

Daniel: Faithful Discipleship in a Foreign Land

Participant Handout Guides

If you are working with a class or small group, feel free to duplicate the following handouts at no additional charge. If you'd like to print 8-1/2" x 11" or A4 size pages, you can download the free Participant Guide handout sheets at:

www.jesuswalk.com/daniel/daniel-lesson-handouts.pdf

Discussion Questions

You'll typically find 3 to 6 questions for each lesson, depending on the topics in each lesson. Each question may include several sub-questions. These are designed to get group members engaged in discussion of the key points of the passage. If you're running short of time, feel free to skip questions or portions of questions.

Suggestions for Classes and Groups

Individuals who are studying online can probably complete one full lesson per week, though they'll need to be diligent to do so. But some of the chapters just have too much material for a one hour class discussion. For example, you might decide to separate some of the chapters I've combined from one lesson into two.

Lesson 3. The Fiery Furnace and the Lions' Den (Daniel 3 and 6)

Lesson 4. Humbling the Proud (Daniel 4 and 5)

Lesson 6. A Vision and a Mighty Prayer (Daniel 8 and 9:1-19)

Feel free to arrange the lessons any way that works best for your group.

Because of the length of these handouts – and to keep down the page count so we can keep the book price lower – they are being made available at no cost online.

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Introduction

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Appendix 2. The Medo-Persian Empire. www.jesuswalk.com/daniel/app2_medo-persian-empire.htm

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Introduction to Daniel

Themes

1. Faithfulness in persecution
2. Faithful prayer
3. Spiritual warfare
4. The Antichrist
5. Evil will not ultimately prevail or last forever.

Date and Author

Since ancient times, Daniel has been accepted as an authentic part of the Jewish canon of Scripture, and by Jesus (who called Daniel a “prophet”), the early church, and the Church Fathers. Many modern scholars see Daniel’s visions were “pseudo-prophecies” circulated in Daniel’s name around 168 to 165 BC to encourage the Jews who were suffering greatly under the persecutions of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-163 BC). In spite of arguments to the contrary, an excellent case can be made for a sixth century dating of the Book of Daniel. The Book of Daniel seems to have been written in Babylon by Daniel near the end of his life, about 530 BC – or compiled in Babylon from Daniel’s writings by his disciples shortly thereafter. See [“The Case for a Sixth Century Dating of Daniel”](http://www.jesuswalk.com/daniel/app3_early-date-of-daniel.htm) www.jesuswalk.com/daniel/app3_early-date-of-daniel.htm

Apocalyptic

Dreams and visions in Daniel belong to the genre of prophecy termed “apocalyptic, characterized by rich symbolism, a deterministic view, and a violent in-breaking by God to establish his kingdom. See Zechariah and parts of Ezekiel in the Old Testament and Revelation in the New Testament.

Structure and Language

The first six chapters consist primarily of stories about how Daniel and his friends adapted to life in the Babylonian court (scholars call these “court tales”), including the great faith with which they handled persecution. The final six chapters consist of apocalyptic visions given to Daniel, several related to future persecution facing the Jews during the intertestamental period, and a couple that look forward to the Last Days. Though the Old Testament is written in Hebrew, Daniel has a section written in Aramaic section (2:4 to 7:28).

History of Interpretation

Over the last two millennia, the Book of Daniel has been subject to literally hundreds of interpretations. In light of the many ways that God-fearing people have understood Daniel’s prophecies, it’s important for us to be humble as we seek to interpret it -- and loving (1 Corinthians 13:1).

Double Fulfillment of Prophecy

Direct fulfillment. Many of Daniel’s prophecies have a direct historical fulfillment (chapters 4 and 5). However, the fulfillment of some of Daniel’s prophecies still appear to be in the future.

Double Fulfillment. We also see prophecies that seem to have a double fulfillment, with an initial fulfillment, and then a later and final fulfillment. Example: Antiochus Epiphanes (the type) and the Antichrist (the antitype). Prophets sometimes see events through the context of events near to his own time, as if they were part of a mountain range visible beyond one close by, with no indication of the distance between the near and the far.

Historical Context

As a young man, Daniel was exiled or deported to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar (605-562 BC) in 605 BC along with a number of other youths from royal or noble families to be trained to serve in the king’s palace in Babylon. He served as a “wise man” (2:12) for about 60 years at the top rung of pagan governments without compromising

his relationship to God. After Nebuchadnezzar died in 562 BC, he was followed briefly by three Babylonian kings from 562 to 556 BC. Then Nabonidus (556-539 BC) took the throne and reigned as the last of the Neo-Babylonian kings. His son Belshazzar served as co-regent with him from about 553 to 539 BC.

Babylon was captured without much resistance by the Medo-Persian army under Cyrus II (“the Great”), who reigned 559-530 BC over the Persian (and later the Medo-Persian) Empire. Darius the Mede (5:31; chapter 6; 9:1; and 11:1) is probably another name for Gubaru, an Assyrian governor of Babylon.

Daniel is considered one of the most righteous men in history – placed by God alongside Noah and Job in Ezekiel 14:14-20. Jesus referred to him as a prophet (Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14).

The Abomination of Desolation

Daniel prophesies concerning the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, and Roman Empires, to be finally destroyed by the Kingdom of God. To understand some of Daniel’s visions, you must be aware that in 168-165 BC, Antiochus IV Epiphanes attacked Jerusalem, slaughtered its inhabitants, and replaced worship of Yahweh with the worship of Greek gods, setting up an “abomination of desolation” in the temple and sacrificing pigs on the altar. In 165 BC, members of a priestly family, led by Judas Maccabeus, rallied the Jews, fought a series of successful battles, and freed their land from Greek rule. You can read this exciting story in 1 and 2 Maccabees, two books in the Apocrypha.

Important Dates for the Book of Daniel

To understand Daniel’s visions requires some understanding of the history. Here are some helpful dates and events.

	612	Fall of Nineveh. Effective end of Assyria.
	609	Reforming King Josiah of Judah killed by Egyptian forces under Pharaoh Neco (610-595 BC) at the Battle of Megiddo.
	609-598	Reign of Jehoiakim, placed on the throne of Judah by Pharaoh Neco. (Jehoiakim succeeded Jehoahaz who had replaced Josiah, but Jehoahaz reigned only 3 months; Kings 23:34; 2 Chronicles 36:4).
Babylon	605	Battle of Carchemish. Nebuchadnezzar II, king of Babylon defeats the combined armies of Assyria and Egypt under Pharaoh Neco, signaling the end of Assyrian might and Egyptian intervention. Nebuchadnezzar II reigns (605-562). First wave of exiles (a small group of hostages) deported from Judah to Babylon, including Daniel and his friends (1:1). Jehoiakim began giving tribute to Nebuchadnezzar in 605 BC. The Babylonians invade Syria in 604, Ashkelon in 603, and clash with Pharaoh Neco on the borders of Egypt in 601.
	597	Jehoiachin becomes king of Judah, reigns for three months (2 Kings 24:8-17), until Jerusalem is besieged and surrenders to Nebuchadnezzar. Jehoiachin is deported and his uncle Zedekiah is made king (2 Kings 24:18). City is subjugated but not yet destroyed. Second group of exiles , a massive group, is deported to Babylon.
	589	Zedekiah rebels against Babylon and forms an alliance with Pharaoh Hophra of Egypt (589-570 BC; 2 Chronicles 36:13; 2 Kings 24:20; Ezekiel 17:11-21).
	587	Nebuchadnezzar returns, lays siege to Jerusalem for two years until the food supply runs out. Nebuchadnezzar executes Zedekiah’s sons, deports Zedekiah and imprisons him, destroys the city, and the Third and final group of exiles is deported to Babylon July/August 587 BC. The Kingdom of Judah ceases to exist (2 Kings 25).
	563-560	Amel-Marduk (Evil-Merodach, 2 Kings 25:27-30) is king of Babylon. Releases Jehoiachin in 562 after 37 years in prison. Jehoiachin is honored at the king’s table.
	560-556	Neriglissar, son-in-law of Nebuchadnezzar.

