominate the discussion.*

**Introduction:** Scientists tell us that we dream every night—and most of the time we enjoy it. But some dreams terrorize us. They are the dreams C. S. Lewis called "dreams that make you afraid to sleep again."

**GROUP DISCUSSION:** Describe a memorable or recurring dream. Bring an object or article of clothing that illustrates some aspect of the dream. Tell or act out the dream with the same emotion you felt when you had the dream.

**PERSONAL REFLECTION:** Have you ever had a dream that was so real it almost seemed to be true? How did you feel when you woke up? Powerful kings in ancient Babylon had dreams too! Mighty King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream that he couldn't forget. He knew it came from someone far greater than himself. Read Daniel 2:1-30.

1. What is your impression of Nebuchadnezzar as you look through the passage again? (What kind of man was he?)
2. Why do you think Nebuchadnezzar demanded to know the content of his dream from his wise men as well as the dream's interpretation (w. 1-13)?
3. Imagine yourself in Daniel's situation. How would you and your closest friends respond, knowing that you faced certain death if you couldn't interpret a dream you knew nothing about?
4. From Daniel's example what can we learn about how we should react to a personal crisis (verse 14-18)?
5. Compare how you normally respond when God answers your prayers with how Daniel responded in verses 19-23.
6. Verses 20-23 have been called "Daniel's psalm" because of their exaltation of God. What aspects of God's character are emphasized in these verses?
7. How will knowledge of God's wisdom authority and power change how you view your next crisis?
8. What did Daniel want King Nebuchadnezzar to know about the true God (verse 27-30)?
9. Three aspects of Daniel's spiritual maturity stand out in this chapter: his wisdom in response to a crisis, his *prayer* in response to a problem and his *praise* in response to God's work in his life. Which of those marks of maturity is most well-developed in your life? Which of them is weakest?
10. Based on Daniel's example, what specific steps will you take to strengthen your weak area?

# ALL CHRISTIANS' FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

## *Bible Study Outline*

### **TOPIC:** Facing the Future

**TEXT:** *Daniel 2:31-49*

**Instructions:** *Let the above passages be read to enable everyone to participate fully. The teacher should provide additional background information on certain follow-up questions. Always try to use relevant but brief Bible references to illustrate your points, and be careful not to dominate the discussion.*

**Introduction:** Every year tabloid headlines in the grocery store checkout lanes shout the same promises, bold predictions for the New Year from the world's most notable psychics and fortunetellers! Some of the predictions are obvious; some are moronic, most never happen. But every year thousands of people buy copies hoping for some glimpse into the future.

**GROUP DISCUSSION:** Make a prediction about the next twelve months of your life. How confident are you that the prediction will come true?

**PERSONAL REFLECTION:** What would you most like to know about your own future? Who would you trust to give you a reliable prediction?

Daniel 2 is one of the most amazing predictive chapters in the Bible. It was written around 600 B.C., yet it accurately described the future rise and fall of four great empires! Some of Daniel 2 may seem like so much ancient history to us, but it was all future to Daniel. He peered through future centuries with God's eyes. *Read Daniel 2:31-49.*

1. From your study in Daniel so far, summarize the events that led to Daniel's appearance before King Nebuchadnezzar.
2. Nebuchadnezzar had demanded that any interpreter of his dream had to first tell him what happened in the dream. What about Daniel's description of the dream (w. 31-35), would have caused Nebuchadnezzar to be troubled (2:1)?
3. In the interpretation of the king's dream, why do you think God referred to Nebuchadnezzar as the head of gold (v. 36-38)?
4. What observations can you make about the relative value and comparative strength of the four metals making up the statue (v. 31-33)?
5. While Daniel does not identify the future kingdoms, we know them as the Medo-Persian (silver), the Greek (bronze) and the Roman (iron) empires. What does your answer to question 4 and what Daniel says in verses 36-43 tell you about the nature, organization and strength of these kingdoms?

