

UNIT 16 | SESSION 4

DANIEL'S PROPHECIES

DANIEL 7-12



KEY PASSAGE: 1 Corinthians 10:31

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How can we glorify God? We can glorify God by loving Him and obeying Him.

CHRIST CONNECTION: Daniel's visions pointed to the truth that God is more powerful than all earthly kingdoms. Jesus, the Son of Man, rules over the kings of the earth, and His kingdom will never end. One day, all who trust in Him will be with God forever.

STORY POINT: Daniel's visions showed that God's kingdom will last forever.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

Prophecy passages are often some of the most difficult passages in all of Scripture to understand. As verses are filled with mysterious visions and future descriptions, we might be challenged to determine what the symbols represent and how we should think about them in relation to the past, present, and future. And while specific interpretations for prophecies can be disputed, the point of prophecy in Scripture is clear—God is in absolute control of everything—past, present, and future.

Daniel’s prophecies, in particular, are interesting because they contain such detailed descriptions of the rise and fall of earthly kingdoms. Strange apocalyptic visions are mixed with real-world historical prophecies to form a complex understanding of God’s power over the present and His plan for the future. God uses prophecy literature to remind us that even though we don’t know the future, He does.

These chapters in Daniel remind us that God is completely sovereign over the affairs and government of men. Daniel sees visions that represent great kingdoms of the world. All of them pale in comparison, however, to the greatness of the kingdom that God will establish and that the Son of Man will rule over. God’s reign is not temporary or limited. Daniel reminds us that we can trust God—who controls all of history—with whatever may be happening in our own lives.

Additionally, Daniel 10 points to the reality of spiritual warfare. An angel revealed that Daniel’s prayer had been heard, but that a delay had happened in the spiritual realm. If we are honest, most of us live without a thought about the spiritual battles happening around us. The delay of the angel showed that the battle in the spiritual realm was intense and real. And while the battle may rage, even the most powerful forces of the spiritual world offer no real opposition to the will and power of God. Even when answers seem distant or delayed, God is working in ways we may never be able to comprehend to bring about His good plan.

Encourage kids to remember the Ancient of Days, who is ruling over every part of their lives for His glory and the good of His people. Point them to the King of kings whose kingdom will never end.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10–15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



LEARN

25–30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



LOVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- "Draw a Dream" activity page

Session Starter (Option 2)

- plastic cups, 10 per group
- balls, 1 per group



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- Small Group Timeline and Map Set (optional)



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- "The Greatest" printable

Reflection and Prayer

- Bible story coloring page



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- countdown video
- Story Point Poster

Big Picture Question

- Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- "Daniel's Prophecies" video
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- white wool, felt, or yarn (optional)

Questions from Kids

- "Unit 16, Session 4" Questions from Kids video

Key Passage Activity

- Key Passage Poster
- "For the Glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31)" song
- worship song of your choice (optional)
- sticky notes



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

| **SAY** “ If you could build a kingdom, what would it look like? Why? ”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete the “Draw a Dream” activity page.

| **SAY** “ Today, we’ll see how Daniel had dreams. Daniel’s dreams or visions pointed to God’s kingdom and how His kingdom is greater than any earthly kingdom. ”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: WHAT DO YOU SEE?



Provide each kid with a piece of paper and a pencil. Challenge kids to listen carefully to what you say and draw what they hear. Say the following steps below to challenge kids to draw a crown but don’t tell them the drawing should be a crown.

- Draw a straight line across your paper.
- On each end of the straight line, draw a line going up.
- Place your pencil on one of the lines going up that you just drew.
- From that point, draw a zig-zag line to the other line going up.

| **SAY** “ What did you draw? [Invite kids to share their drawings.] The words I shared were meant to help you draw a crown. But it was confusing to clearly understand what you were meant to be drawing, wasn’t it? This reminds me of how Daniel saw dreams that confused him. He needed someone to help explain the dream. Today, we’ll hear how Daniel learned that his dreams pointed to the one true King, Jesus, and how Jesus’ kingdom will last forever. ”