	556	Labashi-Marduk.		
	556-539	Nabonidus is the last king. His son Belshazzar is co-regent (553-539) reigns in Babylon while Nabonidus is on journeys and at foreign battles.		
	539	Fall of Babylon to Cyrus II.		
Persia	559 to 530	Cyrus II ("the Great") reigns, founder of the Medo-Persian Empire (Achaemenid dynasty).		
	538	Cyrus allows the first wave of Jews to return to Jerusalem (Ezra 1:2-4).		
	537-520	Temple rebuilt in Jerusalem (Ezra 5:1; Haggai 2:18).		
	530-522	Cambyses (alluded to in Daniel 11:12).		
	522-486	Darius I Hystaspes "the Great" (Ezra 5:5 ?).		
	486-465/4	Xerxes I (King Ahasuerus; Ezra 4:6). His second queen was Esther. He died by the hand of an assassin. Built up Susa and Persepolis.		
	464-423	Artaxerxes I Longimanus. Opponents of the Jews write Artaxerxes to try to stop construction of the walls (Ezra 4). Ezra receives a letter from the king authorizing him to take money and people to Jerusalem (Ezra 7). Nehemiah served as his cupbearer, and in Nov/Dec 445 BC goes to Jerusalem to repair its walls (Nehemiah 1:1).		
	423-404	Darius II. Allows construction of Jerusalem to continue (Ezra 5-6 ?).		
	404-359	Artaxerxes II. Note: some see Ezra during the reign of Artaxerxes II rather than I.		
	338-336	Arses		
	336-331	Darius III		
Greece	334-331	Conquests of Alexander ("the Great") of Macedon (331-323) (Daniel 8:5, 21 ?). He Hellenized the lands he conquered, spreading Greek language and culture, which paved the way for the Gospel.		
	323	Death of Alexander, empire divided into four areas, of which the Egyptian and the Syrian become predominant.		
EGYPT	(Ptolemies)		SYRIA	(Seleucids)
323-285	Ptolemy I		312-281	Seleucus I
285-245	Ptolemy II		281-260	Antiochus I
247-221	Ptolemy III		260-246	Antiochus II
221-203	Ptolemy IV		245-223	Seleucus II and III
203-181	Ptolemy V		222-187	Antiochus III ('the Great')
198	Syria took over Palestine from Egypt		187-175	Seleucus IV
			175-164	Antiochus IV ("Epiphanes")
ROME	The rising power		168	Antiochus expelled from Egypt by Roman consul (11:30).
			167	Dec 25: erection of Greek altar in the Jerusalem temple.
			166-160	Judas Maccabeus. Rebelled against Antiochus, rebuilt and rededicated the temple (166-164).
			160-143	Jonathan Maccabeus

Table of dates, adapted from Joyce Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary* (Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries; InterVarsity Press, 1972), p. 73.

1. Four Hebrew Youths in Babylon (Daniel 1)

In 609 BC, King Josiah (640-609 BC) has just been killed in a battle with Pharaoh Neco of Egypt, a regional power that seeks to control the cities of Palestine and Judah. Josiah's successor, Jehoahaz, reigns only three months until Pharaoh Neco removes him (2 Kings 23:30-32), and replaces him with his brother Jehoiakim, who becomes a vassal of Egypt (2 Kings 23:34).

But Pharaoh Neco's influence in Judah is short-lived. Nebuchadnezzar, general of the armies of Babylon, defeats the combined forces of Egypt and what is left of Assyria in the Battle of Carchemish in 605 BC, signaling the end of Assyrian might and Egyptian intervention. Nebuchadnezzar II then succeeds his father as king of Babylon and reigns 605-562 BC.

To consolidate his victory over Egypt, Nebuchadnezzar sends his troops south into Syria and Palestine to end Egyptian control of that region. Whether he actually besieges Jerusalem with his massive army, or only threatens to do so, is unclear. The bottom line is that Jerusalem seems to have surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar with minimal resistance. Jehoiakim now switches allegiance from Egypt to Babylon and becomes Babylon's vassal.

This is the first of three waves of exiles deported from Judah to Babylon. This first group includes Daniel and his friends (1:1). Jehoiakim also begins giving tribute to Nebuchadnezzar in 605 BC (2 Kings 24:1). Babylonian troops remain in the area, invading Syria in 604, Ashkelon in 603, and clash with Pharaoh Neco on the borders of Egypt in 601.

Q1. (Daniel 1:1-5) Have you ever made a rapid transition between your customary culture and a new and radically different culture? What did it feel like? Were you able to take your faith with you, or did it fade to the background during this time?

Q2. (Daniel 1:1-7) What changes did Daniel and his friends experience? What was their status in Jerusalem? In Babylon? What do you think was the effect of changing their names to Babylonian names? What impact might it have on them to be made eunuchs? Did they make compromises? If so, why?

Q3. (Daniel 1:8-10) Why do you think Daniel took a stand concerning being defiled by the king's food and wine? How do you think eating the king's food would cause defilement to Daniel's conscience? What does this tell you about Daniel?

Q4. (Daniel 1:8-16) What is Daniel's first approach to eat a different diet? What does he do when his first attempt failed? What is his demeanor towards those over him? In what ways do you think God affects the outcome of Daniel's request?

Lessons for Disciples

1. Though our lives may take wrenching turns (such as Daniel's exile), God knows these things and works through them to achieve his purposes.
2. We must learn flexibility to live in the culture we are placed in, without being unfaithful to the Kingdom of God to which we pledge allegiance – the fine art of compromise without capitulation.
3. Daniel seeks compromise with gentleness, not confrontation. He suggests a limited-time experiment. Finding compromise involves discerning the interests of each party (in this case, the health of the young men, and faithfulness to their religion), and then finding a way to meet the needs of all, so far as that is possible.

True education and wisdom, when aided by God, doesn't restrict us, but can cause us to have more wisdom and breadth than our peers.

2. Nebuchadnezzar's Dream and Daniel's Interpretation (Daniel 2)

- "Magicians" describes some variety of occultist in both Egypt and Babylon.
- "Enchanters" (NIV, NRSV, ESV), "astrologers" (KJV) is some variety of occultist.
- "Sorcerers," those who "use witchcraft, practice sorcery."
- "Astrologers" (NIV), Chaldeans (NRSV, ESV, KJV) either "Chaldean" by race, or as "learned," of the class of Magi.