6. What can you conclude about the kingdoms represented by the mixture of clay (ceramic) with iron (v. 41-43)?
7. Verse 44 says that "in the time of those kings [the ones represented by the toes of the statue], the God of heaven will set up a kingdom." How would you describe the kingdom of God based on verses 44-45?
8. In your opinion, was this prophecy fulfilled when Jesus established the church or is it referring to the still future kingdom? Explain.
9. Describe the king's response to Daniel's interpretation of his dream (w. 46-49).
10. What does this chapter teach you about God's activity in the unfolding of human history?
11. How does the portrait of God in this chapter encourage you to trust him with your life and circumstances?

# ALL CHRISTIANS' FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

## *Bible Study Outline*

**TOPIC:** Bow or Burn!

**TEXT:** *Daniel 3*

**Instructions:** *Let the above passages be read to enable everyone to participate fully. The teacher should provide additional background information on certain follow-up questions. Always try to use relevant but brief Bible references to illustrate your points, and be careful not to dominate the discussion.*

**Introduction:** Most of us have never had to face death or persecution for our commitment to Jesus Christ—but that doesn't mean the pressure is off! The secular culture in which we live has other ways of pushing us away from wholehearted obedience to the Lord. If you've ever revealed your faith convictions in a university classroom or turned down an invitation to the wrong kind of entertainment on a business trip, you have felt the pressure to compromise in order to be accepted by others.

**GROUP DISCUSSION:** In what circumstances have you been pressured to compromise what is right? What resources can help you resist that pressure?

**PERSONAL REFLECTION:** Think of someone who is a model to you of courageous commitment to Christ. How can you learn more from that person about remaining faithful in your allegiance to Christ?

The story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the fiery furnace ranks among the top ten best-known Bible stories. It's so familiar that sometimes we forget it really happened! It's also a very instructive account for men and women who are trying to live for God in a secular society. *Read Daniel 3.*

1. If you were covering this story for the evening news, what scenes would you include in the final edit?

Which participants would you try to interview and why?

2. What do you think prompted Nebuchadnezzar to build this image of gold (v. 1-7)?

3. What motivated the astrologers to report the disobedience of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego (v. 8-12)?

4. What temptations did Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego face when they were brought before the king (v. 13-15)?

5. What were these men certain of in their response to Nebuchadnezzar's challenge, and what were they uncertain of (v. 16-18)?

6. How will their example encourage you if you are faced with the possibility of losing your job or being rejected by friends because of your refusal to compromise God's Word?
7. Some Christians claim that pain or sickness or difficulties are always the result of sin or lack of faith. How would you respond to that claim in light of verses 16-18?
8. What specific actions did God take to assure the three men and to demonstrate his power to Nebuchadnezzar (v. 24-30)?
9. As you look back over the chapter, what lessons about the risks and rewards of obedience to God are most significant to you?
10. What commitments can you make to the Lord today that will prepare you to face the pressures of the secular culture around you?

# ALL CHRISTIANS' FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

## *Bible Study Outline*

**TOPIC:** Our God Reigns!

**TEXT:** *Daniel 4*

**Instructions:** *Let the above passages be read to enable everyone to participate fully. The teacher should provide additional background information on certain follow-up questions. Always try to use relevant but brief Bible references to illustrate your points, and be careful not to dominate the discussion.*

**Direction:** The man sitting across from me in the restaurant had lost everything. First his high-profile, lucrative position in the automotive world was slashed in a corporate restructuring plan. In the emotional and economic shakeup that followed, his wife divorced him and his children withdrew in angry silence. He parked cars to make ends meet. When everything else was gone, the Lord was waiting. In the bleakest days of his existence, my friend found genuine life and happiness by trusting in the one person who would never abandon him. He is determined, with God's help, to restore his family relationships. God brought him to the end of his rope in order to rescue him forever.

**GROUP DISCUSSION:** Describe your most humbling experience. What positive change came from that ordeal?

**PERSONAL REFLECTION:** Do you rely most on the Lord in times of prosperity or in times of difficulty? Why?

We are not accustomed to hearing national leaders name their sins in public. That's why Daniel 4 is such an unusual chapter! Nebuchadnezzar, the great, proud, powerful king, writes a letter to the world describing how God humiliated him for seven years and then graciously restored him. Read Daniel 4.

