

KINGDOM DOWN: A STUDY IN DANIEL

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As we enter an election year, Christians will be increasingly torn in their loyalties as politics will dominate the media and social media. Sadly, a sense of pressured urgency has already begun to polarize Christians into warring factions. It is possible that the average Bible-believing Jesus-loving church-attending Christian is torn and troubled wishing there was an option between veering to the right or left. Thankfully, there is an option. That option is going up to the King and Kingdom who rules over all kings and presidents, kingdoms and nations. The Old Testament book of Daniel is incredibly timely because the Word of God is timeless.

In the days of Daniel, he was taken into exile to Babylon. Today we'd call him a prisoner of war, or this act as human trafficking.

Daniel prophesied during the Babylonian captivity at the same time as Ezekiel (Ezekiel 14:14, 14:20, 28:3), Jeremiah (Daniel 9:2), and possibly Habakkuk, who may have been still alive at that time. While in Lamentations, Jeremiah looked back at Israel's destruction and Ezekiel looked forward to religious restoration, but Daniel awaited political restoration under King Jesus.

The book of Daniel can be divided into two sections. The first section (Daniel 1-6) records the experiences of Daniel as he interprets the dreams and visions of others. The second section (Daniel 7-12) records the four future apocalyptic visions that God gave to Daniel. The book spans a great number of years and was likely completed around 530 BC. The theme is the destruction of all ungodly kingdoms and coming of the King Jesus Christ and His eternal Kingdom.

Babylon was corrupt to the core. It was the largest and most powerful nation on the earth in its day, a superpower with a deadly military, strong economy, and demonic power. There, Satan and demons tried to counterfeit God's heavenly Kingdom of light with an earthly kingdom of darkness. Everything from politics to entertainment, gender sexuality and education, was ungodly, unhealthy, and unbiblical. Daniel was trapped in a world that he could not control and was pressured to think and act like a Babylonian which would have made his life easier at the cost of having a relationship with God. Simply stated, Daniel was forced to decide between living as a believer or a Babylonian.

In the opening chapter of Daniel, he and three other young men (likely teenagers) were removed of the birth name given by their parents and instead had the government legally change their names. Those name changes are listed below, and each one is an attempt to forcibly convert them from devotion to the true God to devotion to the demonic spirits worshipped as Gods in Babylon.

Hebrew Name

Daniel: "God is my judge"
Hananiah: "Yahweh is gracious"
Mishael: "Who is what God is?"
Azariah: "Yahweh is my helper"

Babylonian Name

Belteshazzar: "Bel protects his life"
Shadrach: "The command of Aku"
Meshack: "Who is what Aku is?"
Abed-Nego: "Servant of Nebo"

In naming the young men, we see that the spirit of Babylon that exists in every nation and culture is always seeking to change our loyalty from the one God to the counterfeit demonic gods. Throughout the book of Daniel, the young men are called by their new names by the Babylonians, but curiously never refer to themselves by those new demonic names. The point is that our identity must be set by our God who gives us a new nature. Worldly cultures can change your name but only God can change your nature. It doesn't matter what others put on you, it only matters that God's Spirit is in you.

In many ways, Daniel is a case study in the principles of living as a missionary in this world as found in 1 Peter 2:11-12 (NIV): "Dear friends, I warn you as 'temporary residents and foreigners' to keep away from worldly desires that wage war against your very souls. Be careful to live properly among your unbelieving neighbors. Then even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see your honorable behavior, and they will give honor to God when he judges the world."

You can read the entire book of Daniel at once in about an hour or read the book in a week with ten minutes of daily reading. As you read, you will find two realms, three kinds of people, and three periods of history.

What are the 2 realms in Daniel?

Behind the reality that we see is the reality that God sees. In addition to human life, God also created divine life referred to throughout the Bible as angels, stars (because they are between us and God in creation), cherubim, seraphim, sons of God, the gods, the divine council, assembly of the holy ones, council of the holy ones, hosts, seat of the gods, mount of assembly, the court in judgment, and the heavenly host.