Most of these specialties would have been banned if this had taken place in Israel (Deut. 18:10-12)

The Babylonians believed that what the gods planned in heaven was knowable by direct observation on earth by a specialist known as the *bārû* or "observer." To make a determination, the *baru* might resort to a variety of means: (1) sheep lungs and livers, (2) abnormal births, (3) astrology, and (4) dreams. The Babylonians kept extensive dream books that would help with interpretations (Isaiah 47:13-14).

Q1. (Daniel 2:17-18) Why does Daniel ask his friends to "plead for mercy"? According to Scripture, is intercessory prayer important? Is it effective? How can we implement intercessory prayer in our churches?

Q2. (Daniel 2:27-28) How does Daniel show humility in this situation? How does he use this situation as an opportunity to witness before the king to his faith in God? According to 1 Peter 5:5-6, should we try to exalt ourselves? If we do so, what will happen?

The identity of the various kingdoms or empires in chapters 2 and 7 is controversial, but this is likely:

Chapter 2	Chapter 7	Chapter 8	Interpretation
Gold	Lion		Babylon (2:38)
Silver	Bear	Ram	Medo-Persia (8:20)
Bronze	Leopard	He-goat	Greece (8:21)
Iron/Clay	Indescribable Beast		(Rome)
Supernatural Stone	Heavenly Court		God's Kingdom

The coming Kingdom of God will be:

1. Temporal. The Kingdom of God will be set up or established in history (Mark 1:15)
2. Divine. God will set it up, not man.
3. Eternal. This kingdom will never be destroyed, but will endure forever.
4. Consuming. It will eventually crush all other kingdoms and bring them to an end.

See also Daniel 4:40, 44; 7:14; Luke 1:32-33; 1 Corinthians 15:24-25; Psalm 2:7-9; Matthew 21:42-44; Isaiah 8:14; Revelation 11:15; 12:10a.

Q3. (Daniel 2:44) What does verse 44 teach us about the kingdom that the God of heaven will set up? What kingdom is this? When does this kingdom come? How is this related to Mark 1:15? When will it destroy all other kingdoms?

Lessons for Disciples

1. Revealing. God can reveal to his servants through the Holy Spirit things that are otherwise unknown (1 Corinthians 2:9-16; 12:4-10)
2. Asking for intercessory prayer is shown in 2:18. See Romans 15:30; 2 Corinthians 1:11; Ephesians 6:19; 1 Thessalonians 5:25; 2 Thessalonians 3:1; Colossians 2:1; 4:12
3. Seeking God under pressure. Daniel asks for prayer, and then seeks God.
4. Thanking. Daniel offers up a psalm of thanks to God for revealing (2:20-23).
5. Humbly witnessing. Daniel points to God's power (2:28).
6. Exalting the humble. Nebuchadnezzar promotes Daniel to a high position. 1 Peter 5:5b; James 4:6.

3. The Fiery Furnace and the Lions' Den (Daniel 3 and 6)

Because the themes are so similar, we're combined The Fiery Furnace (Daniel 3) with Daniel in the Lions' Den (Daniel 6), even though they are separated in time by many decades and aren't found together in the Scripture text.

A. The Fiery Furnace (Daniel 3)

Nebuchadnezzar was a great builder during his reign. 15 million baked bricks were used in the construction of official buildings. Sun-dried bricks were easy to make, but would disintegrate in a heavy rainfall, while bricks burned in a kiln were virtually indestructible. Such kilns would be quite adequate to enclose several men.

Q1. (Daniel 3:8-15) Why do the Jews' fellow government officials report them to Nebuchadnezzar? Why is the king so angry? What is his motivation to have people bow to the statue?

Q2. (Daniel 3:16-18) How do the Jews answer Nebuchadnezzar? What is their attitude? How do they witness about their God? Do they face death with resignation or defiance? Characterize their faith.

Q3. (Daniel 3:19-27) What effect does their deliverance have on their government official colleagues? What effect does it have on the king? What kind of glory does God receive?

Q4. (Daniel 3:28-30) How does Nebuchadnezzar sum up their faith and commitment? Are you willing to disobey a command or law to be faithful to God? Are you willing to lay down your life to be faithful to God? What might hold you back?

Lessons for Disciples from the Fiery Furnace Account

1. Disciples can't avoid persecution. If God bless us, others may be jealous. If we stand for what is right, some will resent it. We can't change how others feel about us. If we try to avoid persecution by compromise and flattery, we may be displeasing to God.
2. When faced with an ultimatum, we need to answer clearly and boldly, not like a politician. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered forthrightly. So did Jesus before the high priest (Matthew 26:63-64) and before Pilate (John 18:33-38; 19:11). So did Stephen before he was martyred (Acts 7:51-56).
3. Our faith should be in both God's power and God's will. We don't serve him just because he will deliver us. He is able to deliver, but his purposes are often beyond our understanding. We just trust him.
4. God's angels are constantly around us. Only occasionally are they seen.
5. We need to be willing to lay down our lives rather than betray our God. That's what Jesus meant when he said, "Take up your cross and follow me."

B. Daniel in the Lions' Den (Daniel 6)

Since the locus of the action seems to be in Babylon, not one of the capital cities of the Persian Empire (Susa, Ecbatana, Persepolis, etc.), Darius is probably a throne-name for the king or governor of the province of Babylon.

As a government official – and as an employee, Daniel is:

1. **Trustworthy.** He tells the truth and can be counted on to be faithful to his responsibilities.
2. **Diligent.** He keeps up with all his duties and doesn't let anything slip. He's not lazy.
3. **Honest.** He doesn't take money or bribes from those trying to break the rules or be preferred over others.

Q5. (Daniel 6:4) What do we learn about Daniel's character qualities as a government official from verse 4? How do such qualities reflect on Daniel's God? Does your employer or supervisor see those qualities in you?

Daniel is:

1. Praying privately. Daniel went to his own house.
2. Praying toward Jerusalem. (1 Kings 8:30).
3. Praying regularly, three times a day (Psalm 55:17).
4. Praying while kneeling, humbling himself before God (1 Kings 8:38).
5. Praying with bowed head. "Prayed" is *ṣelâ*, a generic Aramaic verb "to pray," originally, "bow in prayer."
6. Praying giving thanks, praising.
7. Praying and petitioning God.
8. Praying seeking God's mercy.

Q6. (Daniel 6:10-11) How would you characterize Daniel's prayer practices? Which of these have you adopted? Which might help your prayers if you adopted them?

Execution by being thrown to the animals was not a common form of capital punishment in the ancient Near East. It wasn't made popular until it was introduced in the Roman Empire about the second century BC. However, the den of lions into which Daniel was thrown was perhaps part of a royal zoo. See Heb 11:33.

Q7. (Daniel 6:21-23) How does Daniel use his experience in the lions' den to testify about God? What might have happened if, in his response to the king, Daniel had focused on the injustice done to him? What experience in your life might you use as a testimony of God's mercy to you?