1. How does Nebuchadnezzar's proclamation in 4:1-3 differ from what he said about God in 3:28-29 (after the fiery furnace)?
2. As you read Nebuchadnezzar's description of the dream (w. 9-18), what aspects of it might have caused the king to be "terrified" (v. 5)?
3. God's purpose for giving the dream is repeated three times (v. 17, 25, 32). Why do you think God was so intent on impressing Nebuchadnezzar with his absolute authority instead of his grace or love?
4. If verse 17 is applicable today, must we conclude that Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin and other evil rulers came to power by God's decree? Explain.  
How does your response relate to (or challenge) your perception of who God is and how he acts?
5. If Nebuchadnezzar had repented of his sins as Daniel advised, do you think God would have withheld his judgment, or was his decision irrevocable at this point (v. 24-27)? Explain.

6. Why did God wait a full year between the announcement of judgment and its actual fulfillment (v. 29)?

7. What specific steps did God take to humble Nebuchadnezzar (v. 31-33)?

8. A new Nebuchadnezzar came out of this experience. He gives God glory instead of himself (v. 34-37). Do you think he was simply forced into humility by God, or was there a genuine change of attitude? Explain.

9. Sometimes we gain fresh insight into God's character as we wrestle with the truth. What's the hardest thing about this chapter for you to accept? What does that hard lesson teach you about how God works in our lives to bring us to spiritual maturity and Christ likeness?



# ALL CHRISTIANS' FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

## *Bible Study Outline*

**TOPIC:** The Handwriting on the Wall

**TEXT:** *Daniel 5*

**Instructions:** *Let the above passages be read to enable everyone to participate fully. The teacher should provide additional background information on certain follow-up questions. Always try to use relevant but brief Bible references to illustrate your points, and be careful not to dominate the discussion.*

**Introduction:** God doesn't often use committees or large groups to do his greatest works. Most often God finds just one person who is totally committed to him, and then God works powerfully through that person to accomplish what he desires. When God's people seem weak and ineffective, the problem is never God's ability but the availability of one woman or one man through whom he will demonstrate his power. Never underestimate the influence of one godly life.

**GROUP DISCUSSION:** What one person has had the most influence on you? Has that influence been positive or negative?

**PERSONAL REFLECTION:** How do you want to be remembered by the people who are closest to you? What are you doing each day to cultivate the influence you want to leave behind?

As chapter five opens, Daniel is more than eighty years old. The successors to Nebuchadnezzar's throne have ignored him. He has been shuffled off to some obscure office in the Babylonian bureaucracy. But when the king finds himself in trouble, he calls on God's man. Daniel shows us how to stand for God over the long haul. *Read Daniel 5.*

1. If this chapter were being produced as a motion picture, what musical background would be playing in verse 1 verse 5 verse 18 and verse 30?
2. The events in this chapter take place in 539 B.C., the year (the very night) of the fall of Babylon to the Medo-Persian army led by Cyrus the Great. The Babylonians considered their city impregnable. They had twenty years of food supplies on hand and the fresh water of the Euphrates River flowed through the heart of the city. With that background, what do you think motivated Belshazzar to have this feast?
3. How would you have reacted if you had been at the banquet and saw a hand appear and write on the wall (v. 5)?
4. Three times Daniel recorded the failure of the "wise men" of Babylon to interpret the message of God. What point is Daniel trying to make?
5. What insights into the nature of Belshazzar's sins can you find in verses 18-23?

6. When are you tempted toward similar sins?
7. How can Daniel's words to Belshazzar help us become more humble and thankful to God (v. 18-24)?
8. Why do you think Daniel emphasizes that "that very night" the city of Babylon fell and Belshazzar was killed (v. 30)?
9. How does this chapter demonstrate that seventy years of life under Babylon's influence had not broken down Daniel's convictions?
10. What can we learn from Daniel's example that will help us resist pressures to compromise our convictions?

# ALL CHRISTIANS' FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

## *Bible Study Outline*

**TOPIC:** On the Menu at the Lions' Club

**TEXT:** *Daniel 6*

**Instructions:** *Let the above passages be read to enable everyone to participate fully. The teacher should provide additional background information on certain follow-up questions. Always try to use relevant but brief Bible references to illustrate your points, and be careful not to dominate the discussion.*

**Introduction:** Your first day on the job you meet the enemy and don't even know it. Later, the company gives you a promotion, a raise and a new office, all the things you deserve for your hard work and creative ideas. The only problem is that a few of your coworkers aren't too happy it. They determine to bring you down any way they can.