The same God who made and rules life in the seen physical realm with human beings also made and rules life in the unseen spiritual realm with divine beings. These two realms are connected, impact and affect one another, and for God the two realms form one reality. There was a great war in heaven where some of the divine beings, led by Satan, rebelled against God and were cast down to the earth (Revelation 12:7-9). Today, they recruit human beings to join their rebellion and are seeking to counterfeit the kingdom of God with a

worldly kingdom that overtakes every sphere of life. Today, there remain divine beings that are loyal to the Lord in the fight against the darkness. Ephesians 6:12 says it this way: "We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places." The entire backdrop for Daniel is spiritual warfare.

As we study Daniel together, and as you read it for yourself, the book shifts between the seen and unseen realms. The purpose is to give believers an encouraging insight that unbelievers do not know. To encourage someone literally means to put courage in them. Believers are to be encouraged by seeing in the Scriptures that God and His heavenly host are at work for our good in ways that we rarely see by sight but must trust in by faith. Over the nations and kingdoms that come and go is the kingdom of God which never ends. Over kings, presidents, prime ministers and premieres is King Jesus.

What 3 kinds of people are in Daniel?

As you read Daniel, you will find the following three kinds of people. The point is to show you your options on which kind of person you will be and how you will live your life during your Babylonian exile here on earth.

1. A godly few. Daniel and his friends are a godly minority. They repeatedly face opposition, persecution, and attempts at execution because their loyalty is to God and God alone. Daniel is not perfect, but he is godly. The Bible has nothing negative to say about Daniel.
2. The ungodly majority. The entire nation of Babylon is filled with ungodly people who have no interest in the real God or any kind of relationship with Him. Their demonic false gods have given them riches, power, and success. For them, live in Babylon is their version of heaven and they have no appetite for the Kingdom of Heaven. Most of the people in our day are sadly similar.
3. Those who say they are believers but live like unbelievers and bring God's judgment. Just like a parent does not run around disciplining random children, God only disciplines the children He loves in an effort to bring them back to their senses and His Spirit (Hebrews 12:5-8; 1 Peter 4:17). Today, we'd call these people lukewarm backsliders.

What are the 4 periods of history in Daniel?

The genre of literature that Daniel falls into is apocalyptic prophecy. Using highly symbolic language, the book speaks of the following periods of history:

1. The past commands and warnings of God serve as the backdrop for God's people being conquered by a demonic nation that plunders and enslaves them. God, through the prophet Isaiah, was very clear that if they did not

stop acting ungodly, they would be taken captive to Babylon. Isaiah 39:5-7 says, "Isaiah said to Hezekiah, 'Hear the word of the Lord of hosts: Behold, the days are coming, when all that is in your house, and that which your fathers have stored up till this day, shall be carried to Babylon. Nothing shall be left, says the Lord. And some of your own sons, who will come from you, whom you will father, shall be taken away, and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.'"

2. The present is historically recorded mainly in chapter 1-6, which detail events during the lifetime of Daniel.
3. The future is the focus of Daniel 7-12 as successive prophecies about the rise and fall of kings and kingdoms is given in spectacular detail and with stunning accuracy.
4. The eternal Kingdom of God is the driving focus throughout the book of Daniel. Over and over, our focus is lifted up from the nation that will come to an end to the Kingdom which exists right now and is one day coming to crush all nations, ruled forever by King Jesus. Two examples include the following:

Daniel 2:44-45 reveals:

"And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever, just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure."

Daniel 12:2-3 reveals:

"And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever."

Prophecy predicts the future of human history until the Second Coming of Jesus. Apocalyptic prophecy predicts the eternal future starting at Jesus Second Coming. Daniel includes all of this and more, making it one of the most incredible books of the entire Bible that has gripped the imaginations of believers for millenia.

Roughly 20% of the Bible was prophetic in nature. Why? God wants us to know the future so we can live life backwards preparing for our eternal home in His Kingdom. Daniel 2:28 (NIV) says it this way: "there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown...what will happen in days to come."

What is the spirit of Babylon?

