

# THE BOOK OF DANIEL



Compiled and Presented by  
Pastor Brad Montsion  
Fountaingate Christian Assembly  
Cornwall, Ontario  
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# THE BOOK OF DANIEL

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Date and Authorship

The record of events extend to the third year of the year of King Cyrus (556 BC) so therefore it covers a span of about 70 years. The book of Daniel was probably completed in the last decade of Daniel's life.

Although Daniel does not speak of himself in the first person until chapter 7, there is little question that the book represents Daniel as its author. The use of the first person is used repeatedly in the last half of the book (cf. 7:2,15,28; 8:1, 15,27; 9:2,22; 10:2,7,11,12; 12:5).

Important links of history are recorded in three passages of Ezekiel (Ezekiel 14:14,20; 28:3). This would have been written after Daniel assumed the important post in the king's court at Babylon. Convincing also to scholars is the reference to "*Daniel the Prophet*" by Christ in the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14).

### B. Place in Scripture

The book of Daniel, although written as the last of all the major prophets, appears in this order in the English Bible. In the Hebrew Old Testament (which is divided into three sections consisting of the Law, Prophets and the Writings, which is also called the Kethubim [Hebrew] or Hagiograpah [Greek]), Daniel is included in the third section called "*The Writings*." In the Septuagint, Vulgate, and the Luther Bible, however, it is included with the major prophets.

Although the ministry of Daniel was prophetic, it was of different character than the other prophets, and apparently for this reason, the Jews included Daniel in the Writings.

"It is more probable, that the book was placed in this part of the Hebrew Canon, because Daniel was not called a 'nabhi' (prophet) but rather a 'hozeh' (seer) and a 'hakham' (wise man). None but the works of the 'nebhi' were put in the second part of the Jewish Canon, the third being reserved for the heterogeneous works of seers, wisemen and priests, or for those who do not mention the work of a prophet, or that are poetical in form."

Robert Dick Wilson

## I. INTRODUCTION (Contd.)

### B. Place in Scripture (Contd.)

In any case the Jews did not regard the third division as less inspired, but only different in character. This is clearly demonstrated by the fact that they included it with such venerable writings as Job, Psalms and Proverbs as well as the historical books of I & II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther.

### C. Purpose

In the dark hour of Israel's captivity, with the tragic destruction of Jerusalem and its temple, there was a need for a new testimony to the mighty and providential hand of God. While it is doubtful whether these prophecies were sufficiently known in Daniel's lifetime to be of an encouragement to the captives themselves, the book of Daniel undoubtedly gave hope to the Jews who returned to restore their temple and their city. It was also very helpful during the Maccabean persecutions.

### D. Apocalyptic Character

The book of Daniel is rightly classed as an apocalyptic writing, because of the series of supernatural visions, which by their character, fulfilled what is intimated by the Greek work "*apokalysis*," which means "*unveiling of truth which would otherwise be concealed.*" In the New Testament, only the book of Revelation can be classified as apocalyptic; but in the Old Testament, Ezekiel and Zechariah may also be classified in addition to Daniel.

"Apocalyptic literature is symbolic visionary prophetic literature, composed during oppressive conditions, consisting of visions whose events are recorded exactly as they were seen by the author and explained through a divine interpreter, and whose theological content is primarily eschatological."

Ralph Alexander

## I. INTRODUCTION (Contd.)

### E. Languages

An unusual feature of the book of Daniel is the fact that the central portion (2:4-7:28) is written in biblical Aramaic also called Chaldee (AV - "Syriac"). A similar use of Aramaic is found in Ezra 4:8-6:18; 7:12-26; Jeremiah 10:11 as well as the two words of the compound "Jegar-Sahadutha" found in Genesis 31:47. The shifts from Hebrew to Aramaic and back again in Daniel are found in the scrolls of Daniel at Qumram, supporting the legitimacy of this feature found in the Massoretic text commonly used in English translations.

### F. Major Divisions and Unity

The traditional division of the book of Daniel into two halves (1-6 & 7-12) has usually been justified on the basis that the first six chapters are historical while the last six chapters are apocalyptic or predictive. An alternative approach is to divide the book into three divisions: (1) Introduction [Chapter 1]; (2) The Times of the Gentiles as presented in the Aramaic language [Chapters 2-7]; and Israel in relation to the Gentiles written in Hebrew [Chapters 8-12].

### G. Apocryphal Additions

In the Greek version of Daniel several additions are made to the book which are not found in the Hebrew or Aramaic text as we now have it. Included are "The Prayer of Azarias," "The Song of the Three Holy Children," "Susanna," and "Bel and the Dragon."

### H. Genuine

Whether the Book of Daniel as a sixth century BC. writing by the prophet Daniel was considered as genuine does not appear to have been questioned in the ancient world until the third century AD. At that time, Porphyry, a pagan neo-Platonist, attacked the book, asserting that it was a second century BC. forgery. Porphyry's attack immediately roused a defence of the book on the part of the Early Church Fathers.

## I. INTRODUCTION (Contd.)

### H. Genuine (Contd.)

#### 1. Rejection of Canonicity

Meril Unger has defined the erroneous critical view of this as follows:

"Daniel's prophecy was placed among writings in the third section of the Hebrew Canon and not among the Prophets in the second division because it was not in existence when the Canon of the Prophets was closed, allegedly between 300-200 BC."

Meril Unger

It is important to remember that Daniel was considered primarily as a government official, and he was not commissioned to preach to the people or to deliver an oral message from God as was Isaiah and Jeremiah.

Denying that the book was in existence during the sixth century BC. disregards the three citations referring to Daniel by the prophet Ezekiel (Ezekiel 14:14, 20; 28:3), as well as the overwhelming evidence in the book of Daniel itself.

If Ezekiel's references are insufficient, certainly the clear attestation of Christ in Matthew 24:15 should be enough to confirm its validity.

"Our Saviour in His own great Advent prophecy (Matthew 24) uttered on the eve of His death, quotes this Book of Daniel no less than three times (Matthew 24:15,21; cf. Dan 12:1; Matthew 24:30; cf. Daniel 7:13).

Charles Boutflower  
*"In and Around the Book of Daniel"*  
pp. 287-88

**I. INTRODUCTION (Contd.)****H. Genuine (Contd.)****2. Rejection of Detailed Prophecy**

The main area that the book of Daniel is attacked on is that it is apocalyptic and therefore unworthy of serious study. It is often mentioned that there were many spurious apocalyptic works both in the time of the Old Testament as well as in the Christian era. The existence of spurious works is not a valid argument against the possibility of a genuine apocalyptic revelation. The problem of this book is not that the apocalyptic sections are obscure, but critics object to the clear prophetic truth presented in the book.

**3. Rejection of Miracles**

If the book of Daniel is to be considered spurious on the ground that it presents miracles, it would follow that most of the Scriptures would need to be eliminated as valid inspired writings. Daniel's recorded miracles are no more unusual than those attributed to Christ in the Gospels or to Moses and Aaron in the Pentateuch.

**4. Textual Problems**

Critics have especially concentrated their efforts on the Aramaic portions alleging that the text had been tampered with. They are very much at odds with each other with their findings. The presumptions of the "higher critics" which lead to most of these arguments are in themselves suspect, and the wide disagreement among the critics themselves as to the nature and extent of the textual problems tend to support the conclusion that their arguments are invalid.

**5. Problems of Language**

Critics have objected to the presence of various Greek and Persian words in the book of Daniel to prove their "later date theory." In the light of recent archeological discoveries their objections are no longer valid. It has now been proved that 100 years before Daniel, Greek mercenaries served in the Assyrian armies under the command of Esarhaddon (683 BC.) as well as in the Babylonian army of Nebuchadnezzar. Robert Dick Wilson noted that if Daniel had been written in the second century, there would have been far more Greek words rather than the few that occur.

