

Lesson 24

DANIEL

GOD STATEMENT: THE GOD WHO

_____ (a), _____ (b), AND _____ (c)

The book of Daniel is a mixture of some of the _____ (d)-known parts of Scripture and some of the _____ (e)-known parts. Some of the best-known parts are even familiar to many people who have never spent much time in church or in the Bible. Everyone knows about Daniel in the lions' den, and many have even heard about Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace. Even the story of "the handwriting on the wall" at Belshazzar's feast is familiar to a lot of people in part because it's the origin of the idiomatic phrase, "the handwriting is on the wall."

The name Daniel means "God is my _____ (f)." He is one of the few well-known characters in the Bible about whom nothing negative is ever written. His life was characterized by _____ (g), prayer, _____ (h), consistency, and lack of compromise. God's angel calls him "greatly _____ (i)" (ESV) or a "man of high esteem" (NASB) (Dan 10:11,19). Three times he's mentioned by his contemporary Ezekiel as a man of _____ (j) and righteousness (Ezek 14:14,20; 28:3).

Like Esther, Daniel lived in _____ (k) outside the promised land. In 605 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar became master of the world when he defeated a coalition of Egypt and what was left of the Assyrian Empire. A few weeks later, Nebuchadnezzar became the king of _____ (l). He then swept southward through the region of Judah, and he put Jehoiakim on the throne as his puppet. As insurance against rebellion, Nebuchadnezzar took _____ (m) back to Babylon (this was the first of _____ (n) groups of Israelites taken into exile to Babylon). Daniel was among those first hostages. Many scholars believe he was only a teenager when he was taken to Babylon. He was among other gifted young Jewish men whom the Babylonians planned to train for positions in their royal _____ (o). Daniel not only served in the royal administration of Nebuchadnezzar, but also the Babylonian king Belshazzar, and the _____ (p) king Darius the Mede. Daniel's ministry concluded in the third year of the Persian king Cyrus' reign, about 536-535 B.C.

The book is written in two languages: Hebrew and _____(q). No other Old Testament book uses Aramaic to this extent. Hebrew, of course, was the language of the Israelites in Judah, while Aramaic was the _____(r) language of the Persian Empire. Chapter 1 is written in Hebrew, Chapters 2-7 are written in Aramaic, and Chapters 8-12 return to Hebrew. The key to this switch in languages is this: When Daniel speaks of God's people, he uses _____(s). When he speaks concerning Gentile nations, he uses the international language of _____(t).

The book of Daniel has two natural divisions. Chapters 1-6 is mostly _____(u) and Chapters 7-12 is mostly _____(v). Chapters 1-6, which we'll call "Daniel's Life," are _____(w) to understand and are favorite texts in Sunday school classes. But Chapters 7-12, which we'll call "Daniel's Visions," are so _____(x) that even adults rarely study them.

DANIEL'S LIFE (Daniel 1-6)

Chapter 1 focuses on Daniel's _____(y) in 605/606 B.C. and his selection for the royal court of Babylon. He was given the name of a Babylonian god, _____(z), as were his three companions. Although we don't think about Daniel by his Babylonian name, we only think about his three friends by their Babylonian names: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Although they didn't object to their new names, they remained faithful to God when it came to their _____(aa). They refused to violate the dietary laws of the _____(bb). God blessed their faithfulness to His will by giving them the gift of influence and _____(cc).

Chapter 2 begins the mysterious part of the book with a dream of a monster statue. It's the only part in the first six chapters that puzzles people. It's about a troubling _____(dd) that King Nebuchadnezzar had and then forgot. The king sent for all his wise men to reveal his forgotten dream and interpret it, and he promises to kill them if they can't. God enables Daniel to both recount the dream and interpret its meaning. Nebuchadnezzar's dream depicted _____(ee) kingdoms, including his, that are succeeded by a kingdom that will never be destroyed. Of course, that kingdom that will never be _____(ff) is God's kingdom. God reveals the _____(gg), and He will triumph effortlessly.

