

4. If possible commit the verses/stories to memory.
5. The most important thing is to remember the teachings found in the verses/stories.
6. Over a period of time, evaluate yourself on whether you have improved. Whenever you encounter a challenging situation that calls for application in defeating your weakness, try to mentally run through all ten or so verses and to ask God to give us the strength to overcome our weaknesses.

Weakness to improve upon	Bible verses	How I can deal with it

R E F L E C T I O N & P R A Y E R



O Lord, there is nothing we want more than to be like You. Help us to remove our heart of stone and give us a heart of flesh. Help us to no longer be slaves to sin. Create in us a clean heart so that we can succeed in our battle with the old self and proceed to a brighter and better transformation with our Lord Jesus Christ.

Lesson 11

Daniel

Listed Scriptures

Dan 1-7

Lesson Aim

- 1) Students can understand the sovereignty of God in human history.
- 2) To imitate Daniel's commitment to holiness in an ungodly world.
- 3) Students will establish better understanding and rapport with each other.

Memory Verse

"This decision is by the decree of the watchers, and the sentence by the word of the holy ones, in order that the living may know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, gives it to whomever He will, and sets over it the lowest of men." (Dan 4:17)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Dan 1-7

B I B L E B A C K G R O U N D



The Babylonian policy for taking captives was different from that of the Assyrians, who moved most of the people out and resettled the land with foreigners. The Babylonians took only the strong and skilled, leaving the poor and weak to rule the land, thus elevating them to positions of authority and winning their loyalty. The leaders were taken to Babylonian cities, but they were permitted to live together, find jobs and become an important part of the society. Many of the Jews like Daniel, Mordecai and Esther rose to prominent positions within the nation of the ruling empire. This policy kept the Jews united and faithful to God throughout the captivity and made it possible for their return in the days of Zerubbabel and Ezra as recorded in the book of Ezra.

W A R M U P



What do the following have in common? (Have students answer)

- * A baseball player's contract
- * Wedding vows
- * A dentist appointment
- * A loan agreement

All the above are commitments of one kind or another. They are promises. A baseball player commits to play for a particular team. A bride and groom promise to love each other and be faithful to each other. A dentist promises to save a certain time of day for a patient. A bank agrees to loan money to someone who agrees to make regular payments.

Commitments are important. When you make a commitment to something or someone, you're not saying, "I'll do this if I feel like it," or "I'll do it if it's easy." Instead you're saying, "I'll do it whether I feel like it or not." "I'll do it even if it's hard."

Have you ever made a commitment of any sort? Did you abide by your decision? Today, we will look at a well-known character, Daniel, who committed himself to a life of holiness.

B I B L E S T U D Y



Part 1

Overview

A. Author

The authorship and date of Daniel are two of the more contested issues in the field of biblical studies. Daniel claimed to write this book (Dan 12:4) and he used the autobiographical first person from Daniel 7:2 onward. The Jewish Talmud agrees with this testimony, and in the New Testament the Lord Jesus attributed a quote from Daniel 9:27 to "Daniel the prophet" (Mt 24:15; Dan 11:31; 8:11). Facts and

events of Daniel mentioned in Hebrews 11:33-34 are also quoted in Daniel chapters 3 and 6.

Daniel's name means "God is my judge." He was also known by King Nebuchadnezzar as Belteshazzar, which means, "His life is protected" (Dan 4:8). Nothing is known of the ancestry and early life of Daniel, except that he was from the line of Judah and of noble descent (Dan 1:3-6). At about 16 years of age, Daniel was taken captive to Babylon when King Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem. He remained there for some 73 years and he lived to about 90 years of age. During this period from 606 B.C. to about 536 B.C., Daniel served under three empires; Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, Belshazzar his son, and Darius of Medes and Cyrus of Persia. This coincided with the reigns of kings Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah of Judah.

B. Date

Some believe that the book was written sometime between the latter part of the Babylonian empire and the rise of Medes (Dan 1:1-2; 10:1).