**GROUP DISCUSSION:** Tell the group about a time when you were betrayed or accused unjustly of doing wrong. What do you think motivated the person who attacked you?

**PERSONAL REFLECTION:** What would you have to "clean out" before your boss or spouse looked through your desk, locker or favorite Internet sites?

Daniel in the lions' den is a story we never get tired of hearing. I've always been impressed by this story because Daniel was not thrown into the lions' den for being bad, but for being godly! We expect to be punished when we do wrong, and when we do right we expect to be promoted. That is certainly the ideal, but it doesn't always work out that way. Sometimes those who do wrong are rewarded and those who do right are persecuted. *Read Daniel 6.*

1. List three or four words that describe each of the main characters in this account. How would you describe them to your best friend?
2. What can we conclude about Daniel's character from the results of this special investigation by his enemies (v. 4-5)?
3. If you were being watched as Daniel was, what changes (if any) would you want to make in your present lifestyle?
4. King Darius willingly signed the document prohibiting prayer (v. 6-9). How does this action resemble the sins of his predecessors?
5. Daniel had three choices in response to the king's decree: (1) stop praying for thirty days, (2) pray secretly or (3) pray as usual. Explain the consequences of each and why you think Daniel made the choice he did. Which choice would you have made?

6. How do verses 14-20 underscore the impact Daniel's life had on the king?
7. In what ways would the miracle Darius witnessed have reinforced Daniel's personal example (v. 21-24)?
8. What specific aspects of God's character can you discover in Darius's decree praising the "God of Daniel" (v. 25-27)?
9. How has Daniel encouraged you to be a more Christ-like example to those around you?
10. What can you learn from Daniel's experience that will help you trust God even in the face of the threat of punishment for your obedience to God?

# ALL CHRISTIANS' FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

## *Bible Study Outline*

**TOPIC:** A Prophetic Panorama

**TEXT:** *Daniel 7*

**Instructions:** *Let the above passages be read to enable everyone to participate fully. The teacher should provide additional background information on certain follow-up questions. Always try to use relevant but brief Bible references to illustrate your points, and be careful not to dominate the discussion.*

**Direction:** Have you ever wondered where human history is going—or how it will end? Nations and empires rise, expand, weaken and fall. Leaders live, rule and die. But where is everything headed? Some people say that history is going nowhere. Others try to sound more optimistic and say that history is going wherever humans take it. Christians who know God's Word, however, realize that history has a plan. God is not sitting in heaven hoping everything will work out. He has already told us how history will conclude because he has planned it all.

**GROUP DISCUSSION:** What are some ways that people think the world will come to an end?

**PERSONAL REFLECTION:** What one question would you like to ask God about the future? Why do you want to know the answer?

1. What scene from Daniel's vision would you most like to have recorded on videotape?
2. If you had seen this vision with Daniel, what question would you have asked the one who interpreted the vision for Daniel?
3. The sea is used in many prophecies to represent the nations of the world. If that is the picture here, how would you explain verses 2-3?
4. Daniel sees four beasts which, according to verse 17, represent four kingdoms. The lion-like appearance of the first beast may represent that kingdom's strength and majesty. What characteristics of the second, third and fourth kingdoms are suggested by verses 5-7?
5. What aspects of God's nature and power are suggested by Daniel's description of the Ancient of Days in verses 9-10?

6. How can this vision of God give us hope and stability when the nations (or our lives) are in turmoil?
7. The final figure to appear in Daniel's vision is "one like a son of man" (v. 13-14), an apparent description of Jesus. What effect does his coming have on the inhabitants and rulers of the world?
8. After the four kingdoms rise, "the saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom" (v. 17-18). How is their conquest different from that of the four kingdoms?
9. Describe the political and military power of the "other horn" from the information found in this chapter (v. 19-26).
10. What can you conclude about the moral and spiritual character of the "other horn"?
11. Twice the heavenly interpreter says that the last king will be tried and condemned by God (v. 22, 26). Why do you think God goes to the effort of setting up court to judge someone so blatantly sinful?
12. Daniel is told that the saints of the Most High will share in the kingdom with the "one who is like a son of man." What do you find most appealing about Daniel's description of God's kingdom (v. 13-14, 27) and why?

