

# Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

## First Quarter 2020: *Daniel*

### Lesson 1 “From Reading to Understanding”

#### Read for this week’s study

Luke 24:25–27; 2 Peter 3:11–13; Jonah 3:3–10; Numbers 14:34; Daniel 9:23; 10:11, 12.

#### Memory Text

“So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, ‘Do you understand what you are reading?’ ” (Acts 8:30, NKJV).

#### Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Christ: The Center of Daniel
- III. The Structure of Daniel
- IV. Apocalyptic Prophecies in Daniel
- V. God’s Timescale
- VI. Contemporary Relevance of Daniel
- VII. Further Study

#### Questions and Notes for Consideration

##### Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “[T]he book of Daniel, our study for this quarter, remains what it was when penned thousands of years ago: a powerful revelation of the love and character of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Introduction)
2. While there is no question that the book is today as it was originally written, how does our **reading** of it change depending on where we are positioned in time and culture? [Rufus] Miles’ Law puts it like this: “Where you *stand* depends on where you *sit*.” How does that apply to our reading and understanding of Daniel?
3. The lesson states that if we want to go from reading to understanding, we need to keep in mind five basic points (which are the headings of individual days of our lesson).
4. What do we mean when we say that “we should always remember that Christ is the center of Daniel, as He is of the entire Bible”?
5. “Chapter 1 shows, although in a limited and imperfect way, that Daniel’s experience is analogous to that of Christ, who left heaven to live in this sinful world and confront the powers of darkness.” (Sunday’s lesson) Did Daniel and his three friends

see themselves as having an experience analogous to the experience of Christ? Is it so just because we can see some vague similarities with historic hindsight? What is it that the author of the text wants us to see and struggle with? How do we avoid shallow allegoric spiritualizing? Why is that so dangerous?

6. Monday's lesson explains the structure of the Book of Daniel. "The emphasis of chapters 2–7 is on God's sovereignty over the kings of the earth as He establishes and removes them." "In the end, this structure shows us the ultimate sovereignty of God." Will God win the cosmic conflict by showing his power? While he certainly needed to show Nebuchadnezzar that "heaven rules" (4:26), what is the ultimate purpose of a prophetic book?
7. Tuesday's lesson discusses the difference between classical and apocalyptic prophecy: "In contrast to classical prophecies, whose fulfillment is often dependent on human response in the context of God's covenant with Israel, apocalyptic prophecies are unconditional." Why is this so important?
8. What do we make of the statement: "It should be remembered that the promises and the threatenings of God are alike conditional." (Ev 695)?
9. Wednesday's lesson upholds the year-day principle quoting Numbers 14:34 & Ezekiel 4:5.6. Why do we need an -ism (like historicism) to arrive at the true meaning of the prophecies? What do you do with claims that all -isms are limiting and oppressive?
10. "Although written more than 2,500 years ago, the book of Daniel remains profoundly relevant for God's people in the 21st century." (Thursday's lesson) What makes the Bible [book] relevant for our own times?
11. Is it an external quality that we "add" to the Bible (book, doctrine)? If there is intrinsic quality within the Bible, why do so many people find the Bible boring and utterly irrelevant? Give examples of when the Bible was relevant to you, and why.

### Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

The Bible is a record of the things that God has said and done. But most of the Bible is made up of the historical details that describe the situations within which God so acted and so spoke. Without these details we would not be in a position to understand why God chose to speak and act in such a variety of ways. Details which would otherwise seem of little significance have their value in helping us to reconstruct the historical setting within which God was seeking to reveal himself to his people.

On each trip through the sixty-six books it soon becomes apparent that the same principle of interpretation that is applied to any ancient document must also be applied to the Sacred

Scriptures. It was the context that determined the meaning of a passage when originally written. To the extent that we can recover the original context, we are able to recover the original meaning. {Maxwell, Graham. *Can God Be Trusted?*, 66-67. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 2002}

<http://speakingwellofgod.org/written-materials/can-god-be-trusted-chapters/chapter-07>

So now, coming to Daniel, a very familiar book for Seventh-day Adventists. In fact, we trace much of our origins, don't we, to this book, and Revelation, and Hebrews. The first part is quite historical, how Daniel and his three friends were taken in captivity to Babylon, and how they acquitted themselves there. And then in Daniel 2, the image, and the burning, fiery furnace story. An interesting thing happens in this story of the image and the burning fiery furnace. When the king asked the Chaldeans to explain the dream to him, they replied, "Oh King! Live forever!" in Daniel 2:4. You see it? The Chaldeans said to the king, "Oh King! Live forever!" And at that point, Daniel switches from Hebrew, the language of almost all the Old Testament, to Aramaic, the language of the Chaldeans. Do you maybe even have a footnote that says that? My *Revised Standard* even has a footnote, very helpfully, "From this point to the end of chapter 7 is in Aramaic." It would seem that after Daniel switched to Aramaic, which was appropriate when the Chaldeans actually replied in that language, he forgot to switch back until the end of chapter 7. Then he goes back to Hebrew for the rest of it. Do you have any indication in your version that that has happened? Now, Aramaic looks very much like Hebrew. If you didn't know very much about either, you wouldn't know whether you'd switched from one to the other. The same alphabet, and they sound and look very much alike. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in All 66 – Daniel*, recorded February, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