OPTION 2: BOWLED OVER

Form kids into groups of three or four and provide each group with a set of 10 plastic cups. Direct groups to spread out around the room. Then lead groups to stack their cups into a pyramid, starting with four cups on the bottom row. Provide each group with a ball and guide them to line up about 6 feet away from the cups. Explain that kids on each team will take turns rolling the ball and trying to knock down all the cups. If any kid knocks down all the cups, award that team a point. Play as time allows, and then see which team had the most points.

| **SAY** “ The stacked cups remind me of the kingdoms of this world that set themselves up against God. They try to build themselves up and think they are great. But only God is truly great, and He rules over every earthly kingdom. Today, we’ll see how Daniel had visions that showed how God will one day knock down all earthly kingdoms. **DANIEL’S VISIONS SHOWED THAT GOD’S KINGDOM WILL LAST FOREVER.** Anyone who trusts in Jesus will be welcomed into His kingdom forever. ”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “ Welcome, kids! My name is [your name], and I’m glad you’re here to hear about the greatness of King Jesus. If you brought your Bible, will you please take it out? [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one. Invite kids to turn to Daniel 7.] We’ll continue to learn about God’s faithfulness to Daniel, even when he faced hard situations or didn’t completely understand how God was working in his life.

Today, we will see how Daniel experienced visions and dreams that were hard for him to understand. Thankfully, an angelic messenger helped Daniel understand these visions. We’ll see that **DANIEL’S VISIONS SHOWED THAT GOD’S KINGDOM WILL LAST FOREVER.** [Display the Story Point Poster.] Let’s pray together: ‘God, we thank You that Your Kingdom will last forever. You are powerful to save, and anyone who trusts in Jesus, will live in Your kingdom forever.’ ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “ Let’s review our big picture question: **How can we glorify God?** What have we learned? [Allow responses.] The answer is, **We can glorify God by loving Him and obeying Him.**

Loving God and obeying Him doesn’t mean we need to understand everything about God or what He does. When we love God and obey Him, we show that we trust God. This glorifies God because it reveals a heart that doesn’t rely on its own understanding. Instead, we show that God’s ways are best. Daniel didn’t always understand everything about God or how He was working. Yet, Daniel glorified God by trusting Him. Daniel loved God and obeyed Him. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “ King Nebuchadnezzar wanted to make Daniel and his friend live like the Babylonians, who did not follow the one true God. But they refused to disobey God by eating the king’s food. We also learned how Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to worship the king’s gold statue. Though they were thrown into the fiery furnace, God showed His power by protecting them. Soon, King Darius took over, and the leaders formed a plan to get Daniel thrown into the lions’ den. Yet, Daniel continued to trust God, and God shut the mouths of the lions. Today, we will read about Daniel’s visions and how they showed God is greater than any earthly kingdom. ”



LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Daniel 7:1-27; Daniel 8:1-8; 9:17-19; 12:1-3,10. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Daniel’s Prophecies.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

DANIEL’S PROPHECIES

“ While Daniel was in captivity in Babylon, God gave him visions and dreams. In these visions, God gave Daniel truth that would comfort God’s people in times of trouble. This truth showed that God is ultimately in control, and that He would one day rule over the world and save His people, no matter how powerful the nations of the world appear.

In the first year Belshazzar was king of Babylon, Daniel saw a dream and visions as he lay in his bed. He saw great winds stir up a great sea, and four huge beasts came out of the sea.

The first beast was a lion with eagle’s wings. The second beast looked like a bear, and it had three ribs in its mouth. The third beast was like a leopard with four heads and four wings on its back. But the fourth beast was the most frightening of all. This beast had ten horns, large iron teeth, and was incredibly strong.

After these four beasts came out of the sea, Daniel saw God, the Ancient of Days, take His seat on a throne. His clothing was white as snow, and His hair was like white wool. The throne was made of fire, and a river of fire was coming out from Him. God destroyed the fourth, most terrifying beast, and He took away the power of the other three beasts.

Then, one like a son of man came to God. God gave the son of man power, glory, and a kingdom, so that every people, nation, and language would serve him. His kingdom will last forever and never be destroyed.

Daniel was confused by this dream. Thankfully, an angelic messenger explained the dream to him. Daniel learned that the four beasts were four kings who ruled over four kingdoms. They looked powerful, but they were not as powerful as God. God would give His people the kingdom, and they would possess it forever.