# ALL CHRISTIANS' FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

## *Bible Study Outline*

### **TOPIC:** Superpowers in Conflict

**TEXT:** *Daniel 8*

**Instructions:** *Let the above passages be read to enable everyone to participate fully. The teacher should provide additional background information on certain follow-up questions. Always try to use relevant but brief Bible references to illustrate your points, and be careful not to dominate the discussion.*

**Direction:** During some difficult days in my own life, I prayed often that God would give me a glimpse of my future. Would I be able to support my family? Would I ever regain the respect and trust I had lost? Would I even survive? I never received those glimpses—and in God's time the difficult days ended. But at times I still find myself wishing I could just get a peek at what's ahead.

**GROUP DISCUSSION:** If God offered to show you snapshots of your nation's future over the next two hundred years, would you want to see them? Why or why not?

**PERSONAL REFLECTION:** What would you like to know about the next ten years of your life? Do you think that knowledge would make you happier or more secure?

Daniel's vision of the future gets very personal beginning in chapter eight. The first seven chapters stress the destinies of the Gentile (non-Jewish) world powers. In chapters 8-12 the emphasis is on the destiny of Israel, Daniel's own people. *Read Daniel 8.*

1. As you look through the chapter again, pick out the main images in Daniel's vision (w. 1-14) and then list the matching interpretation of each image in verses 15-27.
2. The two-horned ram that Daniel sees represents the kings of the Medo-Persian Empire. From the events portrayed in verses 3 and 4, how would you expect this kingdom to come on the world scene?
3. The goat with one horn is a symbol of the Greek empire and their notable king Alexander the Great (v. 21). From the scene in verses 5-8, how would you describe the clash of the Greek empire (the goat) with the Persian Empire (the ram)?
4. Based on the knowledge and experience you have gained thus far in the "interpretation of visions" with Daniel as a guide, how would you interpret the symbolism of verses 9-12?
5. The "stem-faced king" (v. 23) Gabriel describes is probably Antiochus Epiphanies, a Greek-speaking king who ruled Syria and Palestine from 175 to 164 B.C. He hated the Jews and their God. His most infamous act was desecrating the temple in Jerusalem in 168 B.C. For more than six years ("2,300 evenings and mornings," v. 14) Antiochus oppressed the people of Israel. Finally, the Jews were able to drive Antiochus out of Israel and to reclaim the temple. If you had been a Jew living under the tyranny of Antiochus, how would it have made you feel to read Daniel's prophetic prediction of the very events you were experiencing?
6. What specific qualities can you see in Antiochus that you might also expect to see in an evil ruler bent on world conquest?

7. In what ways would this chapter be an encouragement to Christians living under political tyranny (or even emotional discouragement or spiritual attack)?
8. How does this chapter fit with Daniel's main theme of God's absolute authority?
9. What perspective does this chapter give us in understanding how a good God can permit evil?



# ALL CHRISTIANS' FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

## *Bible Study Outline*

**TOPIC:** Kneeling on God's Promises

**TEXT:** *Daniel 9*

**Instructions:** *Let the above passages be read to enable everyone to participate fully. The teacher should provide additional background information on certain follow-up questions. Always try to use relevant but brief Bible references to illustrate your points, and be careful not to dominate the discussion.*

**Direction:** Sometimes reading just one passage of the Bible will change the way we pray. One day I confided in an older, more mature believer that my prayers for the sick seemed ineffective. "I've never seen God raise up someone from sickness powerfully, miraculously," I said. "I know he is able to heal, but so far he hasn't done it." My friend's response was simple, but it pierced to the heart of the problem. "Have you ever asked God to heal someone miraculously?"

I began to defend my prayers, but all that came out was "no." "James 4:2 says that you do not have because you do not ask God," he said. From that day on I began to pray differently.

**GROUP DISCUSSION:** Tell the group about a time when you felt compelled to pray more intently than usual. What circumstances prompted you to seek God so earnestly?