C. Theme

Daniel, the "Apocalypse of the Old Testament," presents a comprehensive sweep of prophetic history. The book is divided into two natural parts. The first section begins from chapters 1 to 6, which talks about Daniel's life and works. The second section from chapters 7 to 12 contains the prophetic visions of Daniel during the reigns of Belshazzar, Darius of Medes and Cyrus king of Persia. These dreams dramatically outline God's future plans, beginning with Babylon and continuing to the end of the age. They demonstrate God's sovereignty and control of history and the destinies of men. The theme of God's sovereign control in the affairs of world history clearly emerges and provides comfort to the future church, as well as to the Jews whose nation was destroyed by the Babylonians. The Babylonians, Persians, Greeks and Romans will come and go, but God will establish His kingdom through His redeemed people forever.

The book also emphasizes on being made separate, with Daniel as the ultimate example. Daniel is one of the few well-known biblical characters about whom nothing negative is written. His life was characterized by faith, prayer, courage, and lack of compromise. Daniel was mentioned three times by his contemporary, Ezekiel, as an example of righteousness.



D. Teachings from the Book of Daniel

a. Leading a godly life in an ungodly world

As people of God, our trademark is holiness. God wants His people to be holy, just like He is holy. Holiness means to be set apart and distinct from ungodly people and from sin and its influences. What make us different are God's qualities in our lives. Yet, holiness does not come naturally. It is easy to be tainted by the trends and thoughts of the world. But Daniel was a man who lived in a sinful society yet remained untainted. He remained devoted throughout his life and became a precious vessel for God's use. How did Daniel achieve and maintain holiness?

i. He understood the God he worshiped

Deuteronomy 10:17 depicts God as, "God is the God of gods, and Lord of lords, He is the great, the mighty and the terrible God." He is the Creator of the universe; holy, almighty, righteous, pure, all-knowing, all-powerful, all-present and full of mercy (Josh 2:1; Deut 7:21; Ps 116:5). When we have a true understanding of God, we will stand in fear and reverence of Him. Our desire would be to please God and remain within the boundaries set by Him.

ii. He worked at it

After we commit our lives to Christ, we still feel a pull back to our old ways. Therefore to maintain holiness requires hard, conscious effort. God helped Daniel because he helped himself first. Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the king's rich food and wine and God provided the means for him to achieve it. Oftentimes, we desire to be holy, but we either remain inactive or we continue down the same old path. 2 Timothy 2:22 instructs us to "Flee youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart." To grow in holiness requires us to first forsake and depart from our ungodly ways, and then to pursue what is pleasing in the sight of God. The Lord Jesus describes the attitude we should have when striving for holiness and dealing with sin: "When our hand or foot causes us to sin, cut it off and throw it away. Or if our eye causes us to sin, gouge it out and throw it away" (Mt 18:7-9). We must never take lightly the "little sins" that we commit, but rather instantly remove the stumbling blocks without hesitation. By doing so we can preserve the holiness of soul, body and spirit (Rev 17:5; 18:1-4; 1 Thess 5:23).

iii. Through God's help

When God sees our desire to draw closer to Him, He will lend a helping hand. After Daniel resolved not to defile himself, God gave Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the chief eunuch so that he was willing to accept Daniel's proposal despite the threat to the eunuch's own life. God also caused Daniel and his three friends to be better in appearance than all the other youths. It is not solely through our own efforts that we attain holiness and perfection, but through the mercy and grace of God (Tit 3:5).

b. He prayed constantly

Throughout his life, Daniel led a consistent life of prayer. Despite his official duties, Daniel faithfully prayed three times a day, even at the grand age of 80 (Ps 55:17; Dan 9:1-4; 10:12; Deut 9:18-20; Lk 2:36,37). He fasted and prayed for the restoration of Jerusalem, for the chosen people of God, for his own sins, and that of Judah. At times when Daniel did not understand the revelations of God (chapter 11), he humbled himself and fasted for 21 days before he received an answer. Daily prayers engage us in spiritual warfare and we must be persistent and faithful in prayer. It was these prayers that enabled Daniel to be victorious over many of life's trials (1 Thess 5:17; Phil 4:6-7; Ac 12:5,12; Mt 18:19).