Lessons for Disciples from the Lions' Den Account

1. Daniel sets a standard for disciples character as a government official – trustworthy, diligent, and honest – not corrupt (6:4).
2. Daniel sets an example for disciples by praying three times a day. He prays privately, facing Jerusalem, regularly, kneeling, with bowed head, giving praise, petitioning God, and seeking mercy (6:10-11).
3. God is able to send angels to protect his servants – like the angel that shut the mouths of the lions (6:21).
4. Daniel gives us an example of testifying to the king about God's deliverance.
5. The result of Daniel's example is Darius coming to believe in God – even if he doesn't become a monotheist. The king also ends up promoting Daniel's God to the nation. God can work amazingly as we testify concerning him.

4. Humbling the Proud (Daniel 4-5)

We are combining two stories, since they both deal with arrogance and humbling.

A. Nebuchadnezzar's Mental Illness (Daniel 4)

Q1. (Daniel 4:10-20) Is Daniel actually afraid to interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dream? Why? Why are we afraid to say the hard things that must be said to help our brothers and sisters? What can we do about it?

Q2. (Daniel 4:23-26) What does it mean to "acknowledge that Heaven rules"? In what ways is this hard for a king? In what ways is this hard for us? How do we sometimes deny by our actions that God is in charge of all?

Since our God is a merciful God, his decrees are sometimes conditional upon our response (for example, 1 Kings 21:29; Joel 2:14; Zephaniah 2:2-3).

Q3. (Daniel 4:27) What must Nebuchadnezzar do to demonstrate that he renounces and repents of his sins? What must you do to demonstrate that you repent of your sins? For us, what does it mean to be kind to the poor? That was certainly within Nebuchadnezzar's ability to accomplish. Is it within your ability? In what way can God's decrees be conditional?

The Dream's Fulfillment (4:28-33; 5:18-21)

Combining 4:28-33 with 5:18-21, we get a picture of Nebuchadnezzar's pride.

- Pride in his achievements – the self-made man complex (4:30).
- Pride in his terrible power, that everyone feared him, and didn't dare to challenge him (5:19a).
- Pride in his absolute authority to condemn, execute, promote, and humble at his own whim (5:19b).
- Pride that hardens his heart (5:20a). Pride distorts our perception of reality.

See Deuteronomy 8:17-18; 1 John 2:16.

Q4. (Daniel 4:30; 5:18-21) How does pride show itself in Nebuchadnezzar's life? In what ways does it show up in your life? Pride is tricky. How can pride mask itself with humility?

Nebuchadnezzar learns about God that He is:

1. God is eternal (4:34a).
2. God's kingdom never ends (4:34b)
3. God cannot be compared with human beings (4:35a).
4. God is sovereign (5:19; 4:35b).
5. God is the "King of heaven" (4:37), not just a god among gods, he is the God of gods.
6. God is accountable to none (4:35c; Job 40:2-5)

Q5. (Daniel 4:34-35) What does Nebuchadnezzar's confession tell us about God? Have you ever given a public testimony of what you have learned about God through your trials? What might your testimony sound like?

B. The Handwriting on the Wall (Daniel 5)

If the incident of Nebuchadnezzar's mental illness took place half-way through his reign, then we must move forward 45 to 50 years until the close of the reign of Nabonidus (556-539 BC), last king of the Neo-Babylonian empire. Since Nabonidus was away from the capital for much of his reign, from about 553 to 539 BC his son Belshazzar reigned in Babylon as co-regent, acting as supreme king, except perhaps in a few areas. By this time, Daniel is an old man, perhaps 80 years old.

In 539 BC, Cyrus the Great invaded Babylonia. In June, the city of Opis (Baghdad) fell, and within days Sippar surrendered. King Nabonidus fled to Babylon and went into hiding. Medo-Persian troops were moving toward the capital at Babylon. Yet Belshazzar, who is charged with the defense of Babylon, is throwing a party for a thousand of his friends in his palace.

Q6. (Daniel 5:22-24) In the New Testament, Jesus doesn't present God as legalistic, but as holy – "hallowed be thy name." We are to be God-fearers. How do Christians commonly act irreverently in ways that would offend God? How have you changed your ways to conform to God's holiness?

Lessons for Disciples

We can learn a number of lessons from Daniel 4 and 5.

1. We must live our lives with the constant knowledge that God rules, not we (4:23-26).
2. Repentance for sin needs to be demonstrable, not with just our lips (4:27).
3. Disciples are to be kind to the poor (4:27).
4. Pride in our achievements can easily blind us to God's enabling power (4:30; Deuteronomy 8:17-18; 1 John 2:16).
5. Pride can harden our heart towards God and others, and distort our perception of reality (5:20a).
6. From Nebuchadnezzar's confession we learn that God is eternal (4:34a), his kingdom never ends (4:34b). He is incomparable (4:35a), sovereign (4:35b), the King of Heaven (4:37), and accountable to none (4:35c).
7. We must be careful not to be irreverent in our speech and our actions, and how we act towards those things we have dedicated to God (5:22-24).
8. God's judgment may be delayed with time for repentance (4:29), or it may fall immediately without further warning (5:30). We are wise to repent quickly.

5. Four Beasts and the Son of Man (Daniel 7)

Many believe that Daniel 7 is the most important chapter in the Book of Daniel. It prophesies the direction of four major empires, culminating in the coming of Christ and the inauguration of the Kingdom of God. First, we'll consider the heavenly courtroom scene, then the four beasts and the kingdoms they represent.

The Ancient of Days

The expression "Ancient of Days" (7:9, 13, 22) draws upon the ideas of advanced age, white hair to represent the wisdom of age, as well as the purity and holiness represented by the white garments (Matthew 17:2; 1 Timothy 6:16). The Ancient of Days, of course, is the Eternal God, Yahweh, the Most High God, whom Jesus called "Father" (Psalm 90:2; 97:3; Revelation 20:12).

The presidents and prime ministers and princes of world empires may think that they are accountable to no one, but in Daniel 7 we glimpse the awesome judgment of these seemingly invincible powers.

By judgment of this heavenly court, the "little horn" of 7:11-12) is judged. See (Revelation 13:5; 19:20).

Q1. (Daniel 7:1-2) What is the relationship of the Ancient of Days (God) to the various beastly nations that rage against each other and against him and his people? What happens to these beast-nations? Why is it sometimes so difficult to believe that God is in charge of the world we live in?

One Like a Son of Man (7:13-14)

In the Old Testament that the term "son of man" is a Hebraic way of saying "human being" (e.g., Ezekiel 2:1; Psalm 8:4; Daniel 8:17). However, Jesus uses it as title of "the Son of Man," rather than Messiah or Son of God. Why?

1. **Accurate.** Son of Man, drawn directly from the imagery of Daniel 7:13-14 is an accurate description of who he really was and is.
2. **Ambiguous.** "Son of Man" is ambiguous enough that his enemies aren't able to seize on the title as blasphemy. Son of Man wasn't laden with religious or political baggage. If, on the other hand, he had openly called himself Messiah or Son of God, his ministry would have been cut short by his enemies.

The heavenly son of man in Daniel 7:13-14:

1. Comes with the clouds of heaven (7:13b). This is prerogative of God alone (Psalm 68:4; 104:3b; Isaiah 19:1a; Matthew 24:30b; Mark 13:26; cf. Luke 21:27; Matthew 26:64; Mark 14:62; Revelation 1:7a; 14:14a).
2. Approaches the Ancient of Days (7:13c; Isaiah 6:1-3).
3. He is given authority, glory, and sovereign power (7:14a; Matthew 28:18b-19a; John 20:21).
4. All Peoples Worshiped Him (7:14b). Only a deity is worthy of this kind of worship.
5. Is given an everlasting, indestructible kingdom (7:14c). This is the kingdom spoken of in Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream (2:44).

