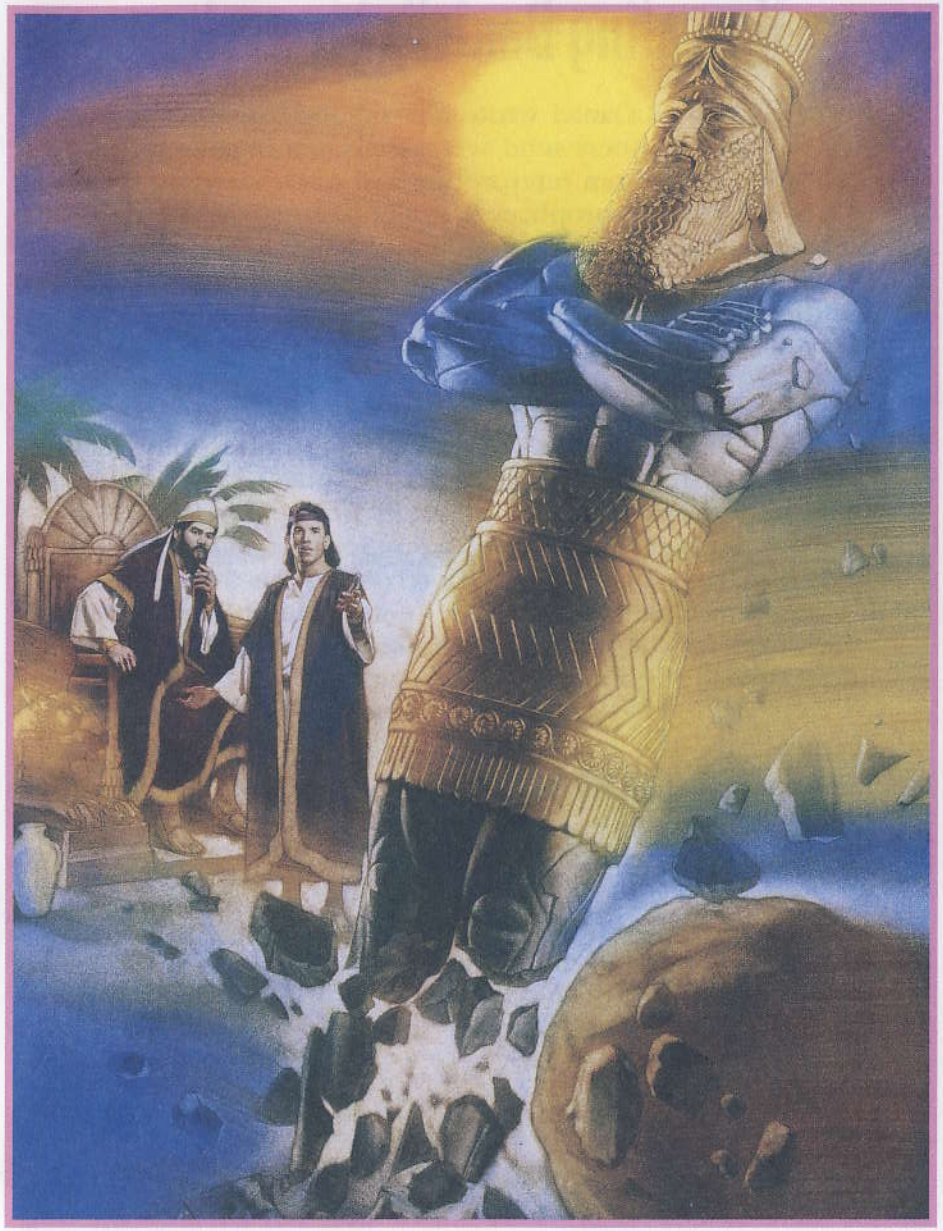
Unsealing DANIEL'S MYSTERIES

WITH MARK FINLEY

Prophetic Symbols Revealed

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Introduction

Unsealing Daniel's Mysteries

The prophet Daniel wrote in symbolic language. Just as military planners send secret messages in code to keep the enemy from intercepting and understanding them, so God has cloaked prophecy in symbolic language. He didn't use symbols to prevent us from understanding His messages. He used them so the evil powers He exposed wouldn't readily see themselves in the messages and attempt to tamper with them, change them, or destroy them.