c. He was loyal to the king

Throughout his life, Daniel not only served under four different monarchies but he held top positions in the various empires. King Nebuchadnezzar made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon. Belshazzar made him third ruler in his kingdom (5:29). Darius first made Daniel one of the three presidents of his kingdom, then later promoted him as Prime Minister (6:3). Aside from the fact that it was God's arrangement, one of the reasons for Daniel's success was his loyalty towards his earthly masters. Daniel did not serve for personal gain. When King Belshazzar promised Daniel gifts, honor and position for interpreting the dream, Daniel replied, "Let your gifts be for yourself and give your rewards to another..." (Dan 5:17). King Darius made Daniel one of the three presidents because he knew that he could "trust Daniel to ensure that he suffered no loss" (Dan 6:2). We need to work with the goal of pleasing our employers and with the welfare of those whom we serve in mind. Through our hard work and faithfulness we can bring glory to God and allow others to know God through us (1 Pet 2:14-17; Mt 5:14-16).

d. Concerned with the matters of God

Although Daniel fared well in a foreign land, his heart was with his people in Israel. Daniel grieved for his fallen nation and the desolation that had come upon the holy city. He fasted and prayed for the people's sins and inquired of God to restore the people to their own country to rebuild the holy city. While we may enjoy certain comforts and status in society, our hearts should not be on the things of the world but on the matters of God. While on earth, our Lord Jesus set His heart on carrying out the Father's business (Lk 2:49). Nehemiah was a cupbearer in the city of Susa, but his heart was with the remnants in Israel. Are our hearts inclined towards the affairs of God? Have we placed the affairs of God and our brothers and sisters in our hearts and prayers? (Amos 9:11; Rev 10:11; 2 Cor 11:28; Rom 12:1; Heb 10:7; Is 6:8).



Part 2

The Most High Rules in the Kingdom of Man

A. God is Lord Over Nations

A major theme in the Book of Daniel is God's sovereignty over the course of history and individual destinies. Through visions and dreams revealed to Daniel, God demonstrates that "dominion belongs to the Lord, and He rules over the nations" (Ps 22:28; Is 46:9b, 10; Dan 2:31-45; 7:3-14). "He makes nations great, and He destroys them; He enlarges nations, and leads them away" (Job 12:23).

a. The great image

Read Daniel 2:1-13. Through the dream of the great image, God showed to King Nebuchadnezzar the progress of history, the rise and fall of empires even before it occurred. God showed how the Babylonian Empire represented by the golden head would later be conquered by the Medes and Persians (539 B.C.). The Medo-Persian empire would later be defeated by the Greeks under Alexander the Great in 334-330 B.C. (belly and thighs of bronze respectively). The legs of iron represent the Roman Empire, which conquered the Greeks in 63 B.C. The feet and toes of clay and iron represent the break-up of the Roman Empire and all the existing nations before Christ's second advent. As we see today, nations continue to divide and are unable to stay united. The stone that breaks the great image into pieces refers to Christ descending from heaven to establish the heavenly kingdom and to execute judgment upon the world (2 Pet 3:10-13).

b. The four beasts

Read Daniel 7:1-28. In this vision, Daniel saw four beasts each representing a world empire. This is similar to Nebuchadnezzar's dream in chapter two, except there the dream is told from a man's point of view while chapter 7 from God's point of view. The lion with eagle's wings represents Babylon with her swift conquests (there have been statues of winged lions that have been recovered from Babylon's ruins). The bear who ravaged the lion is Medo-Persia. The bear has great strength but is slower in movement. Medes and Persia had great strength but it could not match the successes of Babylon. The three ribs in its mouth represents the conquests of three major enemies: Babylon, Libya and Egypt (Dan 8:4). The leopard is Greece. Its wings show the swiftness of Alexander the Great's campaign as he conquered much of the civilized world in four years. The leopard's four heads are the four divisions of the Greek Empire after Alexander's death. The fourth beast represents the Roman Empire and the end times. Rome was militant and relentless, employing every possible torment to torture and slay its captives. It has ten horns, which refer to the ten kings. The ten has the connotation of wholeness and symbolizes every form of government in the last days. The emergence of the little horn refers to the persecutor of God's chosen people in the last days before Christ comes to bring judgment upon the world.