Thus Jesus' title as "Son of Man" is a title of divinity, glory, and might! Jesus spoke of the Son of Man as:

1. Coming from heaven (John 3:12-13; 6:62).
2. Judge of all (John 5:27).
3. To be glorified (John 12:23; 13:31-32).
4. To be lifted up, both in glory and as the object of faith on the cross, which is his ultimate glory (John 3:14-15; 8:28).
5. An atoning sacrifice for sin (Mark 10:45; Isaiah 53).
6. To return in glory (Matthew 16:27; 24:30b; 25:31; Phil 2:10-11).

Q2. (Daniel 7:13-14) How do these verses describe "one like a son of man"? What makes us think he is a divine figure? What authority and glory does he receive? Why do you think Jesus called himself "the Son of Man"?

A Summary of the Vision (7:15-18)

With some clues given in Daniel 8.20-21, it is possible to identify the empires as follows:

1. Lion with wings of an eagle (7:4) = Neo-Babylon Empire.
2. Bear with three ribs in its mouth (7:5) = Medo-Persian Empire.
3. Leopard with Wings of a Bird (7:6) = Greek Empires.
4. The Beast with Iron Teeth, Bronze Claws, and Ten Horns = Roman Empire (7:4-8).

The term “little horn” refers to the size of the horn at the beginning. But later it grew in power. There are two popular views of who the “little horn” (7:8) and the “more imposing” horn (7:20) represent.

1. **Antiochus Epiphanes**, a Greek king who oppressed the Jewish People in 168-165 BC (held by those who see the four kingdoms as: Babylon, Media, Persia, and Greece).
2. **The Antichrist**. If the fourth kingdom is Rome, the ten horns are ten kings or kingdoms that arise from Rome. Roman domination will be followed by the Antichrist.

When we get to 11:36-39, we’ll speak more of “another king” (7:24b) whom I understand as the Antichrist. This lesson is already long, so we’ll wait until Lesson 9 to discuss the Antichrist. However, observe what we learn about the Antichrist figure here. He will:

1. Subdue three kings (7:24b).
2. Speak against the Most High (7:25a).
3. Try to change the set times and the laws (7:25b).
4. The saints will be under his domination for “time, times, and half a time” (7:25c).

There is a sense in which this can be seen as partially fulfilled under Antiochus Epiphanes, but as we’ll see in Lesson 9, this Antichrist figure is larger than any human, and speaks of events long after Antioch Epiphanes was dead and buried.

Q3. (Daniel 7:18, 22, 27) Three times the angel assures Daniel that “the saints of the Most High” will ultimately receive the kingdom and possess it forever (Daniel 7:18, 22, and 27). In what circumstances is this truth most precious to God’s people? Though there may have been partial fulfillments, when do you expect the ultimate fulfillment?

Lessons for Disciples

It is very easy to feel overwhelmed at this point, by the visions and prophecies. So it’s important for us to look at the big picture and draw some lessons from Daniel 7 for modern-day disciples.

1. God will judge the nations (Psalm 2; 82:8; 96:10; 110:6; Isaiah 2:4; Joel 3:12; Acts 17:31; Rev. 19:11; etc.).
2. The kingdom of God will triumph in the End (Daniel 7:17-18, 25b-26)
3. Jesus is the Son of Man to whom all power is given (7:13-14).

6. A Vision and a Mighty Prayer (Daniel 8:1-9:19)

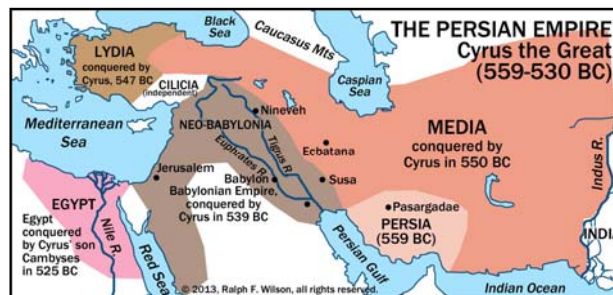
We're combining into a single lesson both Daniel's vision of a ram and a goat in chapter 8 with Daniel's great prayer of intercession in 9:1-19.

A. Daniel's Dream of a Ram and Goat (Daniel 8)

Though Daniel is physically in the city of Babylon, in the vision he is in the ancient fortress city of Susa. It was one of the royal cities of the Medes and Persians that had been the home of both Esther and Nehemiah in their exile.

"The two-horned ram that you saw represents the kings of Media and Persia." (8:20)

"The shaggy goat is the king of Greece, and the large horn between his eyes is the first king." (8:21)



Alexander the Great conquered the Persian Empire in 330 BC, and died a few years later at the age of 32. His kingdom was split into four parts ("four prominent horns"), each led by one of Alexander's generals.

1. **Ptolemaic Dynasty** (Egypt, 323-30 BC), begun by Ptolemy I Soter.
2. **Seleucid Dynasty** (Palestine, Mesopotamia and Central Asia, 312-63 BC), begun by Seleucus I Nicator. Antiochus IV Epiphanes was king of the Seleucid Empire 175-163 BC.
3. **Attalid Dynasty** ruled Pergamom in Asia Minor (281-133 BC). Thrace, Asia Minor, and Macedon were originally ruled by Lysimachus (306-281 BC), one of Alexander's generals.
4. **Antigonid Dynasty** (Macedonia, 306-168 BC) was founded by Antigonus I Monophthalmus (the "one-eyed"), who also ruled over part of Asia Minor, and northern Syria for a time.

The "small horn" is Antiochus Epiphanes. The "Beautiful/Glorious/Pleasant Land," of course, is the Promised Land.

When a rumor spread that Antiochus had been killed in Egypt, a deposed high priest, Jason, made a surprise attack on Jerusalem with 1,000 soldiers and took the city. When Antiochus heard of this revolt, he returned enraged to Jerusalem in 167 BC, took back the city, restored Menelaus as high priest, and massacred tens of thousands of Jews (2 Maccabees 5:12-14)

Then he plundered the temple. Antiochus forcibly converted the temple into a temple to the Greek god Zeus and erected an altar to Jupiter, and defiled the temple by offering a pig on the altar. Remaining Jews were forced to eat of these sacrifices. Death was the penalty for Jews who circumcised their sons. Antiochus destroyed any copies of the Scriptures that he could find.

Antiochus Epiphanes's outrages brought about the Maccabean rebellion, which is described in an inspiring account in 1 Maccabees 1-3. The Maccabees were successful in their rebellion. Faithful priests cleansed the temple and it was rededicated in 165 BC, commemorated by Jews to this day with the Feast of Hanukkah (from a Hebrew word meaning "dedication"). Antiochus died suddenly of disease in 164 BC.

Antiochus Epiphanes set up a desolating sacrifice (8:13), mentioned also in 9:27b; 11:31; and 12:11;. Jesus refers to the abomination of desolation as a future event (Matthew 24:15), probably seeing the fulfillment by Antiochus as a foreshadowing of a later desolation that took place in 70 AD when the Romans destroyed the temple and burned Jerusalem.