As you read the Bible, especially the Old Testament, it can be difficult to make sense of all the kings and nations. This is especially true in Daniel as his prophetic missionary ministry in Babylon continued throughout the reign of four kings, and also foretells of additional nations rising up in history after his death. For the original readers, these details would be as familiar to us as the high-profile nations and political leaders on the world stage that dominate our nightly news.

As a bit of a history lesson to set the stage for the book of Daniel, Babylon is also called Chaldea and the Chaldeans throughout the Bible. Geographically, today we'd call this land Iraq.

In Daniel 1:2 Babylon is also called "Shinar". We first learn about this region in Genesis 11:2. The context is the tower of Babel. Following the great war in heaven where Satan and demons tried to set up their own kingdom apart from God, this demonic effort continued as godless people wanted to make a great city and great name for themselves, complete with a high tower that reached up to the heavens so they could act like god. God creates a Kingdom, Satan counterfeits with Babel.

Seeing this evil, God said that if everyone worked together nothing would be impossible with them and evil would only increase on the earth. To reduce evil on the earth, God confused their languages and scattered the people. The principle is that Satan's team is often more unified than God's people. Why? Satan attacks the unity of God's people and blesses the unholy alliance of those opposed to God. For this reason, Jesus took His longest prayer in John 17 to pray for Christians to have unity and not division. The point is that unified unbelievers are more powerful than divided believers.

Babylon is an ancient nation. But, it is important to note that behind Babylon was the demonic spirit of Babylon. God creates a Kingdom that is called His bride. Satan counterfeits with a kingdom that is called Babylon, the "mother of prostitutes" (Revelation 17:5). The spirit of Babylon is at work in every nation and generation. For this reason, the last book of the Bible, Revelation is closely connected to Daniel as they both have prophecy about the end of human history and beginning of eternity with the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Long after the nation of Babylon had ceased to exist, Revelation reveals that the demonic spirit of Babylon remains at work in the world. Here are some examples:

- Revelation 14:8 | Another angel, a second, followed, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality."

- Revelation 16:19 | The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and God remembered Babylon the great, to make her drain the cup of the wine of the fury of his wrath.

- Revelation 17:5 | And on her forehead was written a name of mystery: "Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth's abominations."

• Revelation 18:1-2 | I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was made bright with his glory. And he called out with a mighty voice, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast."

• Revelation 18:10 | They will stand far off, in fear of her torment, and say, "Alas! Alas! You great city, you mighty city, Babylon! For in a single hour your judgment has come."

• Revelation 18:21 | Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "So will Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence, and will be found no more..."

The demonic spirit of Babylon was in Sodom and Gomorrah, Nazi Germany, is in North Korea and Iran, runs drug cartels and human trafficking, is writing curriculum for students from kindergarten through graduate school, is architecting political platforms and cultural narratives in everything from movies to television shows, and enjoys surfing the internet and causing social media trends. No one, no thing, and no place is immune from the demonic influence of the spirit of Babylon.

What are some important things to know about Daniel?

In our day when it is simply assumed that teenagers will rebel, continue their self-destruction in college, then graduate for a decade of dating, relating, and fornicating, the example of Daniel is clearly counter-cultural. As a teenager away from his homeland, church, and family and pressured to the point of death to rebel against God, Daniel remains resolutely steadfast in his faithfulness to God.

Daniel means "God is my judge." This name summarizes how Daniel lived his life. Even though he was a prisoner of war forced into slavery, he lived solely for God's final judgment remaining loyal for an entire lifetime.

Little is known about Daniel's family history, though it is implied that he began prophesying as a teenager (1:4) and was from a ruling family (1:3). Daniel served during the reigns of four kings (1:1, 5:1, 5:31, 10:1).

Daniel was taken into exile in 605 BC, apparently when king Nebuchadnezzar made a raid upon Judah for wealth, slave labor, and brilliant, skilled young men to help enlarge his kingdom by serving as slaves. God elevated Daniel to hold the crucial role of key advisor to the foreign kings. Daniel's unwavering commitment to serve God even in the face of death for his faith brought great respect for his God and many blessings to his fellow Jews in captivity. These include religious freedom, decent jobs, communication with family and friends back in Judah, etc. Daniel, like Joseph and Nehemiah, serve as examples of how a believer can serve their God faithfully despite being part of a godless government.