c. The ram and the he-goat

Read Daniel 8:1-27. In this vision, Daniel sees a ram with two long horns, which refer to Media and Persia. The longer horn represents the growing dominance of Persia in the Medo-Persian Empire. Next came a he-goat, which refers to Greece and its large conspicuous horn refers to Alexander the Great. This is an amazing prediction because Greece was not considered a world power when this prophecy was given. The he-goat that charges across the face of the whole earth without touching the ground refers to the swiftness of the wars raged by Alexander. He conquered the world with great speed and military strategy. But he was filled with pride after he conquered Medes, Persia and the other countries and in the height of his power, the great horn was broken and he died at the age of thirty-two. From the root of the horn came up four conspicuous horns like the four heads of the leopard: this refers to Alexander's four generals who divided his kingdom after his death. Then out of the four horns came forth a little horn. Part of this prophecy concerning the little horn had already been fulfilled in Antiochus IV Epiphanes who was the king of Syria. A further fulfillment of this prophecy will occur in the future with the coming of the Antichrist.

	Chapter 2	Chapter 7	Chapter 8
Vision	Great image	Four great beasts	Ram, he-goat
Babylon	Golden head	Lion	---
Medes/Persia	Silver breast	Bear	Ram
Greece	Bronze belly	Leopard	He-goat
Rome	Iron legs	Beast	---
Nations of the end-times	Half iron and half clay feet	Ten horns and a little horn	Little horn
The second coming of Christ	The stone smites the great image into pieces	The saints receive their kingdom	The little horn is destroyed

B. God is Lord Over Individual Destiny

God not only controls over the destinies of kingdoms, but also of individuals. There are numerous examples of God's dominion over man's destiny in the Book of Daniel.

- God delivered Jehoiakim, the king of Judah with some of the vessels of the house of God into the hand of the Babylonian king (Dan 1:2).
- God caused Daniel and the rest of the exiles to be carried to Babylon.
- God caused Daniel to find favor in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs (Dan 1:9).
- God gave Daniel and his companions learning and skill in all letters and wisdom (Dan 1:17).
- God gave Daniel the opportunity and the ability to interpret dreams (Dan 2:28; 4:19-26; 5:13-27).

C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



1

Give examples from the book of Daniel that show God's dominion over the fate of nations and individuals.

2

What does the fact that God is sovereign over man means to us in our daily life?

3

How can we "be holy to the Lord" in our daily lives?

L I F E A P P L I C A T I O N



"Do you know who I am?"

Meeting the challenges of an ever-changing world with values different from the Bible is not a battle we can fight on our own. Besides knowing himself well and having a close relationship with God, Daniel had a special bond with three of his closest friends. We may see each other in class every week, but how well do we know each other? How well do you know the person across the room? Do you know each other's fears, hopes or struggles? Do you recognize each other's strengths, or what each of us enjoys doing in our spare time? By developing deeper understanding and rapport between us, our journey of faith can be an easier and joyful one.

Material List:

- Poster board
- Four different colors of paper
- Die
- Markers (equal to the number of students in class)
- Print out of cards

Teacher Instructions:

- Using a poster board, draw squares around the four outside edges. In some squares write penalties like these: take two steps back, start again; lose a turn. Each square should be colored into the four different colors representing the four different categories of cards.
- Print out and cut out individual cards with questions. Use different colors for each category.
- Prepare a die and markers.
- Feel free to come up with your own questions pertinent to the needs of your class.
- Teachers or students can add their own rules to those listed.

Rules:

- Take turns moving your marker around the board.
- When the marker falls on a certain colored space, player draws a card from that category and shares an experience.
- If two players land on the same block, the last player to land on the block can either send the first person back four spaces or draw another card and do what it says.

4. Players should spend no more than a minute to answer the questions.
5. The first person to move around the board once wins.