Lessons for Disciples from Daniel 8

1. God sees the end from the beginning, and is in charge of the affairs of men, even though we may not see it at the time.
2. God sometimes reveals events to his prophets to encourage his people who may go through terrible persecution, so that they might take courage that the persecution will not last forever. In this case, Daniel is given the period of three and half years.

3. Visions can greatly telescope the time between events. Here, the time from the rise of the Medo-Persian empire under Cyrus the Great to its rapid end is a bit more than 200 years. From the rise of Alexander the Great to the death of Antiochus Epiphanes is just under 200 years.
4. Seeing the future is not without cost. Daniel is overwhelmed and devastated by what he sees. Sometimes we idly wish to know the future, but such a vision is costly.

B. Daniel's Prayer of Intercession (9:1-19)

In 539 BC, Daniel realizes that Jeremiah's prophecy of a 70 year exile about to be fulfilled (Jeremiah 25:11-12).

Q1. (Daniel 9:1-2) What encourages Daniel to seek God for the forgiveness and restoration of Israel to its homeland? What practice on Daniel's part leads him to pray?

Several words describe Daniel's prayer of intercession. (1) pleading, (2) prayer, (3) petition, (4) abject humility, and confession.

Q2. (Daniel 9:3-4a) What is Daniel's demeanor as he prays? How does he prepare? Why is this so important in this case? In what ways might you and I prepare for intercession?

Daniel confesses the nations sins as his own (9:5). He identified with his people's sins as did Jesus later (Isaiah 53:12; Galatians 3:13; 4:4-5; 1 Peter 3:18a; Philippians 2:6-8). See 2 Chronicles 7:14.

Q3. (Daniel 9:5) Since Daniel is such a righteous man in his generation, why does he identify himself with the sins of his people? He didn't commit these sins. How does this compare to how Jesus sought forgiveness for his people?

Daniel appeals to God on the basis of:

1. **God's precedent.** God delivering Israel from Egypt provides a precedent for delivering them from Babylon (verse 15a). Neither time were they delivered for their own righteousness (Deuteronomy 9:4-5).
2. **God's glory.** Just as God's glory was known through the deliverance from Egypt, so the deliverance from Babylon will bring him glory (verse 15b).
3. **God's righteousness.** Deliverance of God's people shows God's righteousness as an act of mercy (verse 16a).
4. **God's personal identification with Jerusalem.** God has identified himself with Jerusalem, the City of God ("your city") and the temple mount ("your holy hill"). While Israel's sins have brought scorn to Jerusalem and Israel – and to God, by association – deliverance will erase that scorn (verse 16b).
5. **Worship in God's temple** ("your desolate sanctuary") will be filled with worshippers again. Notice that Daniel points out that this is "for your sake" (verse 17).
6. **God's personal identification with Jerusalem** (again). Daniel reminds God that the desolate city "bears your Name" (verse 18a).
7. **God's mercy.** Daniel's appeal is not on the basis of Israel's righteousness, which has been destroyed by sin and rebellion. He appeals solely on the basis of God's known character of mercy (verse 18b).

Q4. (Daniel 9:15-19) What was Daniel's essential prayer? What are the various grounds of Daniel's appeal? How did God answer the prayer (see Daniel 9:20-23)?

Lessons for Disciples about Intercession

There are many lessons in this passage. Humility, repentance, asking for mercy, appealing to God's own interests, reputation, and glory. But the one that strikes me especially from this passage is that, as an intercessor, I cannot just pray for another. When praying for my own nation, people, or church, I must identify with their sins and confess them as mine. Taking on the sins of another as a mediator – that is the role of an intercessor, and of Christ our Lord.

7. Daniel's Vision of the Seventy Weeks (Daniel 9:20-27)

Verse 24 tells us that six purposes will be completed over this whole Seventy Sevens time period.

1. To finish transgression. The word suggests restricting or restraining sin.
2. To put an end to sin. One of the words points to sealing to designate that something is securely closed (Matthew 1:21; 1 John 3:8).
3. To atone for wickedness, that is, to forgive (John 1:29; 1 John 2:2)
4. To bring in everlasting righteousness. Our righteousness does not depend on us, but on Jesus who justifies us, that is, declares us righteous (Isaiah 53:11; Habakkuk 2:14; Isaiah 11:9b).
5. To seal up the vision and prophecy.
6. To anoint the most holy. This could refer to anointing the temple when it is rebuilt, but probably points to the anointing of the Anointed One, Jesus the Messiah (Matthew 12:6).

Q1. (Daniel 9:24) In what ways can we find in Jesus the fulfillment of the six tasks found in verse 24?

Literal years (Lev 25:8) would be expected. However, no view of the literal numbers interpretations allows you take the numbers at face value without further explanation. **Symbolic numbers** is another approach, since 7 and 10 are used symbolically (Gen 10; Luke 10; Matt 18:20-21; Rev 7:4; 14:1, 3).

The Anointed One could refer to a king, high priest, or Messiah (1 Samuel 2:10; 2 Samuel 22:51; Psalm 2:2; 18:50; Exodus 40:13; Leviticus 16:32; Isaiah 45:1). Some take the "anointed one" to be Onias III, the last high priest of the line of Zadok. Those with a messianic interpretation take him to refer to Jesus of Nazareth.

The beginning point, "issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem" could refer to Cyrus's decree in 538 BC or a decree by King Artaxerxes to Nehemiah and Ezra about 445 BC.

Counting the years is also controversial. The Maccabean/non-messianic interpreters believe that Daniel was confused about the years. Those with a messianic interpretation note that Jesus' death probably took place on Passover of 30 AD or of 33 AD. Some take the 483 years as so-called "prophetic years" with only 360 days, not 365 day years as were used by the Jews with 445/444 BC as a starting point, pointing to Jesus' death in 32/33 AD. Other see 458 BC as a starting point, which takes you to the beginning Jesus' ministry in 26 AD, with the stopping of sacrifices coinciding with Jesus' death 3-1/2 years later. Both of these Messianic interpretations posit a "gap" or "parenthesis" to take up the space between Christ's death and Christ's Second Coming.

The Final "Seven" (9:26-27). Those with a Maccabean interpretation, see the following events as fulfilled by Onias III and "the ruler who will come" as Antiochus Epiphanes. Those with a messianic interpretation see the events fulfilled by Jesus Christ and a future Antichrist.

