

- Background
  - Hebrew for “God is my judge”
  - Descendant of King David
  - Has a gift of visions (prophetic powers)
    - Controversial whether Daniel is an actual prophet or not
    - His visions for the people are different than the other prophets

## Week 1

- Devotion to God
  - God created us
    - We exist purely by his will
    - For that reason we have every reason to continuously glorify him
      - This can mean many different things
      - Though we can continuously glorify God by singing worship songs all day long, that’s not the most practical solution
    - How do we glorify God?
      - We should do everything to serve in his name with a heart full of unwavering love (Galatians 5: 14)
        - The entire old testament law is summed up in loving your neighbor
      - We must act out our faith fully, not halfheartedly (Revelation 3: 15-16)<sup>21</sup>
        - Here, a church is being called out for their lukewarm faith (that’s right, this term actually comes from the bible! It isn’t just a buzzword)
      - We must serve God through our actions, not just through talk (James 2: 17)
        - Without any good works, does one truly have faith?
    - Tie-in to study
      - Daniel is a man that God continuously found favor on
        - God admired his devout faith and blessed him for it
        - In turn, Daniel gave the glory back to God
        - Focus throughout this study in the character of Daniel and how he can be a model for us in our individual walks of faith
- Daniel 1
  - Judah controlled by Babylon (Daniel 1: 1-7)
    - Babylon
      - One of the earliest civilizations, as seen in Genesis
      - Mighty, but corrupt with idolatrous worship
      - God chose to give Jerusalem to Babylonians
    - Nebuchadnezzar
      - King of Babylon

- Commanded some of the people of Israel to be enlightened in the ways of the Chaldeans (Southern Babylonians)
      - Daniel was among these people
  - Daniel (Daniel 1: 8-21)
    - Decided to stand firm in his ways as to remain undefiled
      - Daniel was faithful that God would assist him in bringing glory to his name
        - Ultimately God blessed the youths 10x better than the best of the Babylonians (Daniel 1: 20)
      - In times of adversary, Daniel stood strong in his faith
        - It would have been way easier for him to give in and just go with the flow (remember that thing I said about lukewarmness?)
        - Not all of our opposition will be so direct to our values/religion
          - Sometimes there are many smaller elements that can pull us away from the path of righteousness
          - It's important to not compromise beliefs, but to put them into practice (remember that thing I said about works?)
  - God will do what he wants to provide signs of his glory
    - In itself, blessing Daniel and the other youths with knowledge of the Chaldeans does not further the kingdom of God
      - This ultimately will actually show the supremacy of God, that these prodigies did not come of the world, but of God
        - This is a recurring theme in the old testament
          - God often shows powerful signs to remind everyone that he is greater than the world
          - This goes back to the idea of devoting ourselves to him
            - If he is greater than the world, then why do we continue to give ourselves more to the world than we do God?
- Daniel 2
  - The dream
    - Nebuchadnezzar sought out the best of the world to not only interpret his dream, but relay it to him (Daniel 2: 5-6)
      - The Chaldeans even admit that this is impossible, that no *man on earth* can do this (Daniel 2: 10-11)
    - Daniel confidently declared that he would be able to interpret the dream (Daniel 2: 16)
      - This is another example of Daniel's devotion to God

- Knowing fully that if he mis-relayed the king's dream, he would be executed, but he trusted in God to deliver him using the gifts he was blessed with
  - Daniel immediately thanks God when the dream was bestowed to him (Daniel 2: 20-23)
    - It's super easy to forget to thank God when he helps us out
    - Daniel even went so far to say that the knowledge was not his own, that all wisdom is owned by God (Daniel 2: 20)
  - Daniel gives glory to God in front of the king (Daniel 2: 29)
    - In return, the king acknowledges the might of God, that he is the God of gods (Daniel 2: 47)
  - Side note, there are parallels between Daniel and Joseph
    - Joseph and Daniel both had the gift of interpreting dreams
    - Joseph and Daniel were given high honor for their interpretations
- Daniel 3
  - The golden image
    - Nebuchadnezzar constructed an image of gold: An idol!
      - First of all, how ridiculous is this! He just said that God was the God of gods
        - It's actually not too far fetched. Think of how quick we are to put other gods in front of our own
        - It doesn't take a 60 cubit golden statue to be an idol
          - Most of us have one in our pockets throughout most of our day (a phone)
      - He commanded everyone to bow, but the 3 Jews Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (let's call them SAM because that's complicated to spell out all 3) refused
        - Another example of amazing faith, standing up against oppression for your beliefs, even when the consequences are huge and it seems really easy and minor to just give in
  - The furnace
    - For disobeying the king, SAM were cast into a furnace
    - An angel protected SAM in the furnace
    - The king was amazed at this work of God and pronounced the glory of God
      - This is an example of how our faith is a vessel for God's glory
        - God used SAM's faith to portray a mighty act to the king
        - In return, the king praised God for the work he had seen
      - Even without being as extravagant as a burning furnace, our acts of faith have an impact to those around us
      - People see your devotion, and it has an impact
        - Above all though, God sees devotion

