

The story of Daniel in the Old Testament is particularly relevant and instructive for us as modern-day Christians. The reason why? Because Daniel's story is much like that of all Christians—in reality and in potential! And that's surely no accident. In this series, we are looking at the highly instructive commonalities of Daniel's life in God to our lives in Christ.

But let's start with a Whitestone podcast production story. My astute editor wants me to cut out the recap of themes from the previous podcasts to provide more depth of new material, and he's right! But so many people tend to just take away one thing about someone like Daniel. So, the compromise here is this: I do summarize the themes already covered with just a very few words each. Here they are...go back and listen!

1. Daniel was relevant to his time and place.
2. Daniel was competent.
3. Daniel was a lifetime ambassador for God.
4. Daniel revealed his relentlessly faithful dailiness.
5. Daniel was great at building bankable trust.
6. Daniel's responses to calamities were fantastic.
7. Daniel expertly handled unavoidable enemies and conflicts.
8. Daniel steadfastly just trusted God, only God—fearlessly!
9. Daniel applied the practice of seek, reveal, speak.
10. Daniel superbly surfed the biggest societal and political waves.

Now, to the eleventh relevancy of Daniel, and that is his reality of *linking to the future*. That's right, linking to the future. To start, let's think broadly for a moment. Specific individuals were given much revelation in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. These revelations were both large and small in scope, ranging from the sweeping Revelation to John found at the end of the Bible to seemingly-lesser-scope revelations like the one to Simeon in Luke 2:26 (ESV) that "he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ." Interesting. That was first a private revelation to Simeon but was later made public under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit for billions of us to read about in Luke's gospel.

Now, I'm *not* going to go into a deep discussion of some of the various dimensions of Biblically-valid revelations that might range from Old Testament prophecy to what the Apostle Paul identifies as a word of knowledge (1 Corinthians 12:8) to the overarching reality of the inspired, God-breathed Scriptures themselves (2 Tim 3:16). But I will say that what is utterly reliable and useful to *each and every one of us* for teaching and training is what's written in the 66 books of the Bible—now, that's beyond wonderful!

And, from my perspective, Daniel's life which included so much of God's active revelation is meticulously documented in quite diverse ways. In fact, we should remember that a very large chunk of the book of Daniel is devoted to the multiple narratives encompassing just God's *published* revelations to Daniel. Now, I've titled this particular episode about Daniel *linking to the future*. And my reference to that is not coincidental at all! That's because when you and I are *digitally* engaged, we click on a particular link to get taken to another place, something deeper, or something further down the road. What's interesting about Daniel is that when Daniel was on the hot-seat for an answer, an interpretation, or a word of wisdom, what he said was a link to the future—whether the particular future that was specifically revealed by Daniel was literally in the next few hours...or several millennia away...or at a number of timely destinations in-between. No matter the timetable, Daniel was innately linking current revelations to future events.

So, let's take a look at some specific events in the book of Daniel. Remember the famous handwriting on the wall, where Daniel was summoned to read something where the others had failed? He interpreted to

the king that “God has numbered the days of your kingdom and has brought it to an end.” (Daniel 5:26). Indeed, that very night, the king was killed! So this specific revelation related to the very immediate future.

Earlier in Daniel’s career, King Nebuchadnezzar found no one to interpret his dream. Daniel was finally summoned and, in an opening salvo establishing his credibility, Daniel gave the king telling details of his secret dream. Then Daniel gave the interpretation, too—about specific kingdoms following one another, a narrative many today believe represented some core essentials of the secular history to follow. And this revelation, of course, serves us well today, itself representative of God’s foreknowledge and sovereignty. That specific “link to the future” by Daniel was not fulfilled that very night but was nevertheless accurate regarding the centuries that followed. And God’s revelations continued with visions addressing the future!

Then Gabriel visited Daniel and revealed the so-called Seventy Weeks, a period understood by many to cover the next several hundred years until Christ’s advent, then to encompass a long period of time we are living in today, then to end with the Great Tribulation that’s still to come. Now that’s a multiple-future-linking of sorts. And, yes, it’s about Jesus and His Kingdom, but also addresses those rejecting God, too.

All of these various linkages to the future in the life and times of Daniel rightly give us great confidence in God and the Bible, as do the various Old Testament verses quite clearly pointing to first-century events concerning Jesus, like His birth in Bethlehem. You see, God’s revelations are never without purpose, linking His people to future events of real importance.

And, amazingly, we are to be just like Daniel, that exceptional God-follower who received remarkable revelations and then relayed those revelations to kings and ultimately to you and to me for our edification as to God and His astounding ways. That’s what a solid follower of God does. That’s what the Apostle Paul worked for and accomplished: relaying revelations. So likewise, that’s our privilege, too. Just like Daniel received revelations and then relayed those to others, we take our revealed knowledge of Jesus as Lord and Savior, the revelations of Him as Judge of the world and His Second Coming, and the revelations of the Kingdom of God where we are both current and eternal citizens—well, then, we are privileged to be our own appointed *link to the future* by the proclaiming of the Gospel and by the word of our testimonies.

You know, we’re inclined to think we’re being treated the same as the great Daniel, a man of God who was given revelations of incredible impact not only for his near future but for the future of us all. But in a very real sense, we have been positioned *better* than Daniel—we have been given a full revelation of the Risen Christ! Jesus says just that in Luke’s Gospel and Paul writes that in his first epistle to the Corinthians.

In Luke 10:23-24 (ESV), Jesus tells His disciples, “Blessed are the eyes that see what you see! For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.” Then in 1 Corinthians 2:9-10, Paul quotes Isaiah, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him,” ...then Paul moves on to conclude something about that Isaiah quote, specifically for believers in Christ—“these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.” Yes! Our privilege exceeds that of Isaiah and that of Daniel, who didn’t have the opportunity to proclaim the Risen Christ! What was previously unheard of and unimaginable, we can now proclaim!

Long before the digital world created links that we can easily click to get more insight or a deeper glimpse, God holds before us His revelations of a glorious future for us to share! Isn’t that stunning? Like a hyperlink that takes readers to a new webpage they’ll find helpful, your life is designed to be a glaring link for the future of those around you! And just like Daniel, we can be a link to the future for others! Be that link!

A&A: Application & Action

1. Do Daniel's approaches to life just seem pretty much out of reach, something that only could occur in that time and place...and to a select few God-followers with long beards? But God has made realities like "linking to the future" accessible and even commanded those privileges of every Jesus-follower. Does your church teach this and expect fruits from the works of the body of Christ? Elaborate.
2. When you sit on an airplane, do you think that maybe you might be *the* key "link to the future" for your seatmate? Why or why not?
3. How do you specifically measure success for "linking to the future" in your workplace, your family, your church? Be specific.