1. **"The Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing (26a).** "Cut off" means here, "to destroy by a violent act of man or nature," that is, be killed.
2. **"The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary" (26b).** Does this speak of the destruction of Jerusalem in 168 BC, 70 AD, or by a future Antichrist (2 Thessalonians 2; 1 John 2:18; 4:3; Revelation 13).
3. **"The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed" (9:26c).** See Matthew 24:6-8; Revelation 16:14-16; 19:11-21; 20:7-10.
4. **"He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven'" (9:27a).** See 2 Thessalonians 2, Revelation 13:16-17.
5. **"In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering" (9:27b).** According to Revelation, the Antichrist, the "beast rising out of the sea," will exercise authority and persecute God's people for 42 months (one half of seven years), demanding exclusive worship (Revelation 13:5-8).
6. **"And on a wing [of the temple]¹ he will set up an abomination that causes desolation" (9:27c).** Also Daniel 11:31; 12:11. This was literally fulfilled by Antiochus Epiphanes in 168 BC (1 Maccabees 1:54), but

¹ "Wing [of the temple]" (NIV), "in their place" (NRSV), "the wing of abominations" (ESV), "overspreading of abominations" (KJV). The Hebrew word is *kānāp*, "wing, winged, border, corner, shirt" (TWOT 1003a). The "pinnacle" of the temple in Matthew 4:5 is literally "little wing" (Greek *pterugion*) (Young, *Daniel*, p. 218).

could refer to the fall of Jerusalem (Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14), or a future Antichrist (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

7. **“The end that is decreed is poured out on him” (9:27d).** See Revelation 19:20.

A Synopsis of the Major Interpretations of the Seventy “Sevens”

1. **Literal time periods with Antiochus Epiphanes as the end-point.** This Maccabean interpretation begins the 490 years at the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC, and the termination as Antiochus’s persecution (164/163 BC). But this is only 422 years, so these interpreters assume that Daniel was mistaken about chronology and the coming of the kingdom. This view sometimes takes the “anointed one, the ruler” in verse 25 as Cyrus II (or Zerubbabel or Joshua, Zechariah 4:14), and the “anointed one” in verse 26 to refer to Onias III, the last legitimate high priest of the descendants of Zadok, deposed in 175 BC and murdered in 171 BC. However, its proponents generally interpret Daniel’s visions as historical narratives written after the fact *as if they were* predictive prophecy.
2. **Symbolic time periods with the first century AD as the end-point.** A second view sees the time periods as symbolic, not literal. Seven Sevens cover the period from the decree of Cyrus until the completion of the work of Ezra and Nehemiah, approximately 440 to 400 BC. Sixty-two Sevens from about 400 BC to the first advent of Christ. During this time the city is completely rebuilt, though in stressful times. The final Seven encompasses Christ’s First Advent to sometime after Christ’s death, but before 70 AD.
3. **Literal time periods with Christ’s Second Coming as the end-point.** Typically held by premillennialist and dispensational interpreters, this view sees the 70 Sevens as literal time periods – years – with Christ’s Coming as the end-point. The seven Sevens extend from command to rebuild Jerusalem (Ezra, 458 BC or Nehemiah, 445 BC) to the completion of work, 49 years later. The sixty-two Sevens (434 years) extend either to Christ’s baptism (about 26 AD) or his presentation of himself as Messiah on Palm Sunday (32/33 AD). Key to this view is that you stop counting for “the time of the Gentiles.” That whole period is skipped. The final Seven years begin at the end of present age, with terrible tribulation for Israel and the world, during which the majority of Israel will be saved. The final Seven is terminated by Christ’s coming and Kingdom, which will last 1,000 years. One obvious weakness of this view is that it uses 360-day “prophetic years” rather than 365-day years as did the Jews. Also it arbitrarily skips counting years during the Church Age.
4. **Symbolic time periods with Christ’s Second Coming as the end-point.** A fourth view believes that the 70 Sevens are symbolic periods of time and are a prophecy of Old and New Testament church history from Cyrus’ decree (538 BC) until Christ’s return. The details may vary, but this view typically holds that seven Sevens extend from Cyrus’ decree until the coming of Christ, about 550 years. The sixty-two Sevens extend from Christ’s coming to persecution of the church by Antichrist (at least 2,000 years). The final Seven seems to include the Great Tribulation and ends with Christ’s advent. Keil and Baldwin hold this view. Baldwin sees the last Seven beginning with the first coming of Christ and extending until his Second Coming.

Q2. (Daniel 9:24-27) Why do you think people fight with each other over the interpretation of difficult Bible passages? According to Romans 14:1-5, what should be our attitude towards those who disagree with us on the non-essentials of the faith?

Q3. (Daniel 9:24-27) Why do you think there are so many interpretations of Daniel’s vision of the Seventy Sevens? What is your interpretation of the various key parts of the vision?

Lessons for Disciples

This is a difficult passage. Nevertheless, it has several lessons for us disciples.

1. **Prayer and fasting** touch the heart of God. Verse 23 reminds us that God sent an answer to Daniel as soon as he had begun to pray.
2. **Humility.** Over the many centuries, there have been a great many different interpretations of Daniel's vision. We ought to approach every interpretation with a bit of skepticism – and humility.
3. **Jesus is the fulfillment of God's plan for mankind.** Verse 24 can't be fulfilled by man without God. But this is what Jesus our Messiah came to do!
4. **It's going to get worse before it gets better.** Verses 26 and 27 foresee war, destruction, desolation, and persecution (also seen in Jesus' teaching in Matthew 24 and the book of Revelation). But at the end, the destroyer will be destroyed. We must prepare ourselves to endure over a considerable period of time.
5. **God will deliver his people.** Daniel's vision has often been an encouragement to saints undergoing persecution. He knows the pain of the persecution his people endure. And that persecution will not last forever. The Redeemer will end it all with his Second Coming.

Q4. Why do you think Daniel's visions and prophecies have been an encouragement to Christians throughout the centuries when they are undergoing severe persecution?

8. The Kings of the North and South (Daniel 10:1-11:35)

Chapter 10 describes Daniel's experience of receiving the vision – and some hints about spiritual warfare in the heavenly places – while chapter 11 is a prophecy detailing wars and kings that span hundreds of years, finally focusing on the cruel reign of Antiochus Epiphanes. Daniel 11 may seem tedious, yet you will find a fascinating correlation in detail after detail of prophecy with history as it played out hundreds of years after Daniel's time. The date of the vision (vs. 1) is the third year of Cyrus II ("the Great," 559-530 BC) probably, the third year *after* his conquering of Babylon, about 536 BC.

Q1. (Daniel 10: 3, 7-11, 15-17) Daniel is old, but why does the vision affect him so greatly? What is the physical effect on him? What is the mental and spiritual effect on him? Why is spiritual "work" so taxing on us?

Spiritual warfare (10:12-13). See Ephesians 6:11-12; 2:2). Michael the archangel fights against the princes of Persia and Greece (10:21a; Jude 9; Rev. 12:7). For more on this see C. Peter Wagner, *Wrestling with Dark Angels* (edited 1990), *Warfare Prayer* (1992), *Confronting the Powers* (1996), and others.

Q2. (Daniel 10:12-13) Why wasn't the angel messenger able to bring his message in a timely manner? Who resisted him? Who helped him? What does this teach us about prayer? About spiritual warfare?