By using symbolic images and prophetic pictures, God is able to condense thousands of years of history into a very small space. Each prophetic symbol is clearly explained in Scripture. Once you understand the meaning of the symbol, Bible prophecy becomes plain. To help you in your understanding, study the chart below. The left-hand column lists the symbol as it appears in Bible prophecy. The center column lists the text which explains the symbol. The right-hand column gives the meaning of the symbol.

SYMBOL	CLARIFYING TEXT	WHAT THE SYMBOL MEANS
Metals in Daniel 2—gold, silver, brass, iron	Daniel 2:38-40	Four successive world empires beginning in Daniel's day
Head of gold in Daniel 2:38	Daniel 2:32	Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom—Babylon
Toes of image in Daniel 2:41	Daniel 2:41	A divided kingdom

SYMBOL	CLARIFYING TEXT	WHAT THE SYMBOL MEANS
The rock cut out without hands in Daniel 2:34	Daniel 2:44, 45	God's eternal kingdom
The tree in Daniel 4:10-12	Daniel 4:22	King Nebuchadnezzar
The cutting down of the tree in Daniel 4:14	Daniel 4:24, 25	King Nebuchadnezzar's loss of his throne to temporary insanity
The band of iron and brass around the tree's stump in Daniel 4:15	Daniel 4:26	Nebuchadnezzar's empire preserved
The mysterious writing on the wall of Belshazzar's banquet hall in Daniel 5:5	Daniel 5:26-28	God's judgment pronounced upon Babylon
Four winds in Daniel 7:2	Jeremiah 49:36, 37 (See also Revelation 7:1, 2)	Winds equal devastation and destruction. The number four symbolizes the directions of the compass—North, South, East, and West.
Sea in Daniel 7:2	Revelation 17:15	Multitudes, peoples, nations
Beasts in Daniel 7:3	Daniel 7:17, 23	Empires or kingdoms
The lion, bear, leopard, and dragon-like beast in Daniel 7:4-7	Daniel 7:4-7	Four successive world empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome
Ten horns in Daniel 7:8	Daniel 7:24 (first part)	Ten kings or kingdoms—divisions of power



• *King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon conquered Jerusalem and led away many captives. Among these was Daniel.*



ILLUSTRATIONS: (LEFT) JOHN STEELE, PPPA; (TOP) NATHAN GREENE; (RIGHT) RICK THOMSON, NATHAN GREENE

SYMBOL	CLARIFYING TEXT	WHAT THE SYMBOL MEANS
Little horn, in Daniel 7:8	Daniel 7:24, 25 (last part)	A diverse or different power; one that is not political, but religious in nature
Eyes like a man, in Daniel 7:8	Ephesians 1:18	Eyes equal understanding or wisdom. Eyes like a man indicate a system based on human, rather than divine, wisdom
Clouds of heaven, in Daniel 7:13	Revelation 1:7; Matthew 26:64	Angels





ILLUSTRATION: NATHAN GREENE

A prophetic day	Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6; Genesis 29:27	One year
Time, times, and half a time, in Daniel 7:25	Revelation 12:6, 14	1,260 prophetic days or 1,260 literal years
Son of man, in Daniel 7:13	Luke 19:10; Luke 21:27	Jesus Christ
Ram, in Daniel 8:3	Daniel 8:20	Media-Persia
He goat, in Daniel 8:5	Daniel 8:21	Greece