- Remember that church from Revelation? The lukewarm one?
- There's another church (well, 6 more that are mentioned), but this one was honored for their "patient endurance" (Revelation 3: 10)
  - Jesus promised these to be protected from the trials of judgement
  - There are two types of people (well there are actually a lot more than that, but let's focus on two): The nebuchadnezzar's who walk away from their faith and the SAM's who live out their faith
    - Beginning a new year, let's all strive to encourage one another in our faiths

## Week 2

- Service
  - God has given us many gifts to glorify his name
    - These gifts are not purely us, they are for the service of others to further God's kingdom (1 Peter 4: 10)
    - We shouldn't suppress the gifts we are given, as there is a reason God has entrusted us with them (Romans 12: 6)
  - We serve God by serving others (Hebrews 6: 10)
    - We are called to love one another, this is a way for us to convey God's love to anyone, even an unbeliever
    - By serving others, they may be able to see God's light (Matthew 5: 14-16)
  - Serving others helps us grow closer to God
    - By loving others, God abides in us (1 John 4: 12)
  - Tie-in to study
    - At the end of the night, we will have seen 3 examples of how Daniel shares the glory of God by serving others
    - These are examples and reminders to us of how our actions can have an eternal impact on someone
      - Even the littlest of actions can have a huge impact on someone
      - We are called to plant the seeds in others and have faith God will supplement spiritual growth (1 Corinthians 3: 6-8)
- Daniel 4
  - Faith tainted by pride
    - We continue to see more of Nebuchadnezzar's weak faith
      - Proclaims the glory of God (Daniel 3: 28-30, 4: 1-3)
        - As great as it is to proclaim the glory of God, these words are empty

- He continues to bask in his “gods” (Daniel 4: 8)
  - We see Neb. continuing to try and exalt himself above others, even as God is trying to bring his pride down to earth (Daniel 4: 24-27)
    - It’s really easy to praise God when things go easy for us
    - However, when we are told to repent and that we are evildoers, it is easy to get defensive
    - It took God speaking directly to him literally to have effect on him (Daniel 4: 31-32)
    - Sometimes it takes being stricken down completely to fix our pride, to be truly humbled: Sometimes you have to rebuild from the ground up (Daniel 4: 37)
      - When you rebuild yourself, it’s important to build a strong foundation, that your faith might not collapse on itself or be tainted (Matthew 7: 24-25)
- Daniel 5
  - The new king
    - With Nebuchadnezzar gone, there is a new king: Belshazzar
      - We see that Belshazzar requires Daniel’s ability of interpretation
      - Even though the Babylonians know there is something different about the Jewish God, notice how they still use “gods” in its plural form (Daniel 5: 11)
        - This means (as you probably remember from Sunday School and Biblical background) that the Babylonians still don’t really know God and are idolatrous as all get out
    - Daniel’s service
      - He refuses the reward from the king (Daniel 5: 17) and offers to serve him anyways
        - This is an incredible example of Daniel’s servant heart
        - We should not work for a reward, but work out of joy and love for God
        - Our reward is in heaven, not on earth
        - Parallel to Jesus turning away Satan’s gifts
    - We see that Belshazzar had not learned from his dad’s mistakes (Daniel 5: 22-23)
      - Pride must run in the family
      - We should learn from the mistakes of those before us