## **I. INTRODUCTION (Contd.)**

### **H. Genuine (Contd.)**

#### **6. Alleged Historical Inaccuracies**

It would be most unusual for a writer in the second century BC to have had the intimate knowledge of Babylonian history as presented in the book of Daniel in view of the probability that the texts and other materials now in our possession may not have been available at that time.

## **II. THEOLOGY**

### **A. The Doctrine of God**

The book of Daniel provides the same view of God that appears elsewhere in the Old Testament, namely, a God who is sovereign, loving, omnipotent, omniscient, righteous and merciful.

### **B. The Doctrine of Angels**

We see how prominent Gabriel and Michael are and how active they become to unfold the events of this book.

### **C. The Doctrine of Man**

Daniel fully discloses the depravity of man; God's judgement upon him; and the possibility of mercy and grace as wonderfully illustrated in chapter 4 in the conversion of Nebuchadnezzar.

### **D. The Doctrine of the Resurrection**

Daniel's clear testimony to the subject of the resurrection in chapter 12 has been contradicted by critics as being out of touch with his time. These allegations are without adequate foundation. In comparing passages such as Job 19:25,26; Isaiah 26:19; and Ezekiel chapter 37 we can clearly see the doctrine was taught before and during his lifetime.

## II. THEOLOGY (Contd.)

### E. The Doctrine of Last Things

This doctrine as outlined in the last chapter which also implies the resurrection was a frequent theme of prophecy (cf. Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi as well as many Psalms).

Daniels' contribution to eschatology is evident with his main theme being the course of history and Israel's relation to it, culminating in the second advent of Christ.

## III. THE MAN DANIEL

### A. The Testimony to Daniel

In Ezekiel 14:14-20 the Lord God Himself bears witness to Daniel and to his righteous character. In Ezekiel 28:3 the Lord God again bears testimony to the wisdom of Daniel - wisdom that He Himself had given, but which Daniel proved worthy of having. It would make some of us proud - it made Daniel humble (see Daniel 1:18-20; 2:20-23; 5:12-13; cf. I Kings 4:29-34). Ignatius (AD. 30-107) said, "*Daniel, the wise, at the age of twelves years became possessed of the Divine Spirit.*"

Daniel is believed to have been raised during the great religious revival under king Josiah. He carried the effects of this revival with him all the way into captivity in the idolatrous Babylon.

### B. The Testimony of Angels to Daniel

Daniel was a favourite in heaven (9:23; 10:11,19). The angels are called watchers and were sent to watch over his life.

### C. The Testimony of his Masters

The words of Daniel's masters (Daniel 4:8,9,18; 5:11) illustrate the saying of Proverbs 3:4 and Romans 14:18. It has been well said that a Christian need not go around feeling his spiritual pulse to see how much of the Spirit of God he has; the world can tell much about that.

### D. Daniel was a Devote and Diligent Student of the Scriptures

He was well versed in the Law and the Prophets (See 9:2,11,13). He was one who poured over the Scriptures, examining them in every detail. Do we search the Scriptures or merely skim over them.



### III. THE MAN DANIEL (Contd.)

#### D. Daniel was a Devote and Diligent Student of the Scriptures (Contd.)

\*\*\* A botanist was examining a heather bell of Scotland under a microscope. A passing shepherd smiled at what seemed to be a trifling thing, when the botanist requested the shepherd to look through the microscope. The shepherd handed back the microscope with tears in his eyes. When asked why, he could only say, *"It is beautiful beyond all words. But I'm thinking of how many of them I have trodden under foot."* How many thousands of sparkling gems of Divine truth do we pass unnoticed as we go through Scriptures. \*\*\*

#### E. Daniel was a Man who Prayed

He had a habit of prayer; he heard from heaven while he prayed; he got answers to his prayers. (See Daniel 2:16,18; 6:10; cf. Psalm 55:17; Daniel 9:3; 10:2,12). In chapter 2 he received the forgotten dream in answer to prayer; in chapter 6 he received deliverance from the lions; in chapter 9 he was given the great prophecy concerning the purpose of God and the destiny of his people; in chapter 10 and 12 he received revelation truth as to the last days.

Daniel was a very busy man, yet he found time to pray. He found time to offer definite prayer, kneeling upon his knees three times a day. Some of the busiest Christians have been the most faithful pray-ers.

#### F. Daniel was a Man who Believed God

This is very evident in chapter 1:12,13; 2:16; cf. 1:17. In chapter 2:45 we see how he expressed his faith in the promises of God. He had a similar spirit like that of Joseph (Genesis 50:25). Daniel and others went to their grave with a precious faith in God (Daniel 12:13; Hebrews 11:13).

#### G. "And Daniel Continued"

One of the finest things that could be said about Daniel (1:21) was that he stayed, he was steadfast, he never lost ground. He remained true while living in the worldly court, in all kinds of circumstances, under many masters. **DARE TO BE A DANIEL, DARE TO STAND ALONE, DARE TO HAVE A PURPOSE FIRM, DARE TO MAKE IT KNOWN!**

### III. THE MAN DANIEL (Contd.)

#### G. "And Daniel Continued" (Contd.)

He continued ...

1. In Holiness
2. In Prayerfulness
3. In Scripture Reading
4. In Humbleness
5. In Courage
6. In Power
7. In Service

### IV. THE CITY OF BABYLON (Halley's Handbook)

It was the wonder of the ancient world. It was built around the tower of Babel. It was a favourite city of Babylonian, Assyrian, and Persian kings as well as Alexander the Great. It was brought to its zenith of power and glory during the time of Daniel by king Nebuchadnezzar. During his forty-five year reign he never wearied of building and beautifying its palaces and gardens.

#### A. The Size of Babylon

The wall was 60 miles around, 15 miles on each side, 300 feet high, 80 feet thick, extending 35 feet into the ground so its enemies could not tunnel under it. There was a 1/4 mile clear space between the city and the wall all the way around. The wall was protected by wide and deep canals filled with water. There were 250 towers, guard rooms, and 100 gates of brass. The city was divided by the Euphrates River, with both banks guarded by brick walls all the way, with 25 gates connecting streets and ferry boats. One bridge was 1/2 mile long, 30 feet wide, with drawbridges which were removed at night. A tunnel under the river 15 feet wide and 12 feet high was recently found in excavations.

#### B. The Great Temple of Marduk (Bel)

This temple contained a golden image and a golden table together weighing about 50,000 lbs; 2 golden lions; 1 golden table 40 feet by 15 feet; and a human figure of solid gold 18 feet high. Truly Babylon was a "city of gold" as the prophet Isaiah spoke (Isaiah 14:4 - KJV). The inhabitants of the city were very religious. They built 53 temples and 180 altars.

#### IV. THE CITY OF BABYLON (Halley's Handbook) (Contd.)

##### C. Nebuchadnezzar's Palace

This palace, into which Daniel often went, was one of the most magnificent ever erected on earth. The south walls of the throne were 20 feet thick, the north side was protected by three walls, and another wall 50 feet thick. Another wall was about 1 mile further out which was called the “Inner Wall” of the city, which really was two walls 20 feet thick, 40 feet apart, with the space being filled with rubble, also containing a deep and wide moat (canal) on the outside. Further on was the outer wall. In the days of ancient warfare the city was considered impregnable.

##### D. The Hanging Gardens of Babylon

The Hanging Gardens of Babylon were one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. It was built by Nebuchadnezzar for his Median Queen on seven tiers of arches, one over another, each bearing a solid platform 400 feet square with flowers, scrubs and trees watered from a reservoir at the top into which water was raised by hydraulic pumps. Underneath the arches were luxurious apartments. It was considered the pleasure ground of the palace.

