

FOR
TEACHERS
OF TEENS
AGES 15-17

SENIOR HIGH BIBLE TEACHER

FALL QUARTER | SEPTEMBER | OCTOBER | NOVEMBER 2024



Senior High Bible Teacher

FALL QUARTER

September, October, November 2024

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| The Weeks Ahead | 2 |
| Editorial | 3 |

Two Prophets of God

UNIT I: Faithful Service of Daniel and Friends

| | |
|---|----|
| Sept. 1—Daniel Honors God's Law—Dan. 1:8-21 | 5 |
| Sept. 8—Daniel's Friends Refuse to Bow—Dan. 3:1, 8-18 | 11 |
| Sept. 15—Daniel's Friends Trust God—Dan. 3:19-28 | 17 |

UNIT II: Daniel's Faithful Prophetic Ministry

| | |
|---|----|
| Sept. 22—Daniel Prophesies the Son of Man—Dan. 7:9-14 | 23 |
| Sept. 29—Daniel Sees Future Kingdoms—Dan. 8:19-26 | 29 |
| Oct. 6—Daniel Intercedes for Israel—Dan. 9:4-14 | 35 |
| Oct. 13—God Strengthens Daniel—Dan. 10:10-19 | 41 |
| Oct. 20—Jesus Points to Daniel—Mark 13:14-27 | 47 |

UNIT III: Jonah: A Resistant Prophet

| | |
|---|----|
| Oct. 27—Jonah Runs and Is Found Out—Jonah 1:7-17 | 53 |
| Nov. 3—Jonah Repents—Jonah 2:1-10 | 59 |
| Nov. 10—Nineveh Repents—Jonah 3:1-10 | 65 |
| Nov. 17—Jonah Is Angry with God—Jonah 4:1-11 | 70 |
| Nov. 24—Jesus Points to Jonah—Matt. 12:22-32, 38-40 | 75 |
| Paragraphs on Places and People | 80 |




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The Weeks Ahead

This quarter, we learn about the prophets Daniel and Jonah. Daniel's center of ministry was Babylon, where he and his friends were taken into exile for the king's use. Jonah preached in Assyrian Nineveh for only a few days, proclaiming a message God wanted the Ninevites to hear.

Unit I begins with Daniel and his friends in exile in Babylon. They were confronted with various challenges to their faith as they sought to remain faithful to the Lord. In lesson 1, they requested a different diet than what was appointed by the king. God blessed their faithfulness and diet with superior results. After Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were promoted by the king, greater tests arose. Everyone in the province of Babylon was required to worship the king's golden image. Daniel's friends' refusal led to one of the best-known stories in Scripture, where they were cast into the fiery furnace (lesson 3).

Daniel, remaining faithful to the God of Israel under severe testing, further established his credibility as a gifted prophet in the eyes of the king. Unit II begins with his prophetic ministry and vision of the coming Son of Man and the establishment of His kingdom (lesson 4). Leading up to that kingdom, Daniel saw four empires, depicted as beasts, which would first come and go, including the ruling Babylonian Empire (lesson 5).

Daniel's ministry included both prophetic and intercessory elements. Daniel, aware of Jeremiah's prophecy of seventy years of desolation for Jerusalem, repented on behalf of his peo-

ple Israel, who were in exile because of their violations of the covenant (lesson 6). During one of his visions, Daniel needed strengthening and encouragement (lesson 7). He was strengthened by an angel, who told him that he was greatly loved and that his prayers had been heard. Unit II ends as we fast-forward to the ministry of Jesus, Daniel's prophesied Son of Man, who applied Daniel's prophecies to both Himself and the coming desolations (lesson 8).

In Unit III, we look at a very different prophet with a very different mission. Jonah, given a task by the Lord, was not willing to preach to the Assyrians in Nineveh because he had no desire to see God's mercy rain down on Israel's enemies. Judgment on Jonah was swift and involved a scene as dramatic as that of Daniel's friends in the furnace: Jonah swallowed by a big fish (lesson 9). Jonah got the message and offered up a prayer of repentance from inside the fish (lesson 10). The Lord spoke to the fish, and Jonah was vomited up onto dry land.