Daniel had more visions as well. In these visions, Daniel saw how the beasts of the earth fought for power and acted wickedly. Daniel prayed to God and asked God to be merciful to His people. **God said there will be many troubles in the future. But even through the troubles, God will make His people pure. These visions told the same truth: God is more powerful than all the kingdoms on earth.** Even though things may look bad, God’s people can be patient in hope. God will one day put all things right when He brings His rule over all the earth, forever.

STORYTELLING TIPS

Display it: Hold up white wool, felt, or yarn as you describe the Ancient of Days. Discuss how this name refers to God’s eternal nature—He has always been and He always will be.

Draw it: Provide paper and crayons for kids to illustrate the story as they listen. Challenge kids to imagine what each creature might have looked like.



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

Christ Connection: Daniel's visions pointed to the truth that God is more powerful than all earthly kingdoms. Jesus, the Son of Man, rules over the kings of the earth, and His kingdom will never end. One day, all who trust in Him will be with God forever. ”

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ When God gave Daniel these visions, he was living in the foreign kingdom of Babylon. Think about how these visions would give Daniel and God's people comfort and hope as they began to understand that no kingdom—not even Babylon—is greater than God. We have this same hope today! No matter who is ruling or what is happening in the world, God is in control. His kingdom is greater, and one day, all earthly kingdoms will come to an end when God sets up His kingdom on earth.

Can you describe Daniel's first dream? **[Allow responses.]** Daniel saw four beasts who represented the kings who ruled over four kingdoms of the earth. The four beasts were terrifying, but they were not greater than God. Today, many earthly rulers may disobey God's Word. But we can continue to trust God and follow Him, even when those around us don't. **We can glorify God by loving Him and obeying Him.**

What happened to the four beasts? **[Allow responses.]** They had their power taken away, and God proved He is more powerful. We know how the story ends: God will defeat the earthly kingdoms, and His kingdom will rule forever! But not only does God judge the earthly rulers, He also looks at the hearts of all people. All people are guilty before God because we are all sinners. The Bible tells us that our sin deserves punishment and that punishment is death. Thankfully, Jesus took the punishment we deserve so we could have life with God. Everyone who has trusted in Jesus will live in God's kingdom forever. ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “ Daniel's visions pointed to the truth that God is more powerful than all earthly kingdoms. Jesus, the Son of Man, rules over the kings of the earth, and His kingdom will never end. One day, all who trust in Him will be with God forever. Have you trusted in Jesus? ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 16, Session 4” Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. How does God use His powers?
2. God uses His power for our good. How does knowing God is good and all-powerful help you trust Him?

**5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)**

SAY “ Many people living in Manchester, England, and its surrounding areas do not attend church. The Manchester region also has many different people groups represented. More than 180 languages are spoken in the Manchester area. Sometimes the lack of interest in church and the language barrier can make it challenging to share the gospel. The Byrds, and the churches they partner with, want to build relationships with the people of Manchester so they can trust in Jesus and become part of a local church. ”

Discuss how building the trust of others may take time, but God is more than able to use the faithful witness of missionaries to help people see their need for Jesus. Play a game that focuses on building relationships based on what kids have in common with each other. Instruct kids to go around the room and talk to one another. Kids need to determine at least one thing they have in common with at least three other kids. It could be their favorite foods, favorite sports team, favorite animal, favorite color, and so forth. Then invite kids to share their common interests with the whole group.

Pray for the missionaries to be encouraged as they share the good news of Jesus and build relationships with others. Pray that God would give them favor with the people of Manchester.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud 1 Corinthians 10:31 together.

SAY “ As we trust God and believe that He is all-powerful like Daniel’s dreams showed us, we glorify God. Let’s work on learning our key passage that reminds us to glorify God in all we do. ”

Write each word of the key passage on a sticky note. Pass out each sticky note to a kid. If kids do not receive a sticky note, distribute one to them in the next round. Read the first word of the key passage and challenge the kid with this word to place his sticky note on a wall. Repeat for each subsequent word until the entire key passage is displayed on the wall. Play again, distributing a sticky note to kids who did not receive one in the first round.