Daniel lives in such a way that embodies faith in the sovereignty of God to guide history as He desired. The Bible never has anything bad to say about Daniel. At no point in the book do we find Daniel filled with anxiety or fear. While not a fatalist passively awaiting his demise, Daniel is also not a blind optimist who believes that justice and righteousness will be ushered in during his lifetime. Instead, Daniel defines life forward and lives it backward. He begins with the reality that King Jesus the Messiah is coming one day to establish His Kingdom, and then interprets all of his contemporary reality in light of the end to come. In so doing, Daniel has his head and heart lifted beyond what is to imagine what will be. In this way, prophecy of the future is intended to give us hope in the present.

Daniel is a bilingual missionary. Daniel includes a section written in Aramaic to Gentiles (2:4-7:28) and the rest of the book is written in Hebrew. Seeking to help everyone learn more about the One True God, Daniel taught in Hebrew for those who knew that language. He also taught in the Aramaic language that would have been familiar to the Babylonians, as well as the Hebrews born in Babylon. In this way, Daniel's ministry was a bit like dealing with first generation immigrants in our day. The first generation knows their mother tongue, their children become bilingual and know their mother tongue and the language of their new nation, and the third generation and beyond often only know the new language of their homeland, which is different than their grandparents. To reach and teach all groups requires bilingual ministry.

The book opens with Daniel as likely a teenager, and the book concludes some roughly sixty-nine years later when Daniel would have been an elderly man in his eighties. Daniel lived to an old age in his eighties, and prophesied for roughly sixty-nine years, longer than any other prophet. This is an important fact to note, as Daniel would have been a very elder man in his eighties when he was thrown into the lions den and not a young man like most kids Bibles depict. The book of Daniel records the entire lifetime of faithful service to God and should encourage people of every age to keep their ministry amidst a world that has lost its' mind.

Where does the Bible speak of Daniel in other books?

Have you noticed that sometimes God seems to have a lot to say to you during one season, but not much in another season?

What may be true of your life is also true of God's Word. The four hundred years between the last Old Testament prophet, Malachi, until the prophetic preaching ministry of John the Baptizer are called by many theologians "the silent years".

In other seasons, God has a lot to say. This is true in the days of Daniel whose prophetic ministry during the captivity of God's people in Babylon occurred at the same time as Ezekiel (Ezekiel 14:14, 14:20, 28:3), Jeremiah (Daniel 9:2), and possibly Habakkuk who may have been still alive at that time. While in Lamentations, Jeremiah looked back at Israel's destruction and Ezekiel looked forward to religious restoration, but Daniel awaited political restoration under King Jesus.

In addition to studying the book of Daniel, it is also helpful to make note of the other places where Scripture mentions Daniel:

- Ezekiel 14:12-14 | And the word of the Lord came to me: “Son of man, when a land sins against me by acting faithlessly, and I stretch out my hand against it and break its supply of bread and send famine upon it, and cut off from it man and beast, even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver but their own lives by their righteousness, declares the Lord God.”

- Ezekiel 14:19-20 | ...If I send a pestilence into that land and pour out my wrath upon it with blood, to cut off from it man and beast, even if Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as I live, declares the Lord God, they would deliver neither son nor daughter. They would deliver but their own lives by their righteousness.

- Ezekiel 28:1-3 | The word of the Lord came to me: “Son of man, say to the prince of Tyre, Thus says the Lord God: “Because your heart is proud, and you have said, ‘I am a god, I sit in the seat of the gods, in the heart of the seas,’ yet you are but a man, and no god, though you make your heart like the heart of a god—you are indeed wiser than Daniel; no secret is hidden from you...””

- Hebrews 11:32-34 | ...the prophets—who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire...

Also, the New Testament has the following references to Daniel:

- Daniel 3:6 is referenced in Matthew 13:42,50
- Daniel 6:17 is referenced in Matthew 27:66
- Daniel 7:13 is referenced in Matthew 24:30, 26:64 and Mark 13:26, 14:62
- Daniel 11:36 is referenced in 2 Thessalonians 2:4 (cf. Jude 16)

What are some important themes in Daniel?