Categories:

You and Others

1. What is a characteristic in others that you admire?
2. Have you ever been pressured to doing something you feel you should not have?
3. Have you ever been teased? For what?
4. Where do you feel most comfortable? At church, at school, at work. Why?
5. Tell about the kids you grew up with.
6. Tell of a person you know whose behavior changed noticeably after becoming a Christian.
7. Tell about a person who has influenced you in your life.
8. Do you and your friends ever talk about religion or what your faith means to you?
9. Tell about a time when you could have helped someone, and regret that you failed to do so.
10. It's a Saturday night. What do you and your friends do to relax?
11. What characteristics would you look for in a friend?
12. Name something that someone did for you that touched you.
13. How many brothers/sisters do you have? Name something that you like about them.

About You

1. What is the best thing about being a teenager?
2. What is one of your greatest fears? Why?
3. If you were in an interview for a job and you were asked to describe yourself, what three qualities would you list?
4. What is something you would do with your time if you didn't watch television?
5. Describe a way that credit cards have affected your life.
6. What was one of the most courageous things you ever did?
7. What effect do commercials have on you?
8. If you could change one thing about yourself what would it be?
9. Name the color that best describes you and why.
10. If your house was on fire and you only had enough time to save three material possessions, what would you choose?
11. What is one thing you would like to do before you die? Why?

12. Describe one of your first experiences of living away from home.
13. What is one of your hobbies? What do you like about it?

You and God

1. Who is your favorite bible character and why?
2. Share an experience where you "Let go, and let God."
3. Identify a teaching that you have struggled to keep. Why?
4. Tell about a prayer that was answered.
5. Did you ever go through a period of doubting God? Tell about it.
6. Name a time where you had to stand up for your faith. What did you do?
7. What is one of your earliest memories about God?
8. Tell about a time when God seemed far away.
9. What is one of your favorite Bible passages? Why is it significant to you?
10. When during the day or night do you feel closest to God? Why?
11. Name two things you are most grateful to God for.
12. In what situation would it be the most awkward for you to talk about your faith. Why?
13. Did anyone ever make fun of you for what you believed? How did you feel about that?

Alternatives

1. Move backward one space and choose another card
2. Give this card to someone else to answer
3. Miss a turn
4. Give this card to the person on your left
5. Take another turn
6. Move to the very front
7. Go back to start
8. Move forward three spaces
9. Take a card from the middle of the pack
10. Pick another card
11. Skip over 2 markers
12. Person after you misses a turn

Questions to think about:

1. Having played the game, was there anything that you learned about someone which you did not know before?
2. Is there anything that you learned about yourself?
3. What did you learn about God's doings?



From the history of the chosen people, it is clear that God desired His people to be a blessed and holy nation. The messages of the prophets, the teachings of our Lord, and the epistle of the disciples all express the same desire of the Lord: "Leave! Separate yourselves from them!" And yet like the Israelites, we do not separate ourselves from the world but rather we want to be "like all the nations" (1 Sam 8:5). We are not of the world - we are citizens of God's kingdom. May our lives be a reflection of this in every way.

Lesson 12

Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi

Listed Scriptures

Hag 1, 2; Zech 1-3; Mal 3, 4

Lesson Aim

- 1) Students will study about visions and messages concerning the construction of the temple.
- 2) Students will learn of the right attitudes towards serving God.

Memory Verse

"This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the Lord of hosts." (Zech 4:6)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Hag 1, 2; Zech 1-3; Mal 3, 4

BIBLE BACKGROUND



In the year 538 B.C., some 50,000 people returned to the promised land from Babylon to rebuild their temple. The people had quickly laid the foundation of the temple, but meeting with strong opposition from the Samaritans, the work on the temple came to a stop. During the interim of about 15 years, the people's efforts shifted to their own personal needs, while the temple lay desolate. Then in the second year of King Darius (520 B.C.), God called His prophets Haggai and Zechariah to the task of urging the people to rise up and complete the temple, which was completed during the 6th year of King Darius' reign (516 B.C.).