Lead kids to sing “For the Glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “ God, You showed Daniel Your glory and power over all the kings and kingdoms of the earth, and we trust that You are in control. Help us glorify You as we excitedly wait for Jesus’ return. Amen. ”





LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the Old Testament Mediterranean Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to Daniel 7. Explain that the book of Daniel contains prophecies. Explain that a prophecy is a word from God to people. Some of God's prophecies were given through dreams or visions, like Daniel experienced.

Consider pointing out the nations of Babylon (E11), Egypt (H7), and Assyria (D12) on the Old Testament Mediterranean Map. Share how God is greater than these earthly kingdoms. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Daniel 7:13-14 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verses aloud.

SAY “ Can you think of a scary dream or something that might frighten you? Daniel was in a strange land and experienced strange dreams! But through these dreams, God showed Daniel that he had nothing to fear because God is in control. God had a plan to defeat all evil. The Son of Man, Jesus, came to earth to save people from sin and death. Those who trust in Jesus don't need to be afraid because they will live in His kingdom forever. As we love God and obey Him, we can look forward to Jesus' return and share the gospel with others. ”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “ What did you learn about God through our story? ”

Discuss how this story reminds us that God is all-powerful, in control over all things, hates evil, and has a future plan. Share how God will judge sin, but if we trust in Jesus, we will escape His judgment. Remind kids that God's kingdom will last forever, and everyone who trusts in Jesus will live in His kingdom.

SAY “ What can you do when you feel scared or uncertain? ”

Remind kids that Daniel was deeply distressed and terrified by the visions (Daniel 7:15). Sometimes we will be scared, confused, or uncertain. However, we can continue to trust God because He is in control, is good, and loves His people. Encourage kids to talk to a trusted adult, read their Bible, and pray when they face a circumstance they don't quite understand. Anyone who trusts in Jesus is safe and secure because they belong to Him (Ephesians 1:13).

SAY “ How will God one day make everything right? ”

Prompt kids to think about the Son of Man in Daniel's vision and how He was given rule over everything. Tell kids that Jesus is the Son of Man, the King of kings. Because Jesus came to earth and died on the cross for people's sins, He made the way for sin, evil, and death to be defeated once and for all. When Jesus returns, He will set up His kingdom on earth and reign forever. All sin, sadness, and death will be gone forever.





LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: THE GREATEST

Provide each kid with a piece of paper and a pencil. Display the first page of “The Greatest” printable. Direct kids to write down which animal they think has the greatest weight. Repeat, holding up the second and third pages while leading kids to write down which animal they think has the greatest bite force and the greatest wingspan. Invite kids to share what they wrote. Then review the answers.

(Greatest weight is the blue whale at 200,000 to 300,000 pounds; greatest bite force is the Nile crocodile at over 3,000 pounds of force; greatest wingspan is the wandering albatross at around 11.5 feet)

SAY “ God has created some pretty amazing animals! Each group of animals had one animal that was greater in some way than the others. But you know what? God is greater than everything! He is all-powerful, and He rules over all. While the earthly kingdoms in Daniel’s vision tried to be the greatest, God defeated them. God is the greatest, and **DANIEL’S VISIONS SHOWED THAT GOD’S KINGDOM WILL LAST FOREVER.** ”

OPTION 2: FROM BEGINNING TO END



Invite kids to sit in a circle. Choose one kid to begin by asking him or her to say a sentence that begins a story. For example, he may say something like, “Once a kid went for a bike ride.” Then the kid to his right will say the next sentence of the story. Continue around the circle until it’s the last kid’s turn. He or she will say a sentence to complete the story. If time allows, repeat this activity, allowing another kid to begin a story.

SAY “ That was an interesting story! But you know what? We didn’t really know where the story was going. We had to wait for each person to share before we could learn how the story would end. But we don’t have to guess how God’s story will end! God’s Word, the Bible, shares His story from beginning to end. As Daniel saw visions from God, he learned that God will defeat all earthly kingdoms. When Jesus comes back, He will set up His kingdom forever. And Jesus invites you to be a part of His Kingdom by trusting in Him. Anyone who trusts in Jesus will live in His kingdom forever. ”

2 REFLECTION AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper and pencil to each kid. Ask kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Who can I tell about this story?

Be sure to send the sheets home with the kids along with the activity pages so parents can continue to discuss the Bible story with their kids. If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page. Pray for your group.