\*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1984:

<http://pkp.cc/39MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/40MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Now, many of us have taken Daniel and Revelation through the years, and have read several Adventist books now on Daniel. The question is, what does the Book of Daniel tell us about God? Ellen White strongly recommended our study of this book, along with the last book of the Bible, as you know. Let me re-read it, from *Testimony to Ministers*, page 112 and 113. She says:

[E]specially should Daniel and the Revelation have attention as never before in the history of our work [and that was, of course, many years ago. As a result of our study of Daniel and Revelation, she says]. We may have less to say in some lines, in regard to the Roman power and the papacy.

Now some feel that if we studied those books more, we'd have more to say about the Roman power and the papacy. She says if we studied them as we should, we might have less to say in regard to the Roman power and the papacy. What do you think of that? And across the page, she says as we study Daniel, we should consider the circumstances of the Jewish nation when the prophecies of Daniel were given. That's putting it in its historical setting, which is the only way to treat a book. We must come back and do that. Then later she adds, "When we as a people understand what the book of Revelation means to us [which she has been coupling with Daniel], there will be seen among us a great revival." How could the study of books like Daniel and Revelation produce a great revival? If we were to work out the schedule in detail? If we had all the right dates, would this produce a great revival, necessarily? Well, let's do what she says. "Consider the circumstances of the Jewish nation when the prophecies of Daniel were given," and say, begin with that first. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Daniel, recorded February, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

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It's interesting. We look to Daniel for predictions of the future, don't we? Daniel was reading Jeremiah for predictions. These prophets read each other. And the prediction in Jeremiah was, seventy years and you'll come back. Remember when we read in Jeremiah, there was a prophet who got up and said, "No, it'll be two." And Jeremiah said, "I say to that, Amen! I wish it could be so. But it won't. It will be seventy. This is a false prophet." Well, they didn't go back in two years, did they? Now it's near the end of the seventy years. What does Daniel do? Does he question the seventy years, by the way? That's assumed. It's in scripture. God said it through Jeremiah, and he's counting on it. It will be seventy years. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Daniel, recorded February, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

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Now, of course, that brings up the prophecies. Do we think of Daniel more for the stories of Daniel in the lions' den? We do have a hymn, don't we, "Dare to be a Daniel, dare to stand alone." I remember that was one of my favorites as a small boy. Or is it the prophecies, primarily, for which we remember Daniel? If we look at all these prophecies, and work out Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, the ten horns, the little horn, the three that were plucked up; and then the seventy weeks, and the 2,300 days, and the 1,260 days, and we get it

all worked out in detail. Supposing we get it all right; every symbol is correctly identified, every date is now confirmed, and you could paint a chart of it all, have it all right down, and have a voice from heaven, "Now your charts are correct." Would that produce a revival among us? Or a different religious experience, he says elsewhere. How do the prophecies do this to us? And you remember the book of Revelation. We could include the two together. Now, supposing we had the seven trumpets, and the seven churches, and everything all worked out, and finally, there are many charts, as you know, some long enough to go half way across this room, and I don't know any two that agree exactly. But let's say we finally have a chart, and a voice comes from heaven, "Now, that chart is right-every date, and every identification is right." We'd say, "Good. Now we have an entirely different religious experience." Necessarily? How do you understand that? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Daniel, recorded February, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

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As I was reviewing this before coming, it's significant to me how Jesus commented on the purpose of prophecy. Not just Daniel, of course, but others; but there are so many in Daniel that are so specific. Look at Matthew 24. Jesus himself made some prophecies, and he commented on the purpose of them. (Matthew 24:25) You remember they asked how soon he would come. "Well," he said, "several things will occur before I come." In fact, verse 23:

Then if anyone says to you, "Lo, here is the Christ!" or "There he is!" do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. Lo, I have told you beforehand.

Suggesting that he had warned them in advance, so they'd be prepared. But he gave an additional reason in John 13:19. And I think prophecies have these dual purposes, suggesting it does pay to work them out, indeed. There is warning, unless, of course, we misinterpret them and are looking for the wrong thing. So it pays to study carefully. But an additional reason is given in 13:19: "I tell you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am he."

And of course belief is trust. In other words, when you see this happening, it will strengthen your faith and your trust. Now that makes one look about to see what it was that he told them. "I tell you this now before it takes place."