##### E. Processional Street

Processional Street, the great and royal road, entered at the North, gradually ascended, passed into the palace grounds at the Northeast corner, through the Ishtar Gate, and high over the city, gradually descending to the Southeast corner of the Tower of Babylon, where it turned directly West to the river bridge. On both sides were highly defensive walls which were 20 feet thick and adorned with brilliant and many coloured glazed reliefs of lions. The street was paved with stone slabs, 3 feet square.

##### F. The Babylon Empire

In Daniel's day, the city of Babylon was not only the premier city of the pre-Christian world, but it ruled the most powerful empire that had up to that time existed. The Empire lasted for 70 years. Daniel was there from it's rise to it's fall. The kings under whom Daniel lived were Nabopolassar, Nebuchadnezzar, Eul-Merodach, Nergigisser, Labrish-Marduk, Nabonedus, his son Belshazzar being co-regent the last few years of his reign. Daniel's life in Babylon extended from the first years of Nebuchadnezzar, past the Fall of Babylon, into the Persian Empire, through the reign of Darius the Mede, unto the third year of Cyrus the Persian (10:1).

**IV. THE CITY OF BABYLON (Halley's Handbook) (Contd.)**

**G. The Destruction Prophesied**

It remained an important city through the Perian period. By the time of Christ its political and commercial supremacy had gone and in 1 AD. the greater part was in ruins. Its bricks have been used in building part of Bagdad. For centuries it has been a heap of mounds, a place for the beasts of the desert. Sadam Hussein recent began rebuilding the city and proclaimed himself as the New Nebuchadnezzar. Unfortunately his reign ended in ruin as well.

## THE BOOK OF DANIEL

### CHAPTER 1 THE EARLY LIFE OF DANIEL IN BABYLON

The first chapter of Daniel is a beautifully written, moving story of the early days of Daniel and his companions in Babylon. In a brief and condensed form it records the historical setting of the entire book. It sets the history of Daniel and his experiences in contrast to the prophetic approach of the other major prophets, who were spokesmen to Israel. This chapter explains how Daniel was called, prepared, matured, and blessed of God.

#### I. THE CAPTIVITY OF JUDAH (1:1-2)

The opening verses give the historical setting which includes the first siege and capture of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. Parallel accounts are found in II Kings 24:1-2 and II Chronicles 36:5-7. The seventy years of captivity were, in effect, God claiming the Sabbath, which Israel had violated, in order to give the land rest.

Israel had gone into idolatry (I Kings 11:5; 12:28; 16:31; 18:19; II Kings 21:3-5; II Chronicles 28:2-3), and they had been solemnly warned of God's coming judgement upon them because of their idolatry (Jeremiah 7:24-8:3; 44:20-23). It is significant that after the Babylonian captivity, idolatry never again became a major temptation to Israel. When God's Word is ignored and violated, divine judgement sooner or later is inevitable. Worldly saints do not capture the world but instead become the world's captives.

#### A. Criticism

According to Daniel 1:1, the crucial siege and capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came *"In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah."* Critics have lost no time pointing out an apparent conflict between this statement and that of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 25:1) in that the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon was during the fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign.

#### B. Explanation

1. The simplest and most obvious explanation is that Daniel was using Babylonian reckoning. It was customary for the Babylonians to consider the first year of the a king's reign as the year of accession and to call the following the first year of their reign.

## I. THE CAPTIVITY OF JUDAH (1:1-2) (Contd.)

### B. Explanation (Contd.)

1 (Contd.) - Having spent most of his life in Babylon, it is only natural that Daniel should use the Babylonian form of chronology. By contrast, Jeremiah would use Israel's form of reckoning which would include a part of the year as the first year of Jehoiakim's reign.

2. Theile resolves the discrepancy by assuming that Daniel used the old calendar in Judah which began in the fall during the month of Tishri (Sept-Oct) and Jeremiah used the Babylonian calendar which began in the spring during the month of Nisan (March-April).

The word "*Shinar or Babylonia*" was a term used for Babylon which suggests a place which would be hostile to faith. It was associated with Nimrod (Genesis 10:10) and became the locale of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:2), and is the place to which wickedness is banished (Zechariah 5:11).

## II. JEWISH YOUTHS SELECTED FOR TRAINING (1:3-7)

In explanation of how Daniel and his companions found their way to Babylon, the Bible records that "*Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials . . .*" This is better translated that the king "*told or commanded*" Ashpenaz to bring a selected number of Israelites to Babylon to be trained as servants of the king.

The KJV translates ("*saris*" of Isaiah 56:3) as "*eunuchs*" since it means both "*castrate or court officer.*" Scholars are divided as to its meaning here. The NIV translates it as "*court officials.*" There was a stipulation that they had to be of "*the king's seed or the royal family.*" It literally means "*of the seed of the kingdom,*" that is, of royal descent or of the princes of Israel.

Those carried away captive could well serve as hostages to help keep the royal family of the kingdom of Judah in line. Their presence in the king's court would also be a pleasant reminder to the Babylonian king of his conquest and success in battle. Further, their careful training and preparation to be his servants might well serve Nebuchadnezzar in later administrations of Jewish affairs. Their total physical, personal, and intellectual capabilities as well as their cultural background were factors in the choice.

## II. JEWISH YOUTHS SELECTED FOR TRAINING (1:3-7) (Contd.)

Although an education such as this did not in itself violate the religious scruples of Jewish youth, their environment and circumstances soon presented some real challenges. Among these was the fact that they had a daily provision of food and wine from the king's table. The implication was that the royal food was lavish and properly called "*rich food*" - RSV; "*choice food*" - NASB. The goal was to bring them to intellectual maturity to "*stand before the king*" - KJV or "*enter the king's service*" - NIV). In other words before being trusted with any responsibilities.

Daniel and his three companions were mentioned as being part of the children of Judah as captives (1:6). The corrupting influence of Babylon was probably too much for the others so they were useless in God's hands.

### A. Meaning of Their Names Before They Were Changed

**1. Daniel** - means "*God is my Judge*," and his name is fitting because we see through the entire book where God is in action as a Judge, putting one person down and raising/setting up another.

**2. Hananiah** - means "*Jehovah is gracious*" or "*Graciously given of Jehovah*" which indicates that he was perhaps a child gained through many prayers.

**3. Mishael** - means "*Who is God?*" or "*Who is what God is?*" It is a name with a question as well as a challenge, and the book shows that there is no God like unto the God of Mishael (cf. 3:29).

**4. Azariah** - means "*Jehovah will help or strengthen*." The Lord definitely did help in the time of testing and trial for this young Hebrew slave. He will do the same for us during our hours of darkness and testing.

## II. JEWISH YOUTHS SELECTED FOR TRAINING (1:3-7) (Contd.)

### B. Meaning of the Names after They Were Changed

**1. Belteshazzar** - means "*whom Bel favours*" or "*Bel protects his life.*" He was considered a favourite of the gods. He (Daniel) was definitely a favourite of the One and Only True God and that God indeed protected his life (cf. 6:16,22).

**2. Shadrach** - means "*command of the moon god.*" This is in reference to their moon-god named "*Aku.*" Young considers the name a perversion of Marduk, a principle god of Babylon.

**3. Meshach** - means "*Who is what Aku (their moon-god) is?*" It is a name with a question and a challenge, as his Jewish name was.

**4. Abed-nego** - means "*Servant or worshipper of Nebo.*" Nebo was considered as the son of the Babylonian god Bel.

Daniel in his later writing, generally refers to his own name in Hebrew, but frequently uses the Babylonian names for his companions. Though their names were changed, no circumstances was allowed by these young men to change their natures; while they were placarded with idolatrous names, they remained true in heart and life to the living God.