SYMBOL	CLARIFYING TEXT	WHAT THE SYMBOL MEANS
Prince of the Host, in Daniel 8:11	Daniel 9:25, 10:13, 12:1, Isaiah 9:6	Jesus Christ
Transgression, in Daniel 8:12	1 John 3:4	Sin is the transgression, or breaking, of God's law
Transgression, or abomination of desolation	Daniel 11:31, 32	Open rebellion against God, His word, and His law—the Ten Commandments
2300 prophetic days, in Daniel 8:14	Ezekiel 4:6; Numbers 14:34	2,300 literal years
Seventy weeks, in Daniel 9:24	Ezekiel 4:6; Numbers 14:34	490 literal years
Messiah the Prince, in Daniel 9:25	Matthew 1:21	Jesus Christ
The covenant, in Daniel 9:27	Matthew 26:28	God's plan of salvation through the blood of Christ
The prince of the kingdom of Persia, in Daniel 10:13	John 12:31	The prince of this world, or Satan
King of the South, in Daniel 11:5	Exodus 5:2	Spiritual Egypt, anti-God powers, atheistic powers
King of the North, in Daniel 11:7	Revelation 14:8, 9; 18:1	Spiritual Babylon, or false religious powers which, under the guise of religion, deceive with false teachings
Tidings from the east, in Daniel 11:44	Matthew 24:27	The message of Christ's soon return



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More Than a Hostage

The prophetic book of Daniel was written for our time. Its prophecies speak with increased meaning to this generation. The angel Gabriel specifically told Daniel to "seal up" these prophecies until the "time of the end." Daniel 12:4. The Bible prophet, Daniel, outlines in vivid detail world events now unfolding before our eyes. His predictions, covering twenty-five hundred years of history, clearly outline world events from the prophet's time (six hundred years before Christ) to ours. As we near the close of earth's history, these amazing predictions become more detailed. They provide "inside information" on the enemy's plans. They reveal the last-day delusions Satan uses to deceive the world's population. They also carefully outline God's strategy for the end time.

Best of all, the prophet reveals how to thrive in the tough times ahead. The days ahead will be difficult. A crisis of unimagined fury will break upon our world. Friend, you can do much more than survive—you can thrive. Daniel describes how to tap into resources of spiritual power. As a hostage in a foreign land, subjected to the pressures of mind manipulation, Daniel triumphed. He overcame unsurmountable odds. You can too!

As you study these lessons, you will—

- Discover the secrets of a deeper prayer life.
- Experience a new sense of God's power in your own life.
- Develop the spiritual strength to resist temptation.
- Learn of earth-shaking events soon to burst upon the world as an overwhelming surprise.
- Find the keys to understanding truth for our times.

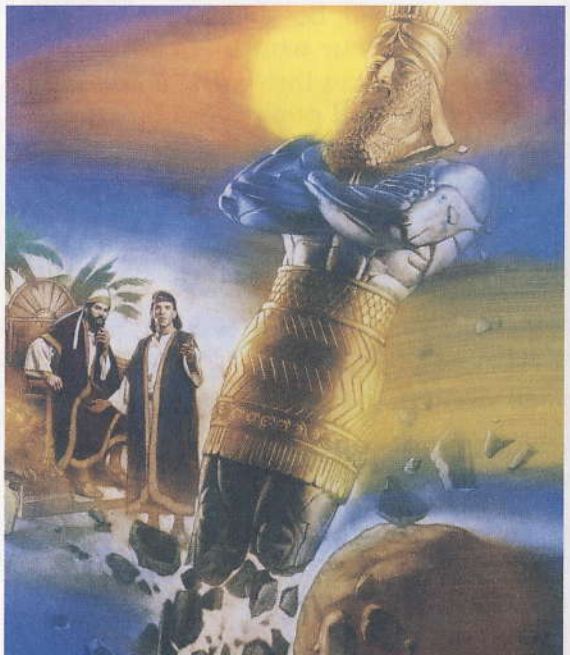
Each lesson will lead you on a journey of discovery into the Scriptures. As you look up the answers in your own Bible, you will find Bible study a rewarding experience. You will discover the path to lasting happiness and life's deepest joy.

