

**LESSON 12**

**Using the Principles for Understanding Scripture (3)  
Background Information for the Teacher**

Objectives:

1. The student can use the ten principles for understanding selected passages.
2. The student can assist in studying Daniel 9 and other passages by using the principles.

Preparation:

1. Have ready to distribute Written Review No. 11.
2. Have ready to distribute Worksheet No. 12. (Fill out one for yourself.)
3. Have sufficient Bibles and pens.
4. Have access to a chalkboard or overhead projector.
5. Have a map of the ancient world (overhead or wall map) which will show Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Egypt. Be ready to point to places mentioned with your finger or with a laser pointer.

**Lesson Plan for the Teacher**

Introduction: (10 minutes)

1. Call the role and plan contact with those who are absent.
2. Make necessary announcements.
3. Songs and prayer as desired.
4. Give answers to Written Review No. 11. 1—marketplace. 2—narrative/sermon. 3—The idols and altars in the marketplace, the Areopagus, the Parthenon. 4—creator, super-human, powerful, approachable, father, divine. 5—the nature of God. 6—the command of God (or punishment of God). 7—10 plagues, Jonah, Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, Darius, Esther with Xerxes. 8—repent, judge, raised.

Learning Experiences: (30 minutes)

1. We move today to a study of an Old Testament passage. We will use a similar method to what we used last week. We will explore the passage in ways that utilize the ten principles we have studied. I will ask questions to lead us through this study but want you to volunteer any information you have that will help our understanding. **Q:** Who is King Belshazzar? **A:** For many years, this was a mystery. There was no mention of a King Belshazzar among the Babylonian kings. In the mid-1800's however, documents were delivered to the British Museum that included a clay cylinder which was a statement from King Nabonidus, king of Babylon when it fell to the Medes and Persians. This document mentions that the son of



Nabonidus was named Belshazzar and this and other documents now clarify that Belshazzar was king in the immediate area of the city of Babylon while his father, Nabonidus, was king over the entire kingdom. Daniel, living in the city of Babylon, could certainly have dated his writing by Belshazzar's years. This same Belshazzar was the king of the "handwriting on the wall." His third year would have been about 550 BC. (Archaeology and History).

2. **Q:** What do we know about Daniel at this point? **A:** Daniel was taken to Babylon in 606 BC. After three years of training he entered the service of King Nebuchadnezzar. According to Daniel 5, when Belshazzar was king, Daniel was not well known to him. So the period of this prophecy was during the latter days of the Babylonian kingdom when Daniel was a man of about seventy years of age. (History)  
**Q:** How did Daniel receive this prophecy? **A:** By a vision.  
**Q:** Where did Daniel see himself in the vision? **A:** In Susa, a major city in Babylon on the eastern side of the Euphrates. This city would later play a very important part in the story of Esther where it is called Shushan. (Geography, Other Passages)  
**Q:** What genre do we have in Daniel 8? **A:** Prophecy. And it also bears the marks of apocalyptic literature with many of the same characteristics found in Revelation. In an apocalypse, the author typically has a vision; animals, numbers, and other features are used in a figurative sense; and there are predictions, often about the rise and fall of nations. So we must approach Daniel 8 as literature of this type. (Genre)
3. **Q:** The prophecy is built around what two animals? **A:** A ram and a goat. **Q:** On your worksheet, list the qualities of the ram as given in verses 3 and 4. (Give a couple of minutes for students to do this.) **A:** The ram had two long horns. One came up later and was longer. The ram charged toward the west, north and south. No animal could stand against him. He did as he pleased and became great.
4. Then comes a goat. **Q:** List on your worksheet the qualities given for the goat in verses 5-9. (Give a couple of minutes for students to do this.) **A:** The goat had a prominent horn between his eyes (like a unicorn). He came from the west. He crossed the earth without touching the ground. He charged toward the ram. He shattered the two horns of the ram and overcame him. The goat became very great. At the height of his power, his one horn was broken off. In its place, four prominent horns grew up. Out of one of these horns came a small horn that eventually grew in power to south and east and toward the Beautiful Land.
5. Before looking at more details, let's see what we can learn about this much of the prophecy. As I read to the class rather slowly Daniel 8:19-24 you should write beside the various traits you have listed so far, the interpretation



which the angel Gabriel gives Daniel. (The class should write the following:

Ram—the Kingdom of Media and Persia

Goat—the kingdom of Greece

Large horn—first king

Four horns—four other kings replace the first and become four kingdoms of lesser power

Small horn that grows larger—From one of the horns, a stern-faced king arises)

(Figures)

6. Now let's look at the list we wrote about the ram and fill in what is missing from history. **Q:** What is the meaning of the ram's two long horns. **A:** They stand for the two merged kingdoms that make up this empire—the Medes and the Persians. **Q:** Which of these powers rose later and became more dominant? **A:** The Persians. Cyrus was the great Persian king who led the conquests of the kingdom. **Q:** From looking at a map of the Medo-Persian Empire, why did the ram move north, west, and south? **A:** Because the Empire was on the eastern edge of their part of the world and thus moved in the other three directions to build their empire. They were very powerful from the time they conquered the Babylonian Empire in 539 BC until they fell in 331 BC. (History)
7. Now look at the list from the goat. **Q:** Who was the first great king of the Grecian Empire? **A:** Alexander the Great. Although his father Phillip began some conquests, it was Alexander that really made it an empire. Not touching the earth suggests the speed with which he moved. He came west through Asia (Turkey) and attacked the Medes and Persians at the Granicas River in 331 BC. There were additional battles but this one was the breakthrough that enabled him to take control of all their territory. At the height of his power, at the age of 33, he died (was broken off) in 323 BC. **Q:** Who do the four horns represent? **A:** The four kings among whom Alexander's kingdom was divided. While there were some power struggles that went on among several, the four eventually were Cassander (Macedonia and Greece), Lysimachus (Asia Minor), Seleucus (Syria and east), and Ptolemy (Egypt). Each had a large area of the formerly unified empire. Daniel's vision shows a small horn growing out of one of the other horns. It represents a king whose power grows toward the south and east and toward the Beautiful Land. **Q:** In Daniel's mind, what would be "the Beautiful Land." **A:** The land of Judah. This part of the story is fulfilled in the horn that was Seleucus. From his horn eventually came forth a "spur" who was a very evil king and who created great difficulty for the Jews. Antiochus Epiphanes, who reigned over Syria from 175 to 165, fought with the successors of the original Ptolemy and that fight usually involved marching and