Chapter 3 is the famous story of the fiery _____(hh). The king made a gigantic gold covered statue and decreed that whenever the state band played, everyone had to _____(ii) down to this idol. It was a

kind of state religion and a quick way to unite the empire around one belief. But Daniel's three friends refused to obey. Their rebellion led them to being tossed into a blazing furnace. They declared that God is able to _____(jj) them and worth _____(kk) even if He doesn't rescue them. But God does rescue them, and it results in Nebuchadnezzar declaring that no other god can deliver in this manner.

Chapter 4 contains the story about Nebuchadnezzar going _____(ll) because he refused to recognize that _____(mm) alone gives kings power. Daniel warns the king that if he doesn't give God _____(nn) for his kingdom then he will become as unknowing as a _____(oo). The king refuses and suffers the consequences. Only when he confesses that _____(pp) lives forever, rules forever, and rules justly does he regain his senses.

Chapter 5 contains the story of the end of _____(qq). This scene unfolds much later. Nebuchadnezzar died in 562 B.C. (having served since 608 B.C.). Six years of relative instability followed before Nabonidus seized control (556-539 B.C.). Due to other interests that took him away from his kingdom, he allowed his son _____(rr) to rule over Babylon. At a big party Belshazzar made a huge mistake that would cost him his _____(ss) and _____(tt). He and his guests drank from the sacred vessels taken from Jerusalem as they praised "the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone." (Dan 5:1-4). His arrogance is as obvious as Nebuchadnezzar's was, so some form of punishment is sure to follow. A _____(uu) then appears and writes a cryptic message on the wall. Daniel interprets it for him. In a nutshell, it meant "Your reign is over, you don't measure up and your kingdom is divided." That very night the _____(vv) attacked Babylon, the empire was finished, and Belshazzar was dead.

Chapter 6 is, without question, one of the best-known and often-told accounts in Scripture. It relates Daniel's _____(ww) colleagues' attempting to block his rise to _____(xx) by inducing the king to pass a law forcing everyone to pray to the emperor or die. The plan worked. Daniel continued his habit of opening his upstairs window to _____(yy) towards Jerusalem. As in chapter 1, Daniel chooses to _____(zz) God rather than the king, and by doing so he faces death, just as his friends did in Daniel 3. Once again God's ability to deliver the _____(aaa) becomes the main issue. The penalty for Daniel's disobedience was to be tossed to the lions, but God rescued him by sending an _____(bbb) who shut the lions' mouths.

DANIEL'S VISIONS (Daniel 7-12)

When we come to this section of the book of Daniel, we're in a totally different atmosphere. We move from the third person to the first person as Daniel receives _____(ccc) of the _____(ddd) from the Lord. So, if the action in the first half of the book operates from earth to heaven, then the second half moves from heaven toward earth. Each chapter presents God as the One who _____(eee), _____(fff), and _____(ggg) history. God is the One who will guide history to a just conclusion and the One who rewards and punishes persons after death as well as before death.

Two great personal _____(hhh) prophecies are found in this section. In Chapter 7—which is the key chapter in the book of Daniel—_____ (iii) kingdoms arise before a _____(jjj) kingdom ordained by God supplants them all. At first, Daniel sees four quarreling beasts or kings (Dan 7:1-8). These individuals appear to rule the earth's events, but Daniel 7:9-28 proves otherwise. Two scenes, followed by an interpretation, highlight God's mastery of events. First, God, called here "the _____(kkk) of Days" (Dan 7:9), assumes His position as _____(lll) Lord and begins to _____(mmm). God takes power from the arrogant beasts and then prepares to give authority to another. This God is _____(nnn), for He is older than days. This ruler endures _____(ooo), in contrast to arrogant earthly rulers who believe themselves all-powerful.

Then, with the ruler presented, Daniel sees God give the final, everlasting kingdom to one "like a _____(ppp) of _____(qqq)" (Dan 7:13-14). God is able to give the kingdom to whomever He wills, since this kingdom is His. The "son of man" is a heavenly being (Dan 7:13) who is capable and worthy of receiving the very kingdom of God and governing it forever (Dan 7:14). The title "son of man" emphasized _____(rrr) in the book of Ezekiel; but in Daniel it signifies _____(sss). Hence, when _____(ttt) referred to Himself as "son of man" he was using a title that portrayed him as the God-man.