The suggestion is, here, not that "I tell you these things before so you can work out your schedule of future events, but I tell you these things beforehand so that when they happen you

may remember, and say, ‘The Lord predicted that.’” Think what that says about him. There’s an additional verse in 14:29, where he’s talking about his having to leave them. He says, “I have told you this before it takes place, so that when it does take place, you may believe.” That’s the simplest statement. Now, belief is always trust, have faith. I think this is one of the most important reasons for prophecy. It’s not so that we can work out the schedule, only, or necessarily. We might even be wrong in some detail. Isn’t it true, with most of the major prophecies, that we figured them out afterwards? Didn’t we figure out 1844 afterwards? When all the evidence began coming together? We made some mistakes at first. “I tell you these things beforehand, so that when they happen, [when you see it happening,] you look back and say, ‘Look how the Lord predicted that!’” {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Daniel, recorded February, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

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God has not lost control. And that’s the book of Ezekiel for next time. The wheels within the wheels and the face in the middle, surrounded by the fire and the glory, represents God’s calm control over all the intricate complexities of human and universal history. God is in charge. How about the book of Daniel? What do all those prophecies tell us? How to schedule everything in history? That’s not important. But that God is in charge. In fact, as nations have risen and fallen, he knew it in advance. So don’t think God has lost control. The book of Revelation says the same sort of thing. And I think the message of that book is not so much, “Now here’s a fine way to work out a detailed schedule of events with names and dates from now to the end.” We keep changing them anyway. No, the thing is that this is all according to God’s eternal plan. He has not lost control. And when he says, “And we will triumph in the end,” he’s in a position to say so. He’s shown that by the way he’s predicted the past in advance; past to us now. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Daniel, recorded February, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

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## Further Study with Ellen White

Jesus did not first reveal himself in his true character to them, and then open the Scriptures to their minds; for he knew that they would be so overjoyed to see him again, risen from the dead, that their souls would be satisfied. They would not hunger for the sacred truths which he wished to indelibly impress upon their minds, that they might impart them to others, who should in their turn spread the precious knowledge, until thousands of people should receive the light given that day to the despairing disciples as they journeyed to Emmaus. {3SP 214.1}

He maintained his disguise till he had interpreted the Scriptures, and had led them to an intelligent faith in his life, his character, his mission to earth, and his death and resurrection. He wished the truth to take firm root in their minds, not because it was supported by his personal testimony, but because the typical law, and the prophets of the Old Testament, agreeing with the facts of his life and death, presented unquestionable evidence of that truth. When the object of his labors with the two disciples was gained, he revealed himself to them that their joy might be full, and then vanished from their sight. {3SP 214.2}

Those who dig beneath the surface discover the hidden gems of truth. The Holy Spirit is present with the earnest searcher. Its illumination shines upon the Word, stamping the truth upon the mind with a new, fresh importance. The searcher is filled with a sense of peace and joy never before felt. The preciousness of truth is realized as never before. A new, heavenly light shines upon the Word, illuminating it as though every letter were tinged with gold. God Himself has spoken to the mind and heart, making the Word spirit and life. {2SM 39.1}

When you search the Scriptures with an earnest desire to learn the truth, God will breathe His Spirit into your heart and impress your mind with the light of His word. The Bible is its own interpreter, one passage explaining another. By comparing scriptures referring to the same subjects, you will see beauty and harmony of which you have never dreamed. There is no other book whose perusal strengthens and enlarges, elevates and ennobles the mind, as does the perusal of this Book of books. Its study imparts new vigor to the mind, which is thus brought in contact with subjects requiring earnest thought, and is drawn out in prayer to God for power to comprehend the truths revealed. {4T 499.1}

The student should learn to view the Word as a whole, and to see the relation of its parts. He should gain a knowledge of its grand, central theme, of God's original purpose for the world, of the rise of the great controversy, and of the work of redemption. He should understand the nature of the two principles that are contending for supremacy, and should learn to trace their working through the records of history and prophecy, to the great consummation. He should see how this controversy enters into every phase of human experience; how in every act of life he himself reveals the one or the other of the two antagonistic motives; and how, whether he will or not, he is even now deciding upon which side of the controversy he will be found. — *Education*, p. 190. (1903) {Ev 339.3}

God created the earth to be the abode of holy, happy beings. That purpose will be fulfilled when, renewed by the power of God and freed from sin and sorrow, it shall become the eternal home of the redeemed. {AH 540.3}

There is no disappointment, no sorrow, no sin, no one who shall say, I am sick; there are no burial trains, no mourning, no death, no partings, no broken hearts; but Jesus is there, peace is there. There “they shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for He that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall He guide them.” Isaiah 49:10. {MB 17.4}