- Learn from alive people: examples of what to do/not to do
  - Learn from the people of the past: the Bible is great for this
  - Power of God vs. power of the world
    - Some people wonder why read the Old Testament
      - In reality, the Old Testament contains a number of examples of “Here’s what not to do”
      - We are to learn from these examples of the past, lest we stumble in the same fashion
  - Belshazzar is killed, Darius becomes the new king
- Daniel 6
  - The Lions Den
    - Satraps found Daniel to be flawless, but still wanted to discredit him (Daniel 6: 4)
      - The word of God is perfect
        - By following God’s word in its entirety, we will be blameless to others
      - Forced Daniel to choose between God and Earth (Daniel 6: 6-9)
        - God’s word is more supreme than the law of the land
        - When in contradiction, we are to follow God
        - When Daniel is unphased and chooses God, he is rewarded
      - Darius wanted to spare Daniel
        - Tried to revoke the law (Daniel 6:14)
        - Offered sympathy and hope for Daniel’s God (Daniel 6: 16)
      - Daniel is saved
        - God found Daniel to be blameless, so he spared him (Daniel 6: 22)
        - Darius found Daniel to be blameless, so he spared him, and punished those that tried to kill him (Daniel 6: 24)
        - Darius’s faith for the Jewish God is made firm (Daniel 6: 26-27)
          - We see again that Daniel’s faith has made a third person pronounce God’s name
          - This is another reminder that our faith is possibly the best way to witness to others
            - Remember, our devotion speaks out to others and they see it

- Our devotion serves God by furthering his kingdom in two ways
  - We further develop ourselves
  - We further develop others

### Week 3

- Repentance
  - We are all human, and therefore, born into sin (Genesis 3)
    - We are inherently evil beings
  - Christ died for us that we may be forgiven (Romans 5: 8)
    - Though we are more easily forgiven, nothing has changed, sin still bears the same weight
    - God has always hated sin
      - Moses pridefully took credit for a miracle once and God punished him immensely for it (Numbers 20: 12)
      - A single accidental sin required a goat as an offering (Leviticus 4: 27-28)
    - We should have the same conviction as of the Old Testament about sin
      - We need to be very earnest in our requests for forgiveness through Christ, not taking them lightly
      - By this, we must also be sure to repent from our wrong-doings, otherwise what's the point of our apology?
      - Our repentance makes us better, more loving disciples
        - Repenting from sin, means we transgress the law less (1 John 3: 4)
        - Love is the fulfillment of the law (Romans 13: 10)
        - We already talked about a servant's heart, and how it abounds in love
          - By repenting from sin, we can serve God better, as discussed before
          - This makes sense: the law was a roadmap as to how to serve God, but it was just impractical to fulfill without Christ
            - But Christ is the fulfillment of the law, so we should do everything to press on, not taking his sacrifice in vain, but living out his name all the more for it (Romans 6: 1-4)
- Daniel 7
  - A lot of this text seems apocalyptic and resembles Revelation
  - 4 Beasts (Daniel 7: 1-8)
    - Lion with eagle's wings (Daniel 7: 4)
      - Majestic (lion + eagle), but humbled (wings taken off, made man)
      - Possibly represents Babylon

- Jeremiah describes Babylon as an eagle and a lion (Jeremiah 49: 19-22)
  - The story of a majestic ruler being humbled mimics the story we read of Neb.
- Bear (Daniel 7: 5)
  - “Arise, devour much flesh”
  - Possibly represent the Medo-Persian Empire
    - 3 ribs could represent 3 military conquests: Babylon, Egypt, Lydia
    - Very ferocious, similar to the Persian people
- Leopard with bird’s wings (Daniel 7: 6)
  - Dominion given to it
  - Swift (winged, leopard)
  - Possibly represents the Greek Empire
    - Alexander the Great conquered the civilized world swiftly
    - After his death, the kingdom was divided into 4 parts (4 heads)
    - This is far into the future, which shows that God is all knowing, reliable, and holds the future in his hands
- Terrifying beast (Daniel 7:7-8)
  - Dreadful and strong
  - Iron teeth
  - Fierce (symbolized by horns)
  - Possibly represents the Roman Empire
    - Comes after the Greek Empire
    - Strongest of them all
    - Persecuted believers of Christ
  - I personally think it represents any form of worldly power
    - Any world power now is stronger than that of the past, otherwise the past powers would still exist
    - In many ways, we are simply a corrupt people, disgusting for what we are
    - The word of God is timeless, it doesn't make sense for it to stop it its tracks and is still relevant today
- The Ancient of Days (Daniel 7: 9-12)
  - The ancient of days is God
    - Could be seen as either the father or the son, most assume the father
    - Clothes white as snow, hair like wool (Daniel 7: 9)
      - Represents purity, the untainted nature of God
    - All servants sit before in judgement (Daniel 7:10)
    - The beasts are conquered (Daniel 7: 11-12)
      - The evil beast was punished in fire