The second great messianic prophecy is in Chapter 9. In this prophecy the angel _____(uuu) announces that the Messiah will appear sixty-nine heptads (weeks) of years—that's 483 _____(vvv)—after the command to restore Jerusalem (Dan 9:25). This command was issued (presumably by Ezra) in 457 B.C. (Ezra 4:7-23). Jesus begins His ministry at His baptism which occurred 483 years after the command to rebuild Jerusalem's walls.

The book of Daniel's view of history is that though _____(www) will not ever reign supreme, never will it ever cease altogether until God reigns supreme. The _____(xxx) remnant will never be promised an _____(yyy) life. Their _____(zzz) to the Lord

will be _____(aaaa) again and again. Still, the answer to “How long, Lord?” is “Not _____(bbbb).” Evil and evildoers will eventually be _____(cccc).

LESSONS FROM DANIEL

- The _____(dddd) will never be promised an easy life until God reigns _____(eeee).
- God will remain the Lord of the _____(ffff) and will rule the future even as kingdoms continue to emerge and exalt themselves on earth.
- God has the ability to _____(gggg) and _____(hhhh) his people.
- God will _____(iiii) the _____(jjjj) and lift up the _____(kkkk).
- God still expects covenant _____(llll) from His people even if they are living in a _____(mmmm) culture.
- _____(nnnn) of the _____(oooo) are at best _____(pppp)
- God alone possesses _____(qqqq) and _____(rrrr), and He alone reveals it to people.
- Ultimate _____(ssss) is certain. God will triumph effortlessly and will bring salvation and deliverance to all who put their trust in Him.
- There is no place we can escape God’s _____(tttt).
- Hold fast to your _____(uuuu) in God no matter what. Don’t _____(vvvv) with the world around you.

KEY PASSAGES FROM DANIEL

- Daniel 1:8
- Daniel 2:44
- Daniel 3:17-18
- Daniel 4:25
- Daniel 5:25-28
- Daniel 6:10

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK ANSWER KEY

[a] PROTECTS	[rr] Belshazzar	[iiii] humble
[b] DISCLOSES	[ss] life	[jjjj] proud
[c] RULES	[tt] kingdom	[kkkk] humble
[d] best	[uu] hand	[llll] faithfulness
[e] least	[vv] Persians	[mmmm] hostile
[f] judge	[ww] jealous	[nnnn] kingdoms
[g] faith	[xx] power	[oooo] world
[h] courage	[yy] pray	[pppp] transient
[i] loved	[zz] obey	[qqqq] wisdom
[j] wisdom	[aaa] faithful	[rrrr] power
[k] exile	[bbb] angel	[ssss] victory
[l] Babylon	[ccc] visions	[tttt] presence
[m] hostages	[ddd] future	[uuuu] faith
[n] three	[eee] knows	[vvvv] compromise
[o] administration	[fff] discloses	
[p] Persian	[ggg] rules	
[q] Aramaic	[hhh] messianic	
[r] official	[iii] four	
[s] Hebrew	[jjj] final	
[t] Aramaic	[kkk] Ancient	
[u] narrative	[lll] enthroned	
[v] prophecy	[mmm] judge	
[w] easy	[nnn] timeless	
[x] difficult	[ooo] forever	
[y] deportation	[ppp] son	
[z] Beltashazzar	[qqq] man	
[aa] diet	[rrr] humanity	
[bb] covenant	[sss] deity	
[cc] skill	[ttt] Jesus	
[dd] dream	[uuu] Gabriel	
[ee] four	[vvv] years	
[ff] destroyed	[www] evil	
[gg] future	[xxx] faithful	
[hh] furnace	[yyy] easy	
[ii] bow	[zzz] commitment	
[jj] deliver	[aaaa] tested	
[kk] serving	[bbbb] forever	
[ll] mad	[cccc] eradicated	
[mm] God	[dddd] faithful	
[nn] credit	[eeee] supreme	
[oo] beast	[ffff] future	
[pp] God	[gggg] protect	
[qq] Babylon	[hhhh] save	