Chap. 11	Fall of Persian Empire to Alexander the Great	
2	Persian Kings: Cyrus II the Great (576-530 BC), reigns when Daniel had this vision. The next three kings are Cambyses (530-522 BC), Smerdis (pseudo-Smerdis or Gaumata; 522 BC), and Darius I Hystaspes (522-486 BC). Xerxes I (486-464 BC) is probably the fourth king mentioned in the vision	
3-4	Mighty king: Alexander the Great. Kingdom goes to his leading generals: (1) Ptolemy I Soter, (2) Seleucus I Nicator, (3) Lysimachus, and (4) Antigonus I Monophthalmus (the "One-Eyed"). Of these, Seleucus (Syria, "king of the north") and Ptolemy (Egypt, "king of the south") and became dominant.	
Verses	Kings of the South (Egypt)	Kings of North (Syria)
5	Ptolemy I Soter (323-285 BC) the ruler of Egypt.	Seleucus I Nicator (312/311-280 BC).
6	Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246 BC)	Antiochus II Theos (261-246 BC). Daughter (Berenice) of Ptolemy II is murdered by Laodice, former wife of Antiochus II.
7-9	Ptolemy III Euergetes (246-221 BC). Third Syrian War.	Seleucus II (246-225 BC)
10-12a	Ptolemy IV Philopator (221-203 BC); Fourth Syrian War (219-217 BC)	Seleucus III Ceraunus (226-223 BC); Antiochus III the Great (223-187 BC)
12b-17	Ptolemy V Epiphanes (204-181 BC). Fifth Syrian War (202-195 BC); Battle of Panium (199 BC)	Antiochus III. Daughter Cleopatra I marries Ptolemy V (193 BC).
18-19		Antiochus III attacks Greece (192-188 BC). Defeated by Rome, Treaty of Apamea (188 BC)
20		Seleucus IV Philopater (187-175 BC) sends prime minister Heliodorus to plunder Jerusalem temple (2 Macc 3:7-40) to pay tribute to Rome. Heliodorus murders Seleucus IV.
21		Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164 BC) usurps throne from Seleucus IV's son.
22-27	Ptolemy VI Philometor (181-146 BC). Sixth Syrian War (170-168 BC). Egypt attacks Syria and is repulsed.	Antiochus Epiphanes invades Egypt. In treaty insincere promises are made.

28		Antiochus Epiphanes puts down rebellion in Jerusalem, massacres 80,000, and loots the temple (2 Macc 5:12-21).
29-30a	Ptolemy VI Philometor (181-146 BC, Memphis) allies with brother Ptolemy VII Euergetes and asks help from Rome.	Antiochus Epiphanes invades Egypt again, but in Alexandria is threatened by Roman ships. Antiochus retreats.
30b-32		Antiochus Epiphanes invades Jerusalem, kills and enslaves Jews, sacks city, desecrates temple with sacrifices of pigs to statue of Zeus, "the abomination that causes desolation."
33-35		A resistance movement led by Judas Maccabees retakes Jerusalem, defeats Syrian armies, and wins independence for parts of Judea (166-164 BC). Temple is rededicated Dec 14, 164 BC, celebrated by Hanukkah (1 Macc 1-5).

Q3. (Daniel 11) What is your general impression of Daniel's vision after reading the prophetic words matched by their historical fulfillment? What other Biblical prophecies can you think of that have been fulfilled so precisely? What does this teach you about God?

Q4. (Daniel 11) What does this rehearsal of prophecy and history teach you about the world rulers and geopolitics of our own time? How does the "big picture" inform us about the events of our day? Do you believe that God knows and cares about the details of your country's struggles and future? Are you praying for your country's leaders?

Lessons for Disciples

1. The high cost of spiritual work (10:2-3, 8, 15-17; Ephesians 6:10).
2. Spiritual warfare (10:13, 20; 11:1; Psalm 90:12)
3. God can see the future far ahead. (1 Peter 5:7)
4. Refining power of persecution (11:35).

9. Antichrist, Resurrection, and the Last Days (Daniel 11:36-12:13)

The figure described in Daniel 11:36-39 goes substantially beyond Antiochus Epiphanes. Rather, he seems to be the Antichrist described in the New Testament who will come in the Last Days. Antiochus Epiphanes is certainly a *type* of the Antichrist who does God's people great harm, but the true Antichrist (the *antitype*) is much worse. See Daniel 7:25; Isaiah 14:13-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4; Revelation 13:5-6)

Battles in the last days (Daniel 11:40-45). See Revelation 16:14, 16; 19:19-20a; 20:7-9.

Q1. (Daniel 11:36-45) What do we learn about the character of this Antichrist figure? What seems to be his prime motivations? What does he have to do with the land of Israel?

Spiritual warfare (12:1). See also Revelation 12:7-10.

Time of Distress (12:1) probably corresponds to the "Great Tribulation" (Matthew 24:21-22; Mark 13:19-20; Revelation 7:14)

Q2. (Daniel 12:1) What will happen during the great distress of God's people? In what ways does this time seem to conform to the "great tribulation" spoken of in the New Testament?

Resurrection

Daniel 12:2-3 is the clearest reference to resurrection in the Old Testament. Many in the Old Testament didn't understand life after death (cf. Psalm 6:4). But some did (1 Samuel 2:6; Job 19:25-27; Isaiah 26:19; Psalm 16:10; Ezekiel 37:1-14; Hosea 6:1-2).

However, Daniel has by far the clearest vision of resurrection in the Old Testament.

"Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake:
some to everlasting life,
others to shame and everlasting contempt." (Daniel 12:2)

The Pharisees dogmatically affirmed resurrection in opposition to the Sadducees, who emphatically denied that there was a resurrection to come. Jesus publicly took the Pharisees' position (Matthew 22:23-34; Luke 14:14; John 5:28-29; 6:39-40). Also Acts 24:15; 1 Corinthians 15; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; etc.

Q3. (Daniel 12:2) What do we learn about resurrection? How does this compare with New Testament teaching? What is the future of the righteous who are raised? Why do you think the unjust will be raised also?

Q4. (Daniel 12:3) What is the end of those who are wise and influential for God? What is their reward? How does God use your influence currently to advance his Kingdom? What would need to change so that you might have greater influence for Christ?

Power of the holy people is finally broken (12:5-7). Difficult to understand. Time, times and half a time = 3-1/2. Time of intense persecution. Also 7:25; 8:14; 12:11-12). See Revelation 11:2-3, 9; 12:6, 14; 13:5. Perhaps this is seen in symbols in Revelation 11:8-12.

Q5. (Daniel 12:5-7). How long will intense persecution last during the final tribulation? What will happen to God's people during this? Why do you think this difficult time is revealed to us people who don't like bad news?

Q6. (Daniel 12:10) In what way will intense persecution in the End Times lead to many being "purified, made spotless, and refined"? In what ways is the Church in our day in such need of this? How do you think we can prepare ourselves for this time?

Lessons for Disciples

This passage gives us several pieces of information about the future that can guide our values and decisions today.

1. The Antichrist figure will blaspheme, exalt himself above God, and will give himself to war and the acquisition of wealth. He will invade many countries, including Israel, but will finally come to his end (11:36-45).
2. In their time of great distress, God will finally deliver his people (12:1)
3. There will be a final resurrection to eternal life and to eternal condemnation (12:2).
4. The wise and influential in God's work will shine brightly, that is, be rewarded. We must always be aware of how we are influencing others (12:3).
5. Persecution in the great tribulation will be limited ("time, times, and half a time"). It will seem like the power of God's people will have been completely broken before Christ intervenes (12:5-7, 11-12).
6. The persecution in the End Times will result in the saints being "purified, made spotless, and refined" (12:10). Persecution, instead of working evil only, may be what the Church needs, so that Christ may "present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless" (Ephesians 5:27)