## III. DANIEL PURPOSES NOT TO DEFILE HIMSELF (1:8-10)

First, the food provided did not meet the requirements of the Mosaic Law in that it was not prepared according to the regulations and may have included meat from forbidden animals. Second, there was no complete prohibition in the matter of drinking wine in the Law; but there was a problem that the wine as well as the meat had been dedicated to idols as was custom in Babylon. It is not to be inferred by this that Daniel never ate meat or drank wine, because he later fasted from such (10:2,3).

Instead of inviting punishment by rebellion, he courteously requested to the prince of the eunuchs that he might be excused from eating food which would defile his conscience (cf. I Corinthians 10:31). The expression "*looking worse*" "*worse liking*" (or "*or poor in comparison*") does not imply any dangerous illness but only a difference in appearance.



#### IV. DANIEL'S REQUEST FOR A TEN-DAY FAST (1:11-14)

The King James Version indicates that this request was made to "*Melzar*" (Heb - "*Hamelsar*"). The probably is that this is not the proper name because it simply means "*the steward or the chief attendant*." Since the chief steward was not in as close or responsible a position as the prince of the eunuchs in relation to the king, he could afford to take a chance.

The request to eat vegetables or "*pulse*" included a broad category of food. Young agrees with Driver that this did not limit the diet to peas and beans but also to food that grows out of the ground (*ie. "sown things"*).

#### V. DANIEL'S REQUEST IS GRANTED (1:15-16)

At the conclusion of the test, Daniel and his companions not only were better in appearance but were also fatter in flesh than those who had continued to eat the king's food. The food they were eating was actually better for them. On the basis of the test their request was granted, and their vegetable diet continued.

#### VI. GOD'S BLESSING ON DANIEL AND HIS COMPANIONS (1:17-21)

The closing of Daniel 1 is a summary of the three years of hard study and the result of God's blessing upon the four faithful young men. The word "*children*" (KJV) is better understood today as "*young men*." By the time they completed their education, they were probably about twenty years of age. In addition to their natural intellectual abilities and their evident careful application to their studies, God added His grace.

Keil has said, "*Daniel needed to be deeply versed in the Chaldean wisdom, as formerly Moses was in the wisdom of Egypt (Acts 7:22), so as to able to put to shame the wisdom of this world by the hidden wisdom of God.*"

The expression "*at the end of days*" (KJV) means at the end of the three year period.

Chapter 1 concludes with the simple statement that Daniel continued even unto the first year of king Cyrus. Critics have again seized upon this as another inaccuracy because according to Daniel 10:1, the revelation was given to Daniel in the third year of Cyrus. Obviously to Daniel, the important point was that his ministry spanned the entire Babylonian empire, and he was still alive when Cyrus came on the scene. The passage does not imply that Daniel did not continue after the first year of Cyrus which, as a matter of fact, he did.

**VI. GOD'S BLESSING ON DANIEL AND HIS COMPANIONS (1:17-21) (Contd.)**

In every age, God is looking for those whom He can use. Here were four young men whose testimony has been a source of strength to every saint in temptation. Certainly Daniel would not have been recognized as a prophet of God and the channel of divine revelation if he had not been a man of prayer and of uncompromising moral character, whom God could honour fittingly.

Daniel and his companions represent the godly remnant which preserved the testimony of God even in the dark hours of apostasy and divine judgement. The noble example of these young men will serve to encourage God's people during their great trials at the end of the age.

Three times in this narrative the activity of God is stressed and emphasized:

1. In National and International affairs (1:2)
2. In Personal affairs (1:9)
3. In Spiritual affairs (1:17)

## THE BOOK OF DANIEL

### CHAPTER 2 NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S VISION OF THE GREAT IMAGE

Chapter 2 gives us the grand outline of the program of God for the period of Gentile supremacy and the chastisement of Israel. Nowhere else in scripture, except for chapter 7, is a more comprehensive picture given of world history as it stretched from the time of Daniel (600 years before Christ), to the consummation at the second advent of Christ. Just as an acorn contains within itself the seed which can produce a great oak tree, so Daniel 2 contains within itself all the great prophecies to follow. Once this chapter is mastered, the subsequent chapters become easier to understand.

The activity of God is seen in three ways. **First**, the dream was sent from God (vs 28). **Second**, the explanation of the dream was given by God (vs 23). **Thirdly**, the accomplishment of the matter was from God (vs 44). So we can see that it is God who is at the control of the events of this prophecy.

Interpretations of the book of Daniel, and especially this chapter, divide into 2 broad categories. The higher critics label it as a 2nd century BC. forgery. Therefore, they state that the writer was merely recording history.

On the other hand, reverent scholars have consistently defended the authenticity of the book as a genuine portion of the Word of God written by Daniel in the sixth century BC.

#### I. Nebuchadnezzar's Dreams Dreams (2:1)

Critics have assailed that this reference to Nebuchadnezzar's second year was inaccurate, but there is an explanation. Nebuchadnezzar had carried off Daniel and his companions immediately after his victory over the Egyptians at Carchemish, which probably took place during May-June, 605 BC. Daniel and his companions therefore entered into their training at Babylon soon after, probably shortly after Nebuchadnezzar had been made king, September 7, 605 BC. at the death of his father, Nebopolassar.

The Babylonian manner of reckoning a king's reign did not regard the unexpired portion of the last year of the deceased monarch as the first year of the new king., but reserved that designation for the first full year of the monarch's rule. In other words the first year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign was not counted, and this gives plausible explanation of the why the dream could occur in the second year and conceivably follow the three years of Daniel's training.

### I. Nebuchadnezzar's Dreams (2:1) (Contd.)

As "dreams" is plural, it implies that he had several dreams which were of such character that he was troubled by their significance and unable to sleep. The Hebrew word for "*troubled*" indicates "*a deep disturbance inducing apprehension.*"

Nebuchadnezzar did something that no believer in God should do: he took his problems to bed with him. Sleeplessness though has been used to fulfill divine purpose. Esther chapter 6 tells of the story of Mordecai exposing an earlier conspiracy to assassinate the king which eventually led to the execution of the wicked Haman and the deliverance of Israel.

### II. All the Wise Men Summoned (2:2-3)

The king quickly summoned all four classes of wise men - the magicians, enchanters (astrologers), sorcerers and Chaldeans. The word "*magicians*" is the translation of the Hebrew word with the root meaning of "*a stylus or pen*" and hence could refer to a scholar rather than a magician in the ordinary sense.

"*Enchanters*" is also translated "*astrologers*" referring to the power of necromancy or communications with the dead.

"*Sorcerers*" are those who practise sorcery or incantations.

"*Chaldeans*" (KJV) is usually interpreted as reference to a group of astrologers. The name itself designates a group of people who lived in Southern Babylonia (Genesis 11:28) and who eventually conquered the Assyrians when Nabopolassar, father of Nebuchadnezzar, was their king.

### III. Revelation of the Dream and its Interpretation Demanded by the King (2:4-6)

The phrase "*in Syriac or Aramaic*" introduces an extended section written in Aramaic instead of Hebrew. It begins in verse 4 and extends to the end of chapter 7. It deals with prophecy which is of primary interest to the Gentiles. It has been stated by Kenneth Kitchen that "*nine-tenths of the vocabulary is attested to in the texts of the fifth century BC. or earlier.*"

In reply to the Chaldeans, the king said, "*The thing is gone from me.*" This translation (KJV) has been challenged by many expositors. All agree that the translation is difficult because of the Hebrew word "*azda*" is used only here and in verse 8. In the LXX, this word with slight alterations is considered to be the verb form meaning "*is gone from me,*" meaning that it is forgotten. The very meaning could, however mean "*gone forth*" in the sense that "*I have decreed.*" Hence the translation could be, "*The thing is certain with me,*" or "*fully decided.*" (cf. NIV).

### III. Revelation of the Dream and its Interpretation Demanded by the King (2:4-6) (Contd.)

It is entirely possible that the wise men were much older than the king, having served his father. It would be understandable that the king might have been somewhat frustrated by these older counsellors and may have had the real desire to be rid of them in favour of the younger men whom he had chosen himself. It may also have been a snap decision arising from the emotion of the moment.