- The other beasts lasted a time, but not forever
    - Everything of the world fades, only God is eternal
    - God will partition worldly power as he sees fit
- Son of Man (Daniel 7: 13-14)
  - Jesus calls himself the son of man throughout the Gospels
  - The messiah
    - He *came* to the ancient of days, implying he is mortal (Daniel 7:13)
    - God gave him power, glory, and dominion (Daniel 7: 14)
      - The son of man becomes eternal
  - We know Jesus is always eternal, so how can he come to God, how can he gain dominion?
    - This isn't the whole story
    - Right here, we are just seeing the part where Jesus is of the earth, and embraces God in his mortal form
      - The eternal mystery: Jesus is 100% man and 100% God
- Interpretation (Daniel 7: 15-28)
  - The beasts are earthly kings, but God's servants shall reign forever (Daniel 7: 17)
    - We've seen this before... remember Neb.'s first dream?
      - Daniel has seen this before, but something is different now
      - He reacts differently this time around
        - This vision is from God's perspective, not mans
          - Sees the brutal nature of man... notice how they are beasts
    - The fourth beast was different
      - Waged war on the saints (winning until God declared judgement, or the coming of Christ (depends on your interpretation)) (Daniel 7: 21-22)
      - Ultimately, he was destroyed in the courts of the Lord
  - Daniel alarmed, but keeps the vision to himself (Daniel 7: 28)
- Daniel 8
  - Ram (Daniel 8: 3-4)
    - 2 Horned
      - Both high, but one horn was higher than the other
    - None could stand before it, none was stronger
  - Goat (Daniel 8: 5-8)
    - 1 Horned
      - Between the eyes
    - Enraged against ram
      - Broke the rams horns, left him powerless
    - Goat becomes great
      - When great, his horn shatters and is replaced by 4

- Out of one of these new horns, a new one grows to be exceedingly great
    - The new horn is ferocious, threw down the stars: persecutor of the church
  - Interpretation (Daniel 8: 15-27)
    - Angel Gabriel speaks to Daniel (Daniel 8: 16-18)
      - Called by “a man’s voice”
      - Same Angel that told Mary of Jesus
    - Models the vision we saw in Daniel 7
      - Vision is about nations giving way to stronger nations
      - Each stronger nation is more brutish than the previous
      - The worst of these had immense power, but not by himself (Daniel 8: 24)
        - All things come from God
        - Even those that are enemies of the kingdom did not create their strength on their own
        - Can God create evil? Does he?
          - God doesn’t create evil things (he is pure and cannot make evil out of something that is all good)
            - Sees sin and allows something to fall into sin
            - Allows hardships knowing consequences
          - Maybe the world just taints things that God created pure
      - Will destroy many and go up against the prince of princes (Daniel 8:24-25)
        - He will be broken, not by human
          - God can conquer evil
        - Seems to relate to Revelation
          - Prophecy of God overcoming the world
      - Daniel is told not to freak because this happens far from now (Daniel 8:26)
        - This is the reason he does not share it, he is told not to
      - Daniel is physically sick from what he hears (Daniel 8: 27)
        - Even if all he hears of, this process of evil overcoming more evil, doesn’t come to be in his lifetime (as Gabriel indicates), Daniel still feels terrible for the people of the future
          - This shows Daniel’s servant heart again
          - He wants to help these people but can’t
- Daniel 9
  - Daniel’s Prayer
    - Daniel sees the turmoils of Babylon, and prays on behalf of them

- Daniel understands the undeservingness of the Jews (Daniel 9: 7-8)
- Daniel is completely open with God, not trying to sugarcoat anything
  - We can definitely use this approach of prayer as an example for us, not hiding from our wrong-doings, but asking God to forgive them, and being 100% real
- Daniel does not blame God for any of their sufferings, but embraces their deservingness (Daniel 9: 11-13)
- Daniel clarifies it is not their own righteousness, but God's mercy that allows for a second chance (Daniel 9:17-19)
- God's Response
  - God sends Gabriel again
  - Daniel is greatly loved (Daniel 9:23)
    - This should be obvious, but this means that Daniel's actions are generally pleasing to God, and is further proof we should model after him
  - God gives Israel another chance (Daniel 9: 24-27)
    - Given a 70 week period to fix themselves of sorts
      - Prophecy from Jeremiah that they will endure
    - God is quick to listen and gives mercy abundantly
    - We should never purposefully turn from him, but if we ever slip up, he is fast to catch us, because he knows our mistakes before we even make them
      - He knew Israel would mess up from the beginning, but still gave them a chance, and as we see here, continued to give mercy (Deuteronomy 31: 16-17)
      - God knows we are not perfect, but through the sacrifice of Jesus, we can become more like him (Romans 3: 23-24)