**PERSONAL REFLECTION:** Based on the content of your prayers alone, what has concerned you most this past week?

One morning, shortly after the Babylonians had been conquered by the Medes and Persians, Daniel was reading the prophet Jeremiah. As Daniel read Jeremiah's words, a couple of passages seemed to leap off the page (Jeremiah 25:8-12; 29:10-11). God promised that after seventy years of captivity he would bring his people back to their own land. Daniel added up the years since he had been deported to Babylon and realized that the captivity was almost over! Daniel began to pray. God's answer to Daniel's prayer was swift—and surprising! *Read Daniel 9.*

1. Daniel 9 has two parts. Verses 1-19 center around a prayer; verses 20-27 center around a message. Who speaks to whom in verses 1-19? in verses 20-27?
2. God promised to release his people after seventy years of captivity. Then why did Daniel need to pray? (Jeremiah 29:10-14 may help.)
3. In verses 4-19, which aspects of God's character did Daniel appeal to as the basis of his requests?
4. Daniel also appealed to God on the basis of specific actions of grace and judgment God had performed for Israel. Which acts did he refer to, and why do you think he chose these?
5. What failures of the nation are causes for God's judgment?

6. Daniel consistently uses the plural pronoun we throughout the prayer. Why does Daniel include himself in the confession?

7. What specific insights about your own prayer life can you glean from Daniel's prayer?

8. In verse 24 Gabriel lists six things that will be accomplished for Israel and Jerusalem within seventy "sevens" (often interpreted as 490 years; see Leviticus 25:8-24). Which of these were accomplished when the people returned to Jerusalem from Babylon (after the first 49 years)?

Which were accomplished at the coming of the Anointed One (after 434 additional years)?

Are there any of the six that are not yet fully accomplished? Explain.

9. The 490-year clock begins with a "decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem" (v. 25). This probably refers to a decree issued by the Persian king in 458 B.C. giving Ezra permission to reestablish Jerusalem as an officially recognized city (Ezra 7:3-26). Gabriel said that once the decree was issued, seven "sevens" and sixty-two "sevens" (483 years) would pass until the Anointed One would come and be "cut off" (w. 25-26). This date corresponds with Jesus' thirtieth year (A.D. 26) when Jesus began his public ministry. What does this "date setting" tell you

10. Verse 26 says that "the people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary." The Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the temple in A.D. 70. How would you describe the course of events during the final period of seven years (w. 26-27)?

11. Some Christians think the final "seven" was fulfilled in the time of Jerusalem's destruction by the Romans. Other Christians think the final seven years is still future and that this evil ruler will make his appearance on the world scene at that time. How do you react to the possibility of a wicked world ruler arising in our generation? What does this chapter offer you (if anything) in the face of such a possibility?

# ALL CHRISTIANS' FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

## *Bible Study Outline*

### **TOPIC:** A World Out of Control

**TEXT:** *Daniel 10:1 — 11:35*

**Instructions:** *Let the above passages be read to enable everyone to participate fully. The teacher should provide additional background information on certain follow-up questions. Always try to use relevant but brief Bible references to illustrate your points, and be careful not to dominate the discussion.*

**Direction:** Wars, terrorist acts, ethnic cleansing—our world moves from one crisis to another. What happens around us seems out of control. We find ourselves frustrated and frightened because we can't do anything to stop the terrible things that fill the headlines and flood our television screens.

**GROUP DISCUSSION:** What recent national or international crisis made you feel insecure or frightened? Explain why you felt that way.

**PERSONAL REFLECTION:** When you hear of bad things happening in other areas of the world or to other people, do you wonder why God doesn't intervene to stop what's happening? What explanation do you give for God's apparent silence or inactivity?

In the last of Daniel's four visions recorded in chapters 7-12, Daniel gains new perspective on international events. He begins to see God's hand even in the clash of empires. Read *Daniel 10:1—11:1*.

1. If you had gone through this experience, what specific actions or words of the heavenly messenger would have encouraged or helped you? What would have concerned you?
2. How would Daniel's personal condition (10:2-3) and vision of the man (10:4-6) have caused him to react the way he did (10:7-11)?
3. What do the angel's words to Daniel tell you about God's response to those who seek him (10:12-14)?
4. How does Daniel's experience encourage you to be persistent? In prayer?
5. The "prince of the Persian kingdom" (10:13) who resisted God's messenger probably refers to a powerful evil spirit who influenced the affairs of the Persian government. What does this "unveiling" of demonic activity in political affairs teach you about our world?