Nebuchadnezzar declares that the wise men would be "*cut into pieces*" and their houses turned into a "*pile of rubble*" or "*made a dunghill.*" This was no idle threat but was in keeping with the cruelty that could be expected by the conquering king. So the wise men were confronted with a supreme test of their superhuman claims.

### IV. The Demand of the King Repeated (2:7-9)

It would seem that if the king had completely forgotten the dream, the wise men could have attempted some sort of an answer. The fact that they did not respond offers the idea that the king was willfully withholding the information he had remembered about the dream. Even if the king was hazy as to the details of the dream and could not recall it enough to provide a basis of interpretation, he probably would have been able to recognize a complete fabrication on the part of the wise men. He accuses them of attempting to "*gain time,*" literally, "*to buy time,*" because "*ye see the thing is gone from me*" or "*you realize that this is what I have firmly decided.*"

### V. Final Plea of the Wise Men Denied (2:10-13)

Although the Chaldeans had confidently claimed to be able to interpret the dream, they were baffled by the demand to tell the dream itself. With an attempt at subtle flattery, they referred to him (or anyone who could answer him) as "*king, lord nor ruler*" which could be translated by combining the three terms as "*great and mighty ruler.*"

Their very bankruptcy of wisdom set the stage for Daniel's divine revelation. It apparently only confirmed the king's suspicion that they were incompetent and incapable of really helping him. He responded with greater anger.

The word "*furious*" comes from a root similar to that from which came the Hebrew word for the wrath of Pharaoh (Genesis 40:2; 41:10).

Although Babylon could refer to the entire empire, it is more probable that the decree was limited to just the city of Babylon (2:49; 3:1).

## VI. Daniel's Request for Time to Seek Interpretation of the Dream (2:14-16)

Arioch, as the captain of the king's guard, had the duty of also serving as the chief executioner. That Arioch would take the time to explain the decree to one already condemned speaks well of Daniel's approach and Arioch's regard for him.

It would hardly have been suitable, especially considering the mood the king was in, for Daniel to go into the king unannounced and without proper procedure. It is quite possible that Daniel's calm assurance that his God was able to help him somehow impressed the king that here was honesty and integrity in contrast to the older counsellors.

## VII. Daniel and his Companions Pray for Wisdom (2:17-18)

Daniel lost no time in going to his house to ask his companions to join him in prayer that God would reveal the secret. As they shared in the danger, they could also share in the intercession. The mercy of God stood in contrast to merciless decree of the king.

The reference to "*the God of heaven*" or literally "*of the heavens*" is an obvious contrast to the religious superstitions of the Babylonians who worshipped the starry heaven. Daniel's God was the God and creator of the heavens, not the just the starry heaven itself. For this supreme hour of testing the Hebrew boys were well prepared because their faith had been previously tested (chapter 1).

The word "*mystery*" or "*secret*" is an important word in the book of Daniel (cf. 2:19,27-30,47; 4:9). The Greek equivalent is a word referring to the secret purposes of God that He reveals only to His chosen prophets and apostles (Mark 13:11; Romans 11:25).

## VIII. Daniel's Prayer Answered (2:19-23)

Deliverance came to Daniel and his companions in the form of a night vision. This apparently was not a dream but a supernatural revelation given to Daniel during his waking hours.

Most significant is Daniel's response in a hymn of praise as he praised the God of heaven who had answered his prayers. A parallel of this hymn can be found in Psalm 103:1,2; 113:1,2. Daniel ascribed to the greatness of God in that He not only had knowledge and wisdom but also the power to do as He wills. Daniel later comments on man's complete dependence upon God for wisdom (2:30)

### IX. Daniel Reports to Nebuchadnezzar (2:24-28)

Arioch at once saw the importance of what had happened and, using his office to introduce Daniel to the king, attempted to get as much credit as he could for discovering a man who could reveal the secret. It is understandable that Arioch would not give God the credit for the interpretation but rather "*a man among the exiles (captives - KJV) from Judah.*"

Daniel's answer is a masterpiece of setting the matter in its proper light and giving glory to God. The repetition of all the classes of wise men is an indication that none of the Babylonians could possibly have met the king's need. Daniel now seizes the opportunity to glorify God and also to disavow any thought that the interpretation stemmed from any innate powers.

In the context of Daniel 2, "*in days to come*" or "*the latter days*" include all the visions which Nebuchadnezzar received which include the time from 600 BC. to the second coming of Christ to the earth. The completion of the last days for the Church marks the beginning of the final moments in the last days for the nation of Israel.

Daniel is now ready to unfold what will occur in the "*last days*" namely, the progression of the four great empires (one being a restoration of the fourth one), and their destruction and replacement by a fifth empire which is the eternal kingdom of heaven.

### X. The Purpose of the Dream (2:29-30)

The dream was a vehicle to reveal the answer to Nebuchadnezzar's question. Just as the king was a remarkable man, so was the dream a remarkable revelation. While Daniel still had the attention of the king eager to learn the secret of his dream, he pressed home the fact that the dream was a means of divine revelation in which God had used to open the eyes and heart of the monarch.

### XI. The Dream Revealed (2:31-35)

Daniel first declares that the king saw "*a large statue*" or "*a great image - KJV.*" The "*image*" was not meant to be an idol but rather a statue corresponding to a human form. In addition to the great size of the statue, was its remarkable brilliance. The image was not seen at a distance but rather standing very close to Nebuchadnezzar. The effect was "*awesome - NIV*" or "*terrible - KJV*" to behold.

Only the first part is recognized as being a whole part. The silver is divided into the arms and the breast. The brass extends from the abdomen into the upper legs or thighs. The legs constitute a division which ends at the 10 toes.

### XI. The Dream Revealed (2:31-35)

The preciousness of the metal deteriorates as it descends from the head of gold to the clay/iron feet. There is also a corresponding lower specific gravity. The approximate specific gravity of gold is 19, silver is 11, brass is 8.5, and iron is 7.8. While the materials decrease in weight, they increase in hardness with the notable exception of the clay in the feet. The image is obviously top heavy and weak at its feet.

While the king watched his dream unfold, he saw a **“rock (stone)”** that was cut out **“but not by human hands”** and smote the image at its weakest point. The rapid disintegration of the entire image followed. It soon became like the chaff that was threshed from the grain. The wind blew until all the pieces away until there was none to be found. In other words there was nothing good in any of these kingdoms. The **“rock (stone - KJV)”** that destroyed the great statue grew until it encompassed the whole earth. The rock was cut out of a mountain (2:45).

### XII. The Interpretation: Babylon the Head of Gold (2:36-38)

Daniel now begins the transition from the dream itself to the interpretation of the dream. The words **“we will interpret”** may be referring to God and himself or his three companions who had joined him in prayer.

Nebuchadnezzar is addressed as the **“king of kings.”** God had assigned him to rule over an empire which included both power, strength and glory. It was quite fitting because he was the supreme monarch over all kings during his generation. It is interesting to note that Ezekiel 26:7 gives the same title to him. This vision sees the empires and world leaders through the eyes of men while chapter 7 gives us the same picture but this time through the eyes of God.

Nebuchadnezzar gained the right of being the world's leader through conflict. His domain included not only humans but also every beast of the field and bird of the air. He was not given the total right to have authority over all things like Adam & Eve were (Genesis 1:28-30). This king of kings temporarily lost this authority as God dealt with him (4:11-14).

Babylon was renown for its gold (see Introduction page 12 B). The king(dom) was therefore represented as the head of gold.



### **XIII. The Interpretation: The Second and Third Kingdom to Follow (2:39)**

Daniel mentions only briefly the second and third kingdom represented by the upper and lowest parts of the body. The statement that the second kingdom is "**inferior**" meant inferior in quality but not necessarily in every aspect.