The Lord called Jonah a second time to go to Nineveh, and this time Jonah obeyed (lesson 11). He went to Nineveh, where the people repented at his preaching and turned to the God of Israel. Jonah's worst fears came true—God showed mercy to Israel's enemies, which led him to anger (lesson 12). God gave Jonah an object lesson to show him that his anger was irrational. Lesson 13 jumps forward to Jesus' reference to Jonah the prophet. He likened Jonah's three days and three nights in the belly of the fish to His own death, burial, and resurrection.

—Brian Burke

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The Son of Man Comes into His Kingdom

In our final lesson text for this quarter, Jesus was accused by the Pharisees of casting out a demon by the power of Beelzebul. Jesus' response confounded them, as usual. Jesus also used the occasion to inform them of a sign of the times: "But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house" (Matt. 12:28-29).

"Jesus was able to expel demons because he had bound Satan, the strong man. Beginning with Jesus' victory over Satan during the temptation in the wilderness (4:1-11), Jesus demonstrated that Satan was powerless to prevent him from proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and demonstrating the reality of its presence through his work and his words. Satan's house represents the sinful world over which, until the coming of Christ, he had such power. Jesus has come to plunder his house and rescue people for the kingdom of God (see Col. 1:13)" (Dennis, ed., *ESV Study Bible*, Crossway). Jesus will consummate this work at His second coming.

Our text for lesson 4 tells us that "one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days. . . . And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, . . . which shall not pass away" (Dan. 7:13-14).

During His entire ministry on earth Jesus was plundering the strong man. When He came up to the Ancient of Days in Daniel 7, He was officially re-

ceiving a kingdom. Daniel 2, though not one of our lesson texts for this quarter, provides an interpretive key to the rest of Daniel's dreams and visions: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (vs. 44). Daniel 7 contains a vision of the events in heaven during the setting up of the kingdom described in chapter 2.

Daniel's prophecy was given in ancient times when empires were the political model of choice—or force. It is significant that at the height of one of those empires and centuries before some of them came to prominence, Daniel prophesied not only their rise but also their fall and the establishment of a heavenly kingdom that shall never be destroyed. Christ's eternal kingdom will ultimately overtake and replace all temporal empires.

The Jews of Jesus' day rightly believed that Daniel's vision of the Son of Man referred to their Messiah, but they wrongly rejected Jesus as that Messiah. In light of Daniel 7, however, they should not have been surprised when the Messiah appeared in human form.

The term "son of man" in general would have referred to someone who shared in everything meant to be a descendant of Adam (cf. Ps. 8:4-8), including the "weakness and infirmities of the race." Therefore, "when applied by the Saviour to himself, there is an undoubted reference to this fact—that he sustained a peculiar relation to our

race; that he was in all respects a man” (Barnes, *Barnes’ Notes on the Bible*, www.studylight.org).

Had Israel recognized this characteristic of the Son of Man as presented in Daniel’s prophecy, they might have recognized its fulfillment in Jesus. As it was, they stumbled over the fact that He did not come as an already-crowned king. Even Jesus’ own disciples did not understand at first when He taught that “the Son of man must suffer many things” (Mark 8:31; cf. 9:12). But that suffering and humiliation was the road to the glorious exaltation described in Daniel 7 (cf. Phil. 2:6-11).

In the Old Testament, “son of man” usually refers to one of Adam’s race. In this sense, a son of man is simply a human. For example, Ezekiel the prophet was consistently addressed by the Lord as “son of man” (cf. Ezek. 2:1), which may have been “a continued admonition to the prophet to remember that he is [just] a man like all the rest” (Barnes). Daniel himself was addressed in this way by the angel Gabriel (Dan. 8:17). Psalm 8 refers to “the son of man” in terms of humankind’s original calling (vss. 4-8).

But there is more to Daniel’s “Son of man” than mere humanity. Daniel’s Son of Man is also heavenly, coming on the clouds into heaven as only Deity can do. As the Son of Man, Jesus identifies with us in our humanity, but “he always carried with him some mark of deity, even in his humility” (Calvin, *Calvin’s Commentary on the Bible*, www.studylight.org). Early heretics often denied Jesus’ humanity, and later heretics tended to deny His divinity, but Scripture presents Jesus as both fully God and fully man.