6. If an evil power could hinder an angel in Daniel's day, what does this indicate about your own need for help against Satan's forces?

7. *Read Daniel 11:2-35.* The conflict between Persia and Greece is described in 11:2-4. Based on your previous studies in Daniel, what names and events can you match with these predictions?

8. Daniel 11:5-35 is concerned with the conflict between two divisions of the Greek empire: the Syrian Seleucid family ("the king of the North") and the Egyptian Ptolemy ("the king of the South"). The focus is on a man we have met before, Antiochus Epiphanies. Daniel 11:21-24 describes his persecution of the people of Israel who had re-gathered in Palestine after the exile in Babylon. Summarize Antiochus's character and methods of operation from these verses.

9. Antiochus invaded Egypt the first time with relative success (11:25-28). The second time he met some opposition and in his frustration vented his anger on "the holy covenant," the Jewish religion (11:29-31). What do you learn from 11:32-35 about why God allows genuine believers to suffer under the hand of a godless tyrant?

10. All of chapter 11 *was future* to Daniel. However, 11:2-35 are *post* to us. Looking back, we can see how precisely God's plans came true. God really is in control! How can God's absolute authority and rule over history help you to stand firm when evil seems to triumph?

# ALL CHRISTIANS' FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

## *Bible Study Outline*

### **TOPIC:** Darkness before Deliverance

**TEXT:** *Daniel 11:36-12:13*

**Instructions:** *Let the above passages be read to enable everyone to participate fully. The teacher should provide additional background information on certain follow-up questions. Always try to use relevant but brief Bible references to illustrate your points, and be careful not to dominate the discussion.*

**Direction:** We come to the end of our journey with mixed feelings. We are glad to be at our destination, but we will miss Daniel's presence. If you're like me, you're ending this study with a new appreciation for the majesty and authority of God, who can describe the future in detail, raise up kings and kingdoms and bring them to ruin, a God who can protect Daniel in the lions' den and who is as concerned about us.

**GROUP DISCUSSION:** What example or aspect of Daniel's character has helped you most to survive spiritually in a secular world?

**PERSONAL REFLECTION:** Realistically evaluate your own life and character. What strengths do you share with Daniel?

What weaknesses are exposed when you compare yourself to him?

The second part of Daniel's final vision projects Daniel into "the time of the end" of world history. The vision focuses on the nation of Israel but also gives us strong encouragement and hope during difficult times. *Read Daniel 11:36—12:13.*

1. Reading this passage during a time of persecution, what would sound like bad news to you? What would you read as good news?
2. Building from his portrait of Antiochus Epiphanies in 11:21-32, the heavenly messenger now focuses on the final oppressor of Israel who will arise at "the time of the end" (11:35-40). This "king" (following the example of Antiochus) will exalt himself as a god. How would you describe the "religious" character and actions of this king from 11:36-37?
3. This future king's god will be "a god of fortresses"—the ancient god of war and militarism (11:38-39). How do you see the influence of this god at work in our world today?
4. From 11:40-43 describe the military career of this future king.
5. "Reports from the east and the north" (11:44), which alarm the king, are apparently reports of other armies marching toward Israel for a final climactic battle. How would you describe the outcome of this battle from what you are told in this passage (11:44-45) and from what you have already learned about this future evil ruler (such as in 7:11, 25-27)?
6. The king's defeat and the deliverance of the godly come through the intervention of Michael, "the great prince" (12:1). How do you envision this intervention taking place?
7. How can this victory and the messenger's description of the resurrection (12:1-3) encourage us during times of tribulation?
8. Daniel was told to go on with his life even though he didn't fully understand all that he had been told. Describe a time when you had to trust God even though you didn't understand what he was doing in your life.
9. Daniel's natural question after seeing this vision is "how long will it be before these astonishing things are fulfilled?" (12:6). How would you paraphrase the answer he received in 12:7?
10. In 12:9-13 do you think the messenger avoided Daniel's last question (12:8), or did he answer it? Explain.
11. In the course of your study in Daniel, what about the character of God strengthened you most spiritually? How has this helped you worship and trust God more fully?