

Introduction:

1. One of the most neglected books of the Bible is the book of Daniel.
 - a. Most Bible students stay away from it, believing it to be too difficult or too complex to study.
 - b. If it is so hard to study, then how do we get stories out of it that we teach our kids—stories about Daniel in the lions' den, or about the three Hebrew boys in the fiery furnace?
 - c. While there are some difficult things in the book of Daniel, the book overall is not that hard to understand. Neglecting it does a great disservice, not just to the book, but to ourselves. There are great and awesome lessons in Daniel, lessons that belong to us and to our families.
2. It is our intent in this short series to draw three lessons from the book of Daniel.
 - a. Sometimes people ask, "Why would we want to study anything from Daniel or the prophets? They lived a long time ago, before Christ and the church. We are Christians, living under the New Covenant. What value could Daniel be to us?" When men have such attitudes, it shows how spiritually impoverished the people of our time truly are.
 - b. We will see that Daniel is relevant to our time and circumstances, that there are meaningful, faith-building lessons here that will help us live the way our great God wants us to live!
 - c. Thus, we introduce our first lesson. Daniel: Powerful Prophet of the Awesome God!

The Lesson:**I. Daniel, a most unusual, yet powerful prophet.**

- A. He was certainly an unusual prophet. Here are five extraordinary things about Daniel.
 1. He was a captive prophet. Most of the prophets of the Old Testament were free men who warned Israel about coming judgments and how they might avoid captivity. But not Daniel; he was among the very first to be taken captive to Babylon in 605 BC, Daniel 1:1, 6.
 2. He was a young prophet. Although his age is never given, he is identified as a young man in Daniel 1:3-6. It is likely that he was in his teens. He began his work as a prophet immediately, in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Daniel 2:1.
 3. He was an old prophet. Daniel was a prophet for at least seventy years. He went into captivity in Babylonian in 605 BC. He was still a prophet in the third year of Cyrus, King of Persia (536 BC), Daniel 10:1. If Daniel was in his teens when he went into captivity, then he was more than eighty years old during the reign of Cyrus. Most people think that it was a young Daniel in the lions' den. But that incident took place after the fall of Babylon, while Darius the Mede was king over Babylon, Daniel 6:1, 16a. This was at least seventy years after Daniel became a captive.
 4. He was a prophet to Gentile kings. We typically think of prophets as God's spokesmen sent to the people of Israel. To be sure, Daniel did have messages for Israel. But he also spoke to kings, even to Gentile kings. He interpreted the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, Daniel 2:28-30.
 5. He was a political figure. Even though he was a captive, he advanced in his status and became one of three governors over the kingdom of Babylon, Daniel 6:1-2. In this sense, he reminds us of Joseph who became second to pharaoh in Egypt (Genesis 41:40-41).
- B. Daniel was also a powerful prophet! Here are five things that demonstrate power.
 1. He was a man of powerful convictions, even while he was very young, Daniel 1:8. It would have been an easy thing to do, to just give in. But Daniel had conviction, and it paid off (Daniel 1:14-17).
 2. He was a man of powerful influence as he interacted with kings and nations, Daniel 2:46-48. He became a counselor to Nebuchadnezzar, to Belshazzar and to Darius. His powerful influence may be traced back to the fact that he was faithful to God. It was God who advanced Daniel to his positions of influence; it wasn't the Gentile kings who did that.
 3. He was a man of powerful speech as he pronounced words of judgment and doom upon Belshazzar, the Babylonian king who followed Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel 5:22, 26-28.
 4. He was a man of powerful prophecy as he spoke mighty words that foretold some of the most awesome events of God's intervention in human history, Daniel 2:44.
 5. He was a man of powerful humility, courage and trust in God. When told that he could not pray to his God for thirty days (Daniel 6:7), he prayed, and let others know that he prayed,

Daniel 6:10. This was the act of faith on his part that got him thrown into the lions' den; it was also the act of faith on his part that caused God to save him from the lions (Daniel 9:22). This was a man of powerful trust in God.

II. Daniel was a prophet of the awesome God.

A. When we study Daniel, we don't just learn about the prophet himself. We learn about the God that Daniel served. We learn about our God—who He is and what He does. We learn about The Awesome God! Here are five things we see about our God in the book of Daniel.

1. *God's Person: His nature and character.*
 - a. Daniel shows us that the Lord alone is God (in contrast to idols). When Nebuchadnezzar was looking for an answer to his dream, the false religion and false gods of Babylon were of no help, Daniel 2:10-11. The Lord—who alone is God—gave Daniel the answer, Daniels 2:20-24.
 - b. Daniel presents the Lord as one who has power that no other has, Daniel 2:21.
 - c. Daniel also presents God's holiness, righteousness and justice, and that these qualities are offended when the people of God disobey Him, Daniel 9:7-8.
 - d. In spite of God's judgments, Daniel presents Him as a God of mercy, Daniel 9:9.
 - e. Because of the great power and character of God, He is to be trusted completely! His purposes always stand; His principles never change; He never errs in His actions!
2. *God's Scriptures: Inspired by His Spirit.*
 - a. The prophet Daniel believed the Scriptures were from God, Daniel 9:1-2. He says what Jeremiah wrote was "the word of the Lord." More than 150 times the phrase "the word of the Lord" is used by the Old Testament prophets to claim their message was from God. Anything can be claimed; but when the things foretold by the prophets come to pass, then the claim is verified. Jeremiah's seventy years came to pass!
 - b. But, it wasn't just Jeremiah. As with all the prophets of God, the words of Daniel himself were from the Spirit of God, 2 Peter 1:21. Jesus personally put His stamp of approval on the writings of Daniel when He told His disciples to trust what Daniel had written, Matthew 24:15.
3. *God's Son: Jesus the Messiah.*
 - a. One of the greatest benefits gained from studying Daniel is an understanding of the Messiah. Daniel foretold His coming 500+ years before His birth, Daniel 9:25-26. This text, by the way, is the only time the term "Messiah" is found in most translations.
 - b. Daniel also spoke of the Messiah's ascension to heaven and of His being crowned as king over His kingdom, Daniel 7:13-14.
 - c. When these things are compared with the New Testament record, we can only marvel. Daniel foretold the coming of Jesus the Messiah. Daniel's record tells us that his message was special; it was from God. But it also tells us that Jesus is special.
4. *God's Justice: how He deals with sin.*
 - a. God does not tolerate wickedness. He meant what He said to Israel, Daniel 9:11-14.
 - b. Whether to Jew or Gentile, God's justice demands punishment, Daniel 5:25-30.
 - c. Because God revenges all disobedience, we need to stand in fear of Him.
5. *God's Rule: how He deals with the nations.*
 - a. "God rules in the kingdoms of men!" That fact is declared in Daniel 2:21; 4:17b.
 - b. God holds every nation accountable to His standards of righteousness.

B. From these things, we conclude that the awesome God is ultimately in charge. We should be confident in the future and not be tossed about by upheavals among nations. We learn from these things that the solutions to the problems of mankind are not found in men, but in God.

Conclusion:

1. As a concluding point, allow me to add one more to the list of five above. In Daniel, we learn of *God's People: hope for the faithful*. It was a book of hope for those who first received it; it is a book of hope for today. God always keeps His promises, Daniel 9:4; 7:27. We are those people.
2. Have you put your trust in the Most High God? He never failed Daniel; He will not fail you.