#### Week 4

- Listening to God
  - Sometimes we are either completely ignorant of God or just blabbering to him
    - God hears all of our prayers, we need not worry about him remembering them or anything (1 John 5: 14)
    - Too often, we don't give God a chance to speak, we talk when we should be listening (James 1:19)
      - We need to slow down and take time to hear God
      - God may not speak in a vision or with a thunderous voice
        - We have to try very carefully to hear him
  - Listening is not enough, we must follow up with action (James 1: 22)
    - We shouldn't be stubborn in our ways when we hear the word of God, but take it to heart (Proverbs 19: 20)
    - God will fight for our hearts, but if we continue to ignore and disobey him, we can't expect him to keep fighting for us (Psalm 81: 11-12)
- Daniel 10

- Daniel's abilities are refined with use (Daniel 10: 1)
  - Before we would see interpretations given to Daniel by an angel of God that was as long (if not longer) than the description of the image
  - Here, we see that Daniel is able to understand the vision
    - His God-given gifts continue to grow as he hones them more and more
- Daniel's prayers are answered
  - The first messenger of God speaks to Daniel (Daniel 10: 10-14)
    - Daniel humbled himself and set out to understand and serve God (Daniel 10: 12)
      - God sees our service, and hears our pleas
    - The stranger is fighting against Persia (Daniel 10: 13)
      - Archangel (angel of high rank) Michael helped this messenger, and claimed the Jews as God's people, telling of what is to come of them (Daniel 10:14)
  - Daniel's desire to speak to God (Daniel 10: 15-17)
    - After hearing the messenger speak, Daniel becomes weak
      - Daniel desires to be given the strength to speak to God (Daniel 10: 16-17)
        - Testament to Daniel's faith
        - We should strive to have this longing to seek God out
  - The second messenger (Daniel 10: 18-21)
    - This messenger bestows blessings of strength to Daniel (Daniel 10: 18-19)
    - Foretelling of the future (Daniel 10: 20)
    - Set up for a longer spiel to come in chapter 11
- Daniel 11
  - Prophecy from the book of truth
    - We could probably spend a long time trying to interpret everything that is going on, but I found it more beneficial to focus on general ideas
    - Details are given to Daniel of the future of the world, including the end of times
      - There have been a lot of prophecies up to this point that have come true (namely the ones concerning Babylon, Persia, and Greece)
        - A prophet who's word comes true is reliable (Deuteronomy 18: 22)
        - We can have confidence that all prophecies from Daniel are accurate, even if they haven't happened yet
        - The first part of this prophecy has happened, and is true, which indicates the rest is true
    - Kingdoms of South and North

- Unnamed, but could be relevant today with tensions in the middle east
  - In terms of Israel, Egypt was to the South and Syria was to the north
    - Israel found aggression on both of its sides
  - God's perspective here is purely of his people
    - The north to God is the north of his people, as the south of God is the south of his people
    - This love and dwelling of God exists within us today as Christians bearing the holy spirit
- Daniel 12
  - Deliverance of God's people
    - Apocalyptic writing resembling Revelations
    - At the end of time, those who are written in the book of life will be given eternity (Daniel 12: 1)
    - The two options are everlasting life or shame and everlasting contempt (Daniel 12: 2)
    - Daniel told to keep all he has heard quiet (Daniel 12: 4)
      - What's the point in him hearing all that is to come?
        - Prophecy from God for us
        - Reward for Daniel's works
        - God's answer to Daniel's prayers
    - Some people will purify themselves, while some people will remain wicked (Daniel 12: 10)
      - Wisdom of God seems foolish to the world
      - Even at the end of times, when people are threatened with eternal death, some still won't get it (Revelation 9: 20-21)
        - It's not our job to worry about other's growth, God will do his will
        - Our job is to just plant the seeds, then God will grow those seeds into a solid foundation of faith (1 Corinthians 3: 6)
      - We should do all that we can to be in the first category, purifying ourselves, not remaining wicked