Persia (the second kingdom) had more territory than ancient Babylon, and the Greek (the third kingdom) was greater in land mass than Medo-Persian. The Roman empire (the fourth kingdom) was the greatest of all in the extent of its boundaries.

No head is bigger than its body. History confirms that the Medo-Persian Empire and the Grecian Empire, lacked the central authority and fine organization that was characterized by the Babylonian Empire. Daniel seems to imply that the inferiority of the succeeding empires would not prevent them from a wider geographical control for it is stated that the third kingdom "**will rule over the whole earth.**"

The descending scale of value of the four metals also suggests the degeneration of the human race through the ages, as also implied in Genesis 4. This vision contradicts the evolutionist's theory of human history. Instead of man beginning in the dust and consummating in the fine gold, God reveals that during the times of the Gentiles man would begin with fine gold and end in dust.

Something very significant is the fact that the third empire ends with the upper part of the legs, or thighs indicating that the third empire would "*territorially*" embrace both the East and the West.

### **XIV. Interpretation: The Fourth Empire, Rome (2:40-45)**

Daniel gives more attention to the fourth kingdom than to all the proceeding kingdoms put together. The first aspect of this kingdom stresses the strength of the iron legs and their power to break to pieces and subdue all that opposes it.

This is precisely what characterized ancient Rome. Leupold states,

"The Roman legions were noted for their ability to crush all resistance with an iron heel. There is little that is constructive in the program of this empire in spite of the Roman law and Roman roads and civilization because of the destructive work outweighed all else, for we have the double verb '*crush and demolish.*'"

[Herbert Carl Leupold](#)

**XIV. Interpretation: The Fourth Empire, Rome (2:40-45) (Contd.)**

Daniel dwells at length with the fact that the feet and toes were made of potter's clay and part of iron. He therefore implies that the material which forms the feet portion of the image will not adhere well to the other.

The presence of iron in the feet indicates an element of strength as Daniel states "***yet it will have some of the strength of iron in it.***" The clay is obviously not still in its soft state but has been hardened by the fire. The word "***hasap***" means "***a formed pottery object.***"

"As the iron denotes the firmness of the kingdom,  
so the clay denotes its brittleness."

Carl Friederich Keil

Another common interpretation of the meaning of the mixture of clay and iron is that it refers to diverse forms of government, such as democracy as opposed to dictatorship. H.A. Ironside, for instance, defines it as

"speaking of an attempted union between  
imperialism and democracy."

"But what does the clay represent? Clay is of the earth. It stands for that which does not belong to the great statue at all, a foreign ingredient brought in. The metals represent monarchies, but the clay stands for democratic rule, the rule by the people."

A. C. Gaebelein

According to Daniel this ten-toed stage appears simultaneously. These kingdoms will exist side by side and be destroyed by one catastrophic blow. Nothing like this has ever occurred in history.

Looking again at the legs there are many opposing views. One view believes that the upper part of the legs represented the twofold stage of the last period of the Alexandrian Empire, which especially concerned the Jews, namely Syria and Egypt. This was two-legged because it embraced two continents, or two major geographical area, the East and the West.

**XIV. Interpretation: The Fourth Empire, Rome (2:40-45) (Contd.)**

The Roman Empire continued this two-fold division and extended its sway over the entire Mediterranean area as well as Western Asia. This was recognized ultimately in the political division of the East and the West by Emperor Valentinian in AD. 364. The Roman Empire embraced a much wider territory in which the Western division became fully as strong as the Eastern, and this seems to be portrayed by the two legs.

Verse 44 cannot refer to our Lord's first coming because the Gentile world power is very much in control today. According to Revelation 19:11-21 (which is generally agreed to refer to His second coming), we see that Jesus will assume command as the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

*"Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. 'He will rule them with an iron scepter.'"*

*Revelation 19:15*

The kings that rule during the last generation of Gentile power will be totally overtaken by the Lord. They will come to an end while His kingdom will become established forever.

Daniel concludes by saying that the fulfilment of this dream will take place with absolute certainty. It comes from God and therefore is sure. Taken as a whole it assures the ultimate rule of God over all the earth according to His sovereign will.

**XV. Nebuchadnezzar Worships and Promotes Daniel (2:46-49)**

Nebuchadnezzar, overwhelmed by the tremendous significance of the image and the demonstration that Daniel's God was greater than any god he worshipped, fell on his face and worshipped Daniel, commanding that an oblation and sweet odours be offered to him.

Some have accused Daniel of accepting worship that should only belong to deity. We can only conclude that if Daniel allowed it to happen it had to have a different significance than we would consider today. It has been suggested that the king merely regarded Daniel as a worthy priest or representative of his God and was honouring him in this way. In other words, even the king understood that Daniel was an ambassador and representative of God but not deity himself.

An interesting parallel is found in the writings of Josephus. He records an instance when Alexander the Great bowed down before the high priest of the Jews. When Parmenion, one of his generals, asked him why, when ordinarily all men would prostrate themselves before Alexander the Great, he replied,

"It was not before him that I prostrate myself, but the God of whom he has the honour to be priest."

The king then exalted Daniel to a high position and lavished many gifts upon him. Being made the ruler of the province of Babylon was indeed an great honour. Yet he was also made the chief of the governors over the wise men. Indeed the word earlier recorded in chapter 1:17, 20 was proven to be correct.

If Daniel had lived during in second century during the strict legalism among the Jews, it would have been doubtful that he would have received such honours from a heathen king.

Having been honoured by the king, Daniel, in all fairness to his three companions who had joined him in prayer that the secret might be revealed, requested that they too might have a position of power and influence in Babylon. Daniel though, was set apart "*in the gate of the king - KJV*" which meant he served in the royal court.

\*\*\* A young man fresh from his university education, desired to enter politics with the express purpose of cleaning up the whole thing. He was a Christian. His father invited a well-known minister and Bible scholar to his home. It was arranged that the minister would give the young man a Bible study.

One morning, the famous Bible scholar sat on one end of the sofa and the young politician sat on the other. The minister stated that his first Bible study would be the second chapter of Daniel.

This chapter was expounded with great wonder, admiration, and astonishment by the young man. When it was all finished all the ideas in the young man's head of becoming a politician and of cleaning up politics were gone from him.

The next day the famous Doctor of Divinity had to return home, but not before he had done a real work in the mind of the young man. He turned his mind to other things, and became the first American Director of the China Inland Mission, Henry W. Frost. The minister was Dr. Erdman, one of the greatest Bible student and scholars of his time. \*\*\*

## THE BOOK OF DANIEL

CHAPTER 3  
THE GOLDEN IMAGE OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR

The account of the golden image which was erected on the plain of Dura records Nebuchadnezzar's reaction to the revelation of chapter 2 in which he (as the representative of Babylon) was symbolized as the head of gold. The astounding courage of Daniel's companions has inspired God's people in similar times of trial throughout history.

Hebrews 11, in summarizing the "Heroes of Faith" mentions those, "*Who through faith . . . Quenched the fury of the flames (violence of fire- KJV).*" (Hebrews 11:33,34). In chapter 3 we read the account of how the three Hebrew companions were tested, charged, arraigned, convicted, preserved, and honoured.

## I. THE IMAGE OF GOLD (3:1-7)

The date of this chapter is not given and therefore there has been many speculations. It may well be however that twenty years elapsed between chapter 2 and chapter 3.

The image is described as being 60 cubits (90 feet) high and 6 cubits (9 feet) broad. It is interesting that the number six is predominant in it's measurements. Six is the number of man in the Bible, and here we see an image inciting man-made worship. Here mankind is called to worship the working of man's hands. It is **MAN WORSHIP** in opposition to **GOD WORSHIP**.