In the Gospel accounts, Jesus used the title “Son of man” more than any other title to refer to Himself, and He linked that designation with His identity as the Messiah (Mark 8:29-33). The

Jews understood the link but rejected as a blasphemer the one making the messianic claim (14:61-64). Jesus’ claim before the high priest in verse 62 was a clear reference to the Daniel 7 “Son of man” vision. Jesus not only called Himself the “Son of man,” but He also described Himself as coming on the clouds and receiving God’s power at His right hand.

In Mark 13:14-27, the text for lesson 8, Jesus similarly used Daniel’s coming-with-the-clouds imagery in a description of Himself as the Son of Man. It is possible that Jesus chose the term “Son of Man” as His favorite self-designation “because of the way it could simultaneously represent humanity and the transcendent character of his work. Either authority or suffering are attached to most of his uses of Son of Man” (Green, Brown, and Perrin, *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, IVP Academic).

As the divine Son of Man, Jesus both identifies with our human weaknesses and has the power to save us from our fallen state. As Jesus’ disciples, we should identify, as He did, with the frailties of others. We do this because we too are frail, and we are called to weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice (Rom. 12:15). The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve (Mark 10:45). As we imitate Him in this way, we can point people to the only man who has both compassion and the power to save them—Jesus Christ.

Jesus identifies with us, so we now identify with Him and remain watchful, for we “know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh” (Matt. 25:13). Daniel’s prophecies that have already been fulfilled can give us confidence that those yet to be accomplished, such as Christ’s return, will one day likewise be fulfilled.

—Brian Burke

SCRIPTURE LESSON TEXT

DAN. 1:8 But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

9 Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs.

10 And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which *are* of your sort? then shall ye make *me* endanger my head to the king.

11 Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah,

12 Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink.

13 Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat: and as thou seest, deal with thy servants.

14 So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days.

15 And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat.

16 Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink; and gave them pulse.

17 As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

18 Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar.

19 And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king.

20 And in all matters of wisdom *and* understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians *and* astrologers that *were* in all his realm.

21 And Daniel continued *even* unto the first year of king Cyrus.

NOTES

Daniel Honors God's Law

Lesson Text: Daniel 1:8-21

Related Scriptures: II Chronicles 36:5-8; Psalm 119:105-112; Daniel 1:1-7

TIME: 605 B.C.

PLACE: Babylon

GOLDEN TEXT—"But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat" (Daniel 1:8).

Studying the Text

Some things that are valuable do not have any intended practical uses. When an athlete wins a trophy, whether for a high school or a professional sport, it is usually kept in a trophy case or on a shelf. Likewise, a wedding ring is used to symbolize someone's marriage to another. Neither a ring nor a trophy is used as a paperweight or doorstop. It would be foolish to endanger the value of an important and symbolic thing by using it in such a way.

Other possessions are meant to be used, however. Wedding gifts, for example, often include practical things the new couple can use, such as linens, dishware, and appliances. When someone purchases a new vehicle, an expense that involves a great sacrifice of time and effort, he or she does so with the purpose of using that vehicle. It would be silly to call a taxi for getting the children to school or soccer practice or for purchasing groceries—all while the new car sits shiny and unscratched in the garage.

The believer's faith in Christ is a highly valuable possession (cf. I Pet. 1:7). That faith, however, was meant to be lived out, exercised through ac-

tion. Our study this week examines the sincerity of the faith of Daniel and his companions as they trusted in God's commands rather than the cultural pressures of Babylon. This lesson begins the quarter's first unit of study. Our studies for the quarter will focus on two prophets of God, Daniel and Jonah. The first two units will focus on Daniel, and the third unit will focus on Jonah.

OBEDIENCE AND DANGER— Dan. 1:8-10

The lesson text opens with a description of Daniel refusing to eat the king's meat or drink the king's wine. It is important to briefly survey the context of this opening description of Daniel's obedience. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had invaded Judah, besieged Jerusalem, and forced Judah's king into submission. Nebuchadnezzar had then put a man named Ashpenaz in charge of taking as captives young men from Judah who were physically and intellectually superior.

These young men, including Daniel and his friends Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, were set apart to be given thorough training. They would learn