fighting through the land of Judah, after their return from Babylon. Without getting into great detail, sometimes Antiochus took out his anger on the Jews, even stopping their sacrificial system and desecrating the temple by offering pigs there as sacrifices. These things are the fulfillment of Daniel 8:11-12 and 23-25. (History)

8. So we have looked at an Old Testament passage, one of prophecy and which is in the apocalyptic style. We have seen how the images of the ram and the goat may be interpreted both by suggestions from the passage itself and from history. We have used geography, archaeology, history, other passages, genre, speaker/audience, and figures to help us.
9. We close our study of this passage with two other observations. The prophecies of Daniel deal with the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek, and Roman kingdoms. The question naturally arises as to whether the book of Daniel was actually written before these things took place or was it written by a person who lived after these things and wrote of what had already happened merely posing as Daniel. Just two or three things that will help us with this question. (a) Jesus, in Matthew 24:15, refers to Daniel the prophet, and says he prophesied about the fall of Jerusalem. This statement from Jesus attests that he was a prophet and Jesus says he would be right about his prophecy regarding the fall of Jerusalem. And he was right. (b) The Dead Sea Scrolls contained 17 fragments of the book of Daniel. These date from about 165 BC and indicate the book was not only in existence at that time, but that it had circulated enough to be highly regarded among Scriptural texts. (c) Josephus reports that Alexander the Great was shown a copy of the book of Daniel when he conquered Jerusalem. (d) The writer of Daniel describes in detail many cultural elements of both Babylonia and Persia that no one could have known who was not a part of that time. (e) The book of Daniel appears in the Septuagint, translated around 200 BC.

Applications: (3 minutes)

1. While this passage of Scripture is not one to give us commands about what God expects from us, it is a passage from which we can learn some useful lessons.
2. **Q:** What useful lessons can we make from this study of Daniel 8? **A:** We get a brief glimpse at the predictive element in the Scriptures and see how what is predicted came about. Such exact fulfillment of a specific prophecy gives us faith that God, who alone can foresee the future, has sometimes released that information in the Bible. We see the power of God at work and see how He can work in the affairs of nations. He used the Babylonians to take Israel into captivity; He used the Persians to release them to return to their own lands; He used the Greeks to spread



the Greek language and culture throughout the world as a prelude to His bringing Christ and revealing the New Testament in the language of the Greeks. What a great God we serve! Although little in Daniel 8 is about Daniel himself, we know that he was a very faithful servant of God during many difficult times.

Assignment: (2 minutes)

1. Use the worksheet from today to prepare for the written review for the next class.
2. For the next class meeting, read Christ's letter to the church in Ephesus in Revelation 2:1-7, which will be the basis of our study. Be ready to contribute to the class discussion. Think through our list of ten principles and see how they might apply to this study.



**UNDERSTANDING SCRIPTURE  
WORKSHEET NO. 12**

1. King Belshazzar was the son of Babylonian King \_\_\_\_\_ . While the father was king of the entire empire, he made his son king in the city of \_\_\_\_\_ . (Which principles are used here: \_\_\_\_\_ ).
2. Daniel 8 was written in the third year of King Belshazzar, we can place the date near the year \_\_\_\_\_ BC. Since Daniel was carried to Babylon as a young man in 606 BC, we know he was about \_\_\_\_\_ years old when he wrote this chapter. (Principles: \_\_\_\_\_ )
3. Daniel 8 are written as what type (s) of genre?
4. The prophecy is built around two animals. What are they?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principle: \_\_\_\_\_ )
5. The ram represents the kingdom of \_\_\_\_\_ .

Properties Mentioned

Interpretation

6. The goat represents the kingdom of \_\_\_\_\_ .

Properties Mentioned

Interpretation

7. What evidence is there that the book of Daniel was written well in advance of the events described in Daniel 8?

STUDY REVELATION 2:1-7 AND BE READY TO DISCUSS IT NEXT WEEK.



**WRITTEN REVIEW NO. 11  
(For use with Lesson No. 12)**

1. Paul first talked with Stoics and Epicureans in the \_\_\_\_\_ of Athens.
2. What genre are we studying in Acts 17:22-34?
3. Name one thing we have discovered from archaeology and/or history that help us understand Paul's sermon?
  
4. Name two qualities of God which Paul presents to the Athenians.
  
5. The first part of Paul's sermon could be titled: the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.
6. The second part of Paul's sermon could be titled: the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Name one occasion before New Testament times that God taught Gentiles about Himself.
  
  
8. Paul says it is time for all men everywhere to \_\_\_\_\_ because God is going to \_\_\_\_\_ the world by one He has \_\_\_\_\_ from the dead.