In reading the book of Daniel, there are some themes that thread the entire story together. Here are a few examples:

1. God’s people should be faithful because our God is faithful. Throughout Daniel, God is faithful. In response to God’s faithfulness, Daniel is faithful to God.
2. God is in control of who is in control. God sovereignly rules the past, present, future, and eternity. There is no one, no thing, no place, and no time that is beyond His ultimate rule and reign.

3. God's people can forget the importance of getting Jesus to the world. This was the case in Daniel's day when God's people stopped living for God, stopped telling the nations about God, and forgot that believers are to be missionaries.
4. Sometimes innocent people suffer. For 490 years, God's people did not obey His command to let the ground rest every seventh year. Then, God had them exiled for 70 years to repay every year they did not rest the land. When judgment came, Daniel was only a teenager, likely not a land owner, and not responsible for the sins of others. But, he and his godly friends were caught up in the judgment of their entire nation. Sometimes, innocent people suffer because they are part of a rebellious people, or simply living in a broken fallen world.
5. Whatever kingdom you are under, there is a Kingdom over it that will crush that kingdom and last forever. Daniel speaks of four major world empires: Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. Each has come to an end, but the Kingdom of God continues to march forward until it is fully established when Jesus Christ returns.
6. Many of the spiritual testing of your faith will happen on the job. Over and over, it is on the job where Daniel's faith is most pressured. The spirit of Babylon continually seeks to get him to deny or defy his God for the sake of winning at work.
7. What feels like abandoning is really preparing. Over and over in the story of Daniel, what could have felt to him like God abandoning him was actually God preparing him for the next test, trial, and temptation. God is with Daniel throughout his entire life, and that good God uses every hardship, struggle, and crisis to prepare him for faithfulness.

How do unbelievers respond to God in Daniel?

For some people, their problem is not that they don't understand who God is. Instead, they don't want God to be in authority over them, so they never convert to the worship of the God they know about. Such people do not have a mental problem as much as they have a moral problem.

There's a big difference between respecting God and receiving God. Throughout Daniel, the power of God is so obviously at work in and through Daniel that even the demonic pagans marvel at his God even though they never convert. Here are some examples:

- Daniel 2:47 | The pagan king said, "Truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries..."

- Daniel 3:28-29 | Nebuchadnezzar answered and said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered

his servants, who trusted in him, and set aside the king's command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God. Therefore I make a decree: Any people, nation, or language that speaks anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins, for there is no other god who is able to rescue in this way.”

•Daniel 4:34-35 | “At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and praised and honored him who lives forever, for his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation; all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, “What have you done?””

•Daniel 6:26-27 | King Darius wrote, “I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for he is the living God, enduring forever; his kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion shall be to the end. He delivers and rescues; he works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, he who has saved Daniel from the power of the lions.”

The equivalent today might be people in your life who have seen the difference Jesus has made, cannot deny the fact of His work in and through you, but nonetheless never seek a saving relationship with Him. In this way, both the unbeliever and believer can witness the greatness of God, but only the believer can experience the greatness of God.

What are the 4 common ways Daniel is wrongly taught?

Studying the Bible is a bit like doing a math equation. There’s one right answer, and lots of ways to get the wrong answer. Regarding Daniel, there are four common ways that the book is wrongly taught.

1. The most common way that the Bible is misinterpreted and mistaught is called moralizing. Moralizing treats the Bible as a series of biographies where people are treated as heroes. We are encouraged to follow their example by copying their moral virtues. There are two main problems with this. One, it causes us to overlook the sins and flaws of some people that God uses mightily – like David who was an adulterous murderer or Noah who got drunk and passed out naked in his tent. Two, it causes us to miss the work of God for, in, and through people. Daniel, for example, lived an incredibly godly and faithful life by the power of the Holy Spirit at work in and through him. Like Jesus, Daniel lived a Spirit-filled life. Even the godless ruler Nebuchadnezzar knew that Daniel was empowered by the Holy Spirit. In Daniel 4:8, he says, “in whom is the spirit of the holy gods”. The Hebrew translated “gods” is the same root word *elohim*, which simply means a

citizen of the unseen realm and can refer to God, angels, demons, and other divine beings. Therefore, some translations will say that he has the spirit of the “holy god”. Nebuchadnezzar also says to Daniel in 4:18: “the spirit of the holy god(s) is in you.” We should give gratitude to Daniel for his lifelong obedience, and give glory to God for the power of His Spirit that sustained Daniels faithfulness.