Daniel, chapter 1, introduces the theme of the entire book—a titanic struggle between good and evil. It reveals God's divine power in an unusual way. God is never taken by surprise. He is never caught off guard. His plans triumph in the midst of apparently insurmountable odds.

Truth for the End Time

1. For what special time in this world's history were the prophecies of Daniel written? Daniel 12: 6, 8, 9, 13.

2. What promise does God give His people regarding the future? Amos 3:7.





ILLUSTRATIONS: NATHAN GREENE

The Holy Spirit reveals truth through the Bible prophets. The future is clearly revealed. God is never caught by surprise.

3. Why should we study Bible prophecy? John 14:29.

Fulfilled prophecy increases our confidence in the truthfulness of the Bible. It also prepares us for the overwhelming events ahead.

4. What counsel did Jesus personally give in His sermon on end-time events, regarding the prophecies of Daniel? Matthew 24:15.

The book of Daniel must be extremely important. It is the only book which Jesus specifically urges His last-day people to study. It contains truth for our time. Daniel's prophecies reveal the plans of God and unmask the plans of the enemy. The book of Daniel can be divided into two parts—stories and prophecies. The stories reveal how to be ready for earth's final days. The prophecies reveal when these last-day events will occur.

In this lesson, we discover the source of Daniel's courage in the midst of a sin-polluted society.

Conflict in the Middle East

5. The book of Daniel opens with a major conflict in the Middle East. What two nations were involved? Daniel 1:1.

   a. _____

   b. _____

6. Who was the king of Babylon? Daniel 1:1.

In 605 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, led a vicious attack on Jerusalem. These two cities represented two ways of life—two ideologies—two philosophies. Babylon was the center of rebellion against the true God. It stood for apostasy or a counterfeit system of religion based on idol worship in opposition to the law of God. Jerusalem, the city of Daniel, stood for loyalty, fidelity, and faithfulness. It represented worship of the true God and obedience to His law. In the first verse of Daniel's book, this struggle between the forces of good and the forces of evil is introduced. The great controversy between good and evil which began in heaven (Revelation 12:7-9) continues on earth.

Hostages Seized

7. Describe the qualities of the Hebrew young men whom Nebuchadnezzar took captive. Daniel 1:4.

_____

_____

8. What did Nebuchadnezzar do to change the hostages' Hebrew identity? Daniel 1:6, 7.

_____

_____

Nebuchadnezzar began a "brainwashing" process—changing the names of the Hebrew young men to represent pagan Babylonian gods. In this way, he hoped to destroy their identity.

9. What decision did Daniel make which changed the course of his life? Daniel 1:8.

_____

_____

The word "purpose" means "to determine" or "decide." The governing power within our mind is our will. When we choose to do right, God supplies the moral power to carry out our choices. His Holy Spirit guides us to make the choice—and as we make it, He gives us the power to carry it out.

10. What did Daniel request of the king's servant? Daniel 1:12.

_____

_____

Daniel's faith led him to conclude that God would honor his choice. He knew that God would never disappoint him.

Miraculous Results

11. What benefits did Daniel and his friends gain from their choice to be totally obedient to God?

The physical results (Daniel 1:15)

_____

_____

The mental results (Daniel 1:17)

_____

_____

The political results (Daniel 1:19, 20)

_____

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Daniel's faithfulness to God brought him God's blessing. When we make decisions that are morally right—when we do right because it is right—we too can expect the abundant blessings of a loving, heavenly Father. We may experience trials. Daniel did! We may experience disappointments. Daniel did! But we can be certain of ultimate triumph at last. God turns our defeats into victories. He turns our scars into stars to shine for His glory forever. In the trials of life we can truly trust Him.

- ❑ Today I determine to surrender my will to God.
- ❑ Right now, I acknowledge my loving Creator as the Lord of my life.