

Aim: Prophecies, both those that have been fulfilled and those that are waiting to be fulfilled give us confidence that God is in control.

Refer: The Great Controversy chapter 12, Daniel 4, 8

The truth of the Bible came to the Netherlands (Holland is part of the Netherlands) seven hundred years before Luther's time when two bishops travelled to Rome and like Luther, were disgusted and horrified by the corruption they found there. When Missionaries from the Waldenses visited they found the people hungry for truth and the Waldensian Bible was also translated into the Dutch language. Later, the writings of Luther were received with gladness and many believed and became preachers of truth.

Menno Simons was a priest in Holland when he was finally forced to turn to the Bible to find the answers to some difficult questions. He withdrew from the Roman Church and became a travelling preacher in the Netherlands and northern Germany, taking his wife and children with him.

The Emperor had lots of power in the Netherlands so when he decided to stop the reformation a time of great persecution followed. 'To read the Bible, to hear or preach it, or even to speak concerning it, was to incur the penalty of death by the stake. To pray to God in secret, to refrain from bowing to an image (like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego), or to sing a psalm, was also punishable with death... thousands perished under the reign of Charles and of Philip II.' GC p240. Yet they died willingly and their deaths showed people the truth and as a result more people believed.

The progress of truth in Scandinavia (Denmark, Norway and Sweden) was more peaceful. Students from Wittenburg passing through brought the truth and writings from Luther also circulated.

Hans Tausen's parents could not afford to give him the education he desired so he joined a monastery. His talent was soon recognised, and they agreed to sponsor him at any university except Wittenberg. Tausen went to Cologne but was soon disgusted by the mysticisms of the school men so without permission he changed to Wittenberg. When he returned to Denmark, he immediately started sharing the truths he had learned. His was at once confined to a prison cell but when several of the guards decided to convert to Protestantism, they didn't know what to do so they released him. Now he was free to preach, and the people thronged to listen!

In Sweden, two brothers, Olaf and Laurentius Petri, studied at Wittenburg and then return to spread the good news. The king was trying to improve his country, so he invited Olaf to defend the doctrines of the Reformation against the Roman church. Soon after this the king too accepted the Reformed Christian faith.

Olaf had already translated the New Testament into Swedish, but now at the king's request the two brothers translated the Old Testament as well. Then the king ordered that the Bible be taught throughout Sweden in the churches and the schools.

We have been learning about Nebuchadnezzar.

Even though he was a foreign king who did not know about God, what did God send him? (Dream of statue – Daniel 2)
Then he praises God. But after a while he starts thinking his kingdom should last forever and he forget God, so he built his own statue.

What did God do to get his attention? (Fiery furnace – Daniel 3)

Once again Nebuchadnezzar praises God and commands everyone else to too.

Tell the story from Daniel 4 or have everyone look it up in the Bible and then answer these questions:

- This is a letter sent by Nebuchadnezzar – who does he send it to? Verse 1
- He has had another dream, although this time he remembered it. Could the wisemen interpret it? Verse 7
- What does he dream about? Verse 10-12
- Then he dreams that someone comes from heaven and chops down the tree. What is left of it? Verse 15
- What does Daniel say that the dream means? Verse 25
- When did this happen and what was Nebuchadnezzar doing at the time? Verse 29-30
- For 7 years Nebuchadnezzar thought and lived like an animal. What did he learn from this experience? Verse 37.

Many of the prophecies in the Bible have their fulfilments written in the Bible. Some like this one, were fulfilled in only a short time – in this case a year. Can you think of others that were fulfilled in a short time? (eg. Hannah)

Other prophecies took hundreds of years but still have the fulfilments written in the Bible. Can you think of some? (God's promises to Abraham; prophecies about Jesus' birth etc.)

Some of Daniel's prophecies were fulfilled during Bible times and others were fulfilled later and still others have not happened yet. Can you think of examples?

- Babylon and Persia ruled during the Old Testament times, and Rome was in power during the time of the New Testament.

- The divided kingdoms of the statue's feet and many of the prophecies about the little horn have happened in the time after the Bible was written.
- The prophecies about the rock that hit the statue, and the setting up of God's kingdom are still in the future.

Discuss: Why did God tell Daniel about the four world empires? Why not just skip to the end of time? (Because we can look back now and see that it happened just as God said it would)

If time is short, read this summary from the Orange lesson, otherwise do the Bible study below.

After the vision of the four beasts God gave Daniel another vision of a two-horned ram that was knocked over by a one-horned goat. Then the angel Gabriel came and told Daniel that the ram was Medo-Persia and the goat represented Greece; the horn was first king of Greece who we now know was Alexander the Great. The first horn was broken, and more horns grew to symbolise future kings, including the one who would destroy Gods people - the little horn from the terrible fourth beast in Daniel's other vision. At the end of that dream Daniel heard an angel say, "2300 days and then the temple will be made right again."

Then Daniel was told to seal up the vision to keep it secret for now and then for several days Daniel lay in bed, exhausted.

After the vision of the 4 strange beasts, God gave Nebuchadnezzar another vision about 2 animals which is recorded for us in Daniel 8.

- What is the first animal? Daniel 8:3
- Who does the ram represent? Verse 20
- Do you remember which part of the statue and which of the 4 beasts also represent Medo-Persia?
- Remember that the bear had 3 ribs in it's mouth because they conquered 3 other kingdoms, and now Daniel learns that the ram will run West, North and South, and we know now that they conquered Lydia, Babylon and Egypt.



- What is the second animal in this vision? Verse 5
- The goat rushed from the west and struck down the ram, breaking it's horns.
- Who does the goat represent? Verse 21 (Note: Greece is further west)
- The goat's horn is snapped off (remember Alexander the Great died when he was only 32) and 4 horns replace it.
- Then what happens? Verse 9
- This little horn is the same little horn as was on the beast.
- Read what Daniel says about this little horn in verse 25.
- Daniel was told to seal up the vision because it concerned the distant future, and then he lay in bed because he was tired and ill for many days.

Revise: Why did God tell Daniel about the four world empires? (To give us confidence that God is in control)