The Hebrew word for "*image*" implies, as Leupold says, "An image in the very broadest sense," probably in human form although the proportions are far too narrow for a normal figure. The image may have been on a pedestal with only the upper part of the image resembling human form.

It is believed that the intent was to impress by the size of the image rather than by its particular features. Some believe that its purpose was to unite all world religions into one. I feel that it was made by a king who was full of pride in a feeble attempt to become a political object to test the allegiance of the people.

Although Nebuchadnezzar had tremendous wealth and could have conceivably erected this image of solid gold, it is probable that it was made of wood overlaid with gold as was custom of the day (Isaiah 40:19; 41:7; Jeremiah 10:3-7).

**I. THE IMAGE OF GOLD (3:1-7) (Contd.)**

The expression "*Dura*," as Leupold states, "is a rather common name in Mesopotamia, being the name that is applicable to any place which is enclosed by a wall." The name simply means "*the walled place*." The consensus of conservative scholarship is that the most probable location is a mound located six miles southeast of Babylon consisting of a large brick construction which would have ideally served as a base for such an image. It was found to be 45 feet square and 20 feet high.

The official titles used in Daniel 3:2-3 help to date the book into the sixth century and refute the second century date given by critics. The exact function of each office is not given, but seven classes of officials are designated. The following explanation by Keil is probably the best we have.

KJV	MEANING
Princes	administrators, guardians, or watchers (satraps) governors ....commanders or military chiefs
Captains	presidents or governors of civil governments
Judges	counsellors of the government, chief arbitrators
Treasurers	superintendents of the public treasury
Counsellors	lawyers or guardians of the law
Sheriffs	judges in a stricter sense of the term

Studies on musical instruments in Daniel 3 conducted by T.C. Mitchell and R. Joyce have given support to the authenticity of the instruments listed as being used in the sixth century B.C. These instruments probably provided as full an orchestra as could be arranged in Babylon.

**I. THE IMAGE OF GOLD (3:1-7) (Contd.)**

KJV	MEANING
Cornet	horn instrument (from the horn of a beast)
Flute	made of reeds (similar to a fife)
Harp	some sort of stringed instrument
Sackbut	triangular board to which strings were attached
Psalter	stringed instrument with 20 strings (harp?)
Dulcimer	a wind instrument

To these were added other instruments as "*all kinds of music.*"

Keil and others are probably correct in stating that the people were simply recognizing a symbol of power of the empire which included the recognition of its heathen gods.

"A refusal to yield homage to the gods of the kingdom, they regarded as an act of hostility against the kingdom and its monarch, while everyone might at the same time honour his own national god."

Carl Friederich Keil  
*"Biblical Commentary on the Book of Daniel"*

**II. DANIEL'S COMPANIONS ACCUSED BY THE CHALDEANS (3:8-12)**

Undoubtedly there was resentment against these Jews who had been placed by Nebuchadnezzar in charge of the province of Babylon because they were of another race and of a captive people. The stage was set and the Chaldeans made three charges against Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego.

**First**, they showed no regard for the king. **Second**, they did not serve the king's gods. **Third**, they did not worship the golden image which Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

## II. DANIEL'S COMPANIONS ACCUSED BY THE CHALDEANS (3:8-12) (Contd.)

The **First** charge was false because they had shown their personal loyalty for approximately 20 years. The **Second** accusation was more than merely a religious difference. To challenge Nebuchadnezzar's gods, was to challenge Nebuchadnezzar himself and to raise a question as to the political integrity of the three men accused.

The arguments were calculated to arouse the anger of Nebuchadnezzar and to bring about the downfall of these three men with the possibility that the Chaldeans might be given greater authority in the political affairs of the empire.

### **There are 4 important lessons we can learn from this portion of Scripture.**

1. The favour of the world did not turn their heads, much less their hearts. They were favoured by the king, but refused to let that favour influence their faith in God and their faithfulness to Him.
2. They were still the true men we saw in chapter 1. They were going on from strength to strength, from faith to faith, and from victory to victory.
3. The prophetic picture of chapter 2, which no doubt they knew and understood, enabled them to profit. They turned prophecy into good use. They used it for their spiritual advantage.
4. They typify the future remnant, who in the last days shall refuse to worship the image set up for world-wide worship (Revelation 13)

## III. DANIEL'S COMPANIONS REFUSE TO WORSHIP THE IMAGE (3:13-18)

Nebuchadnezzar, in spite of his anger, gave them a second chance which lesser men might not have afforded. Yet even though he conquered the world, he still was not able to conquer his temper.

Some have asked where Daniel was at this time. It is quite possible that either he was away on business affairs or that he was excused from such a "loyalty oath" because of his highly recognized position. Lest it be thought unfair that he was excused from this severe test of his faith while his friends were forced to endure it, do not forget that the den of lions awaited Daniel! God does not test all of His children at the same time or in the same manner.



### III. DANIEL'S COMPANIONS REFUSE TO WORSHIP THE IMAGE (3:13-18) (Contd)

The fact that he distinguishes between serving his gods and worshipping the image (vs 14,18) though they are interrelated, seems to confirm the idea that the worship was primarily political, although the fact that they did not worship his gods led to a condemning circumstance. He makes it clear that there is no alternative but to worship the image he had made. He seems to feel supreme in his power and does not expect any god to interfere.

The Aramaic word translated "*need*" NIV or "*careful*" KJV may be considered a technical word for "*need*." Hence, the statement may be translated, "*There is no need for us to answer thee on this matter.*"

There was no doubt about what they had done, but their purpose in not conforming was what should have been brought into question. Was it really that their purpose was to dishonour the gods of Babylon and to disobey the king? NO! Rather they set their priorities on Whom they would serve.

The article should be omitted before "*burning fiery furnace*" in verse 17, with the resultant meaning that He could deliver them from ANY fiery furnace, not just the one immediately at hand.

The expression, "*But if not,*" should be understood as referring to the deliverance **NOT** the ability of God. They took into consideration that it is not always in God's purpose to deliver His faithful ones from martyrdom. Even if God would not deliver them, they would not change their decision to refuse to worship the gods of Babylon and the golden image.

*"Though he slay me, yet will I trust him."*

*Job 13:15*

### III. DANIEL'S COMPANIONS REFUSE TO WORSHIP THE IMAGE (3:13-18) (Contd.)

\*\*\* The persistent refusal of these faithful Hebrew believers finds a parallel in the story of John Chrysostum (A.D. 347-407). He was one of the greatest of the Greek Church Fathers. As a young Christian he was brought before the emperor. The emperor said to him that if he would not give up Christ, but insisted on becoming a Christian, *"I will banish you from the country - your father's land - I will banish you."*

Chrysostum said, *"You cannot; the whole world is my Father's land. You cannot banish me."*

The emperor then said, *"I will take away all your property."*

Chrysostum said, *"You cannot. My treasures are in heaven."*

The emperor then tried again by saying, *"I will send you to a place where there is not a friend to speak to you."*

Chrysostum replied to that, *"You cannot. I have a friend that 'sticketh closer than a brother!' I shall have my Brother, Jesus Christ, forever."*

But the emperor finally answered, *"I will take away your life."*

Chrysostum finally answered, *"You cannot. My life is hid with Christ in God."*

What could the emperor do with a man like that? Nothing! Just nothing. \*\*\*

There were probably many ways they could have rationalized the situation they were facing in an attempt to avoid the king's decree. Today's Christians are sometimes masters at rationalizing away the clear commands of Scripture. They could have rationalized as follows:

1. We are not required to forsake the worship of Jehovah forever.
2. We are not required to become idolaters because we are only required to bow once. We can do it with mental reservation and then confess it! God will forgive us.
3. If we bow down we are simply following the orders set down by the king. He would be responsible and God would forgive us.
4. We need to consider that Nebuchadnezzar has treated us well, educating us and appointing us to positions of honour.