2. Another common misrepresentation of the book of Daniel is that if you do the right thing, nothing bad will happen to you. To be sure, there are times that God delivers Daniel from disaster. But, there are also many times that God does not get him around disaster and instead sustains him through disaster. For example, in chapter one, we learn that he was taken as a captive slave, forced to walk some 700 miles to the last place he wanted to be on earth, was castrated, and spent the next sixty-nine years dying in Babylon without ever enjoying a wife or starting a family.
3. Some will use Daniel to make the case that the Bible has a lot of prophecy about the centrality of America in end times events. This is simply not true. The nation of Israel is featured prominently throughout the Bible, not America. If my home country still exists at the same time as Jesus’ Second Coming, we will not be on the center stage of human history.
4. Lastly, some people become dogmatic about specific detailed prophecies and prophetic imagery in Daniel. Such people can get inordinately fixated on biblical prophecy, become dogmatic on things that have not yet happened, and assert that even miniscule details in prophecy can be known with great certainty. The book of Daniel simply says otherwise. We read God saying in Daniel 12:4: “But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.” Much of what is recorded in Daniel is sealed up by God and won’t be fully understood until it happens. Likewise, we read in Daniel 12:8-9: “I heard, but I did not understand. Then I said, ‘O my lord, what shall be the outcome of these things?’ He said, ‘Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end.’” When it comes to prophecy, we can put some things in the closed hand such as Jesus’ return, the resurrection of the dead, and reality of heaven and hell. We also need to keep a lot of things in the open hand and see what God does in the end.

Who wrote the book of Daniel?

There is a bit of debate regarding who the author of Daniel is for reasonable reasons. Ultimately, God the Holy Spirit is the divine author of Daniel. As a prophecy, it fits squarely within 2 Peter 1:20-21 which says, “no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”

Uncovering the human author of Daniel is a bit more complicated. The first six chapters are narrated in the third person. Daniel may have dictated those chapters to a scribe who wrote down what he prophesied. Or, humility in that day required one not to write so much of themselves as that could seem arrogant and braggadocious. If this is the case with Daniel, it may have simply been a humble way to tell his story and prophecy.

The last six chapters of Daniel are in the first person and most likely written by him. At least part of the book was written by him. Here are those sections which are clearly from Daniel:

- Daniel 7:1 | Daniel saw a dream and visions of his head as he lay in his bed. Then he wrote down the dream and told the sum of the matter.
- Daniel 8:27 | And I, Daniel, was overcome and lay sick for some days. Then I rose and went about the king's business, but I was appalled by the vision and did not understand it.
- Daniel 9:2 | I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years that, according to the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years.
- Daniel 10:2 | In those days I, Daniel, was mourning for three weeks.

Additionally, Jesus clearly calls Daniel a prophet and attributes at least part of the book to him. Matthew 24:15 says: "So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand)..." After surveying the various arguments for and against Daniel being the author of the entire book bearing his name, it seems to me that this is the most likely option.

What was Daniel's prayer life like?

How did Daniel remain faithful to God from his teens to his eighties while living in Babylon pressured every day in every way to dishonor, disobey, and disregard his God? One secret to Daniel's success was his prayer life.

Daniel knew God and knew how to talk and listen to God. Daniel's prayer life is highlighted throughout the book and a prime cause of his fortitude and wisdom. In fact, Daniel gets into trouble with the demonic leadership in Babylon because of his immovable prayer life.