The purpose and plan of grace existed from all eternity. Before the foundation of the world it was according to the determinate counsel of God that man should be created, endowed with power to do the divine will. But the defection of man, with all its consequences, was not hidden from the Omnipotent, and yet it did not deter him from carrying out his eternal purpose; for the Lord would establish his throne in righteousness. God knows the end from the beginning; “known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.” Therefore redemption was not an afterthought—a plan formulated after the fall of Adam—but an eternal purpose to be wrought out for the blessing not only of this atom of a world but for the good of all the worlds which God has created. {ST, April 25, 1892 par. 1}

The Bible shows us God in His high and holy place, not in a state of inactivity, not in silence and solitude, but surrounded by ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of holy intelligences, all waiting to do His will. Through channels which we cannot discern He is in active communication with every part of His dominion. But it is in this speck of a world, in the souls that He gave His only-begotten Son to save, that His interest and the interest of all heaven is centered. God is bending from His throne to hear the cry of the oppressed. To every sincere prayer He answers, “Here am I.” He uplifts the distressed and downtrodden. In all our afflictions He is afflicted. In every temptation and every trial the angel of His presence is near to deliver. {DA 356.3}

Invisible armies of light and power attend the meek and lowly ones who believe and claim the promises of God. Cherubim and seraphim and angels that excel in strength—ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands—stand at His right hand, “all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.” Hebrews 1:14. {COL 176.3}

All heaven is interested in our salvation. The angels of God, thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand, are commissioned to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. They guard us against evil and press back the powers of darkness that are seeking our destruction. {6T 63.3}

Heaven and earth are no wider apart today than when shepherds listened to the angels' song. Humanity is still as much the object of heaven's solicitude as when common men of common occupations met angels at noonday, and talked with the heavenly messengers in the vineyards and the fields. To us in the common walks of life, heaven may be very near. Angels from the courts above will attend the steps of those who come and go at God's command. {DA 48.4}

If the curtain could be rolled back, and each one could discern the constant activities of the heavenly family to preserve the inhabitants of the earth from Satan's seductive wiles, lest in their careless attitude they should be led astray through satanic strategy, they would lose a large degree of their self-confidence and self-assurance. They would see that the armies of heaven are in continual warfare with satanic agencies, to obtain victories in behalf of those who do not sense their danger, and who are passing on in unconscious indifference (MS 32, 1900). {6BC 1120.4}

Heaven's plan of salvation is broad enough to embrace the whole world. God longs to breathe into prostrate humanity the breath of life. And He will not permit any soul to be disappointed who is sincere in his longing for something higher and nobler than anything the world can offer. Constantly He is sending His angels to those who, while surrounded by circumstances the most discouraging, pray in faith for some power higher than themselves to take possession of them and bring deliverance and peace. In various ways God will reveal Himself to them and will place them in touch with providences that will establish their confidence in the One who has given Himself a ransom for all, "that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments." Psalm 78:7. {PK 377.1}

God has recorded many narratives in His Inspired Word to teach us that the human family is the object of the special care of heavenly angels. Man is not left to become the sport of Satan's temptations. All heaven is actively engaged in the work of communicating light to the inhabitants of the world, that they may not be left without spiritual guidance. An eye that never slumbers nor sleeps is guarding the camp of Israel. Ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of angels are ministering to the needs of the children of men. Voices inspired by God are crying, This is the way, walk ye in it. If men will hear the voice of warning, if they will trust to God's guidance and not to finite judgment, they will be safe.... {HP 103.2}

The angels of heaven are sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. We know not now who they are; it is not yet made manifest who shall overcome, and share the inheritance of the saints in light; but angels of heaven are passing throughout the length and breadth of the earth, seeking to comfort the sorrowing, to protect the imperiled, to win the hearts of men to Christ. Not one is neglected or passed by. God is no respecter of persons, and He has an equal care for all the souls He has created. {DA 639.1}

The value of man is estimated in heaven according to the capacity of the heart to know God. This knowledge is the spring from which flows all power. God created man that every faculty might be the faculty of the divine mind; and He is ever seeking to bring the human mind into association with the divine. He offers us the privilege of co-operation with Christ in revealing His grace to the world, that we may receive increased knowledge of heavenly things. {COL 354.3}

Looking unto Jesus we obtain brighter and more distinct views of God, and by beholding we become changed. Goodness, love for our fellow men, becomes our natural instinct. We develop a character which is the counterpart of the divine character. Growing into His likeness, we enlarge our capacity for knowing God. More and more we enter into fellowship with the heavenly world, and we have continually increasing power to receive the riches of the knowledge and wisdom of eternity. {COL 355.1}

In every human being He discerned infinite possibilities. He saw men as they might be, transfigured by His grace—in “the beauty of the Lord our God” (Psalm 90:17). {AG 223.3}