We read in Daniel 6:10 that he prayed three times a day on his knees openly and publicly as a form of nonviolent protest against false gods and praise to the real God. In 2:17-23, he asked friends to join him in prayer and was emboldened to risk his life interpreting the king's dream. Daniel 9:1-27 is a long explanation of his prayer life, complete with fasting and prayer answered by an angelic visit from Gabriel who would later visit Jesus' mother Mary.

To live in a world filled with the spirit of Babylon, the only way to navigate all the landmines is with wisdom. Throughout life, both Daniel's and yours,

there will be difficulties, days, and decisions that are so complex and challenging that knowing what to do is incredibly difficult to determine. The Spirit-filled example of Daniel is that we need to be humble enough to pray, asking the Lord of specific wisdom and courage, and then acting in faith upon what He says without trying to control the outcome but leaving those details in His hands.

How is the book of Daniel ultimately about Jesus?

Christians and non-Christians, including people from cults and world religions, can and do turn to the Bible for instruction and inspiration. But, the Christian has a distinctly unique focus when studying the Bible. For the Christian, the center of the Bible is Christ.

Jesus Christ modeled this very thing for us. After His resurrection from death, the last chapter of Luke's gospel in the New Testament says that Jesus taught two different Bible studies, including the prophets like Daniel, and revealed how every page of the Old Testament was ultimately about Him.

For the Christian, the Bible is not primarily about us. The Bible is about Jesus, but for us. Here are a few ways that the book of Daniel connects to Jesus Christ:

1. The point of preserving the nation of Israel was to bring forth Jesus Christ as the Savior of the whole world.
2. The Second Coming of Jesus is prophesied in Daniel 7:13-14: "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed." This title, "son of man" was Jesus' favorite title, referring to Himself some eighty times by this title as the fulfillment of Daniel.
3. In many ways, Jesus is the greater Daniel. Both went from the glory of royalty to the humility of poverty and returned to glory in royalty. Both went from their home to enter into a world that was dark and opposed to them and all that they believed about God. Both were filled with the Holy Spirit. Both travelled with a few faithful friends through adversity and hardship. Both had tremendous wisdom for making ethical decisions under duress. Both were given incredible authority, helping rule over the kingdoms of Babylon (Daniel) and Heaven (Jesus). Neither married a woman or fathered children. Both were forced to walk to their doom in chains. Both stopped to pray for wisdom throughout their arduous journey through this world. The Bible has nothing bad to say about either man. Both men were wrongly accused and arrested on false charges, even though the political leaders overseeing the process declared them innocent. Both men were placed in a

tomb/pit with a stone covering the entrance from which they were both miraculously delivered alive. And, both men had exemplary character, humbly stood against demonic evil, and suffered greatly for their loyalty.

What is the preaching schedule for Daniel?

Reading ahead in the Bible will be easy for this sermon series as we will be covering one chapter each week. The preaching schedule will be as follows:

January 12th	Daniel (1) Chapter 1 (1:1-21)
January 19th	Daniel (2) Chapter 2 (2:1-49)
January 26th	Daniel (3) Chapter 3 (3:1-30)
February 2nd	Daniel (4) Chapter 4 (4:1-37)
February 9th	Daniel (5) Chapter 5 (5:1-31)
February 16th	Daniel (6) Chapter 6 (6:1-28)
February 23rd	Daniel (7) Chapter 7 (7:1-28)
March 1st	Daniel (8) Chapter 8 (8:1-27)
March 8th	Daniel (9) Chapter 9 (9:1-27)
March 22nd	Daniel (10) Chapter 10 (10:1-21)
March 29th	Daniel (11) Chapter 11 (11:1-45)
April 5th	Daniel (12) Chapter 12 (12:1-13)

What are some resources for further study in Daniel?

- Bestcommentaries.com is a good place to survey all the options.
- An easy-to-read narrative book based upon Daniel is “Agents of Babylon” by Dr. David Jeremiah.
- For a relatively easy-to-read Bible commentary, Joyce G. Baldwin’s, “Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary” is good.
- You can also visit MarkDriscoll.org and sign up for free daily email devotions sent Monday-Friday covering Daniel during this series.