**III. DANIEL'S COMPANIONS REFUSE TO WORSHIP THE IMAGE (3:13-18) (Contd.)**

5. Here we are in a strange land, a 1000 miles from home. Didn't the Scriptures say that those driven out of their homeland would serve strange gods? Perhaps that means, "When in Babylon, do as the Babylonians do!"

6. What about our ancestors? They set up idols in the temple in Jerusalem as well as erecting altars all over the land. It must be alright - everyone is doing it.!

7. If we bow to the image, our lives will be spared and we will continue to occupy our strategic positions in government and be able therefore to help our people when they need it. Doesn't the end justify the means?

**IV. DANIEL'S COMPANIONS CAST INTO THE FURNACE (3:19-23)**

The answer to Nebuchadnezzar left no doubt as to their determination not to serve the gods of Babylon and worship the image. According to the Law (Exodus 20:4-6) making of an idol and bowing down to it was forbidden.

Nebuchadnezzar was as angry as possibly could be. His face was distorted, and his pride had been severely damaged. He therefore provoked a foolish order to heat the furnace seven times hotter than usual, as if it would increase their torment. Actually, a slow fire would have created more torture.

The Scripture relates that they were bound in their coats, hose (trousers), and hats as well as their other garments. Normally criminals were stripped before execution; but in view of the execution and the haste of the whole operation, there was no particular point in stripping off their clothes. This enhanced the testimony of the delivering power of God further on.

Here was a testimony of the Word of God as prophesied by Isaiah,

*"When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze."*

*Isaiah 43:2*

The apostle Peter also offered a word of encouragement to those who would pass through "fiery trials (I Peter 1:7; 4:12).

## V. THE MIRACULOUS DELIVERANCE FROM THE FURNACE (3:24-27)

Nebuchadnezzar was apparently seated in such a manner as to be able to observe the interior of the furnace. What he saw, however, brought him to complete astonishment. Instead of three men, he saw four; instead of being bound, they were free; instead of writhing in anguish in the flames, they were walking about in the fire and making no attempt to come out. Further, it was quite apparent that they were not hurt; most astounding of all, he had the impression that . . .

*"the form of the fourth is like the Son of God (son of the gods - NIV)"*

*Daniel 3:25*

While it is entirely possible that the fourth person in the fiery furnace was indeed the Son of God, it would be doubtful whether Nebuchadnezzar would comprehend this, unless he had been given a prophetic insight. The word "*elahin*" whenever used in the plural in the Aramaic section gives the translation of "*god*" as compared to "*God*" when used in the Hebrew section.

When Nebuchadnezzar gave reference to "*servants of the Most High God,*" he was not disavowing his own deities but merely recognizing on the basis of the tremendous miracle that the God of Israel was greater.

Scripture records that all the higher governmental officials were there to witness this event of miraculous deliverance of the children of God. The fire had not damaged their garments in any way; only the ropes which bound them, the symbols of Nebuchadnezzar's unbelief and wrath, were destroyed in the fire.

\*\*\* Brother Bill Harrod was a boilermaker before he was converted. A muscular 210 pounder in his prime, he was candid about what he called, "*the sins of my youth.*"

Brother Bill worked his heart out for the bodies and souls of the poor folks in West Dallas. His sermons were delivered in colourful language, as on the occasion when he preached on Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

"This wicked old king took and th'owed those three little bench-legged Israelite boys into the fiery furnace. But God was with them boys and they stayed cool as cucumbers down there and grinned up at the wicked king like three mules eating cockleburs."

\*\*\*

## VI. THE DECREE OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR (3:28-30)

Just as Nebuchadnezzar had acknowledged Daniel's God at the conclusion of chapter 2, so here he admits to the power of the Israelite God and issues a decree in an oriental style commemorating the event.

The expression "*the Son of God*" (3:25)(KJV) is a translation of the Aramaic "*bar 'elahin*" which means "*a divine being.*" Nebuchadnezzar interprets this in verse 28 as a "*mal'ak,*" meaning "*an angel.*" The alternative that God sent a mighty angel to protect them is, of course, also in keeping with other Scriptures.

Taken as a whole, chapter 3 is a thrilling account of young men remaining true to God under a severe trial. The common excuses for spiritual compromise, especially the blaming of contemporary influences, are contradicted by the faithfulness of God to those who call upon His Name. In spite of separation from their parents and of the increasing corrupting influences of the Babylon religion, political pressure, and immorality, they did not waver in their hour of testing.

Also the contrast of the God of Israel to the idols of Babylon is a reminder that the god of this world, behind the Gentile dominion, is doomed to judgement at the hands of our Sovereign God.

Another important lesson is found from the fact that "*there was no smell of fire on them*" (vs 27). Others may see the product of our trials, but we need not tell them the processes nor of the persecutions we have gone through. May we so live through our trials of faith in a manner that when we come through, the odour of the trial or persecution or discipline may not remain on us. Just let the sweet smelling savour of obedience be an aroma for many to witness.

## THE BOOK OF DANIEL

### CHAPTER 4 NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S PRIDE AND PUNISHMENT

This chapter which occupies such a large portion of the book of Daniel is more than a profound story of how God can bring a man to place of humility. Daniel, a man of prayer, undoubtedly prayed for Nebuchadnezzar and eagerly sought some evidence of God's working in his heart. Even merely as a lesson in the spiritual progress of a man in the hands of God, this chapter is a literary gem.

The theme of this chapter, as given by Daniel himself in the interpretation of the dream, is God's dealings with Nebuchadnezzar *"until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men, and gives them to anyone he wishes"* (vs 25).

The content of this chapter is found in the form of a decree recording this dream, Daniel's interpretation, and Nebuchadnezzar's subsequent experience. Whether written by Nebuchadnezzar himself, or more possibly by Daniel at the king's direction, the inclusion of it in the Book of Daniel is by divine inspiration.

#### I. INTRODUCTION OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S PROCLAMATION (4:1-3)

The first verse of chapter 4 is the natural form for such a decree. That it should be sent *"To the peoples, nations, and men of every language, who live in all the world"* (vs 1) is not out of keeping with the extensive character of Nebuchadnezzar's empire, although he was well aware of the fact that not all of the world's geography was under his power.

Although the benediction *"May you prosper greatly"* NIV or *"Peace be multiplied unto you"* KJV is strikingly similar to some of Paul's greetings in his epistles. It was a common form of expression in the ancient world. A greeting much like it is found in Daniel 6:25 where Darius wrote with almost the same wording.

The expression *"the miraculous signs and wonders"* (vs 2) is also a familiar idiom of Scripture (Deuteronomy 6:22; 7:19; 13:1,2; 26:8; Nehemiah 9:10; Isaiah 8:18). The expression *"the Most High God"* (vs 2) is another evidence that Nebuchadnezzar regarded the God of Israel as exalted; but not in itself proof that he was a monotheist, trusting in only one God.

## II. WISE MEN UNABLE TO INTERPRET THE DREAM (4:4-7)

In his early reign he was active in military conquest. Now his vast domains had been made secure, and Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilling his heart's desire by making Babylon one of the most famous cities in the ancient world.

In describing himself as “*at home in my place, contended and prosperous*” (vs 4) NIV “*flourishing in my palace*” KJV he used a word meaning “*to be green*” such as growth of green leaves on a tree. It was an evident anticipation of the dream which followed. The expression “*made me afraid*” (vs 5) is actually much stronger in the original and indicates extreme terror or fright.

Upon being told the dream, the wise men, described here in their various categories, as also in Daniel 2:2, were not able to make known the interpretation of the dream.

## III. DANIEL TOLD THE KING'S DREAM (4:8-18)

The decree was going throughout the whole kingdom where most people would know Daniel by his Babylonian name, Belteshazzar. The king in recognition of the fact that Daniel's God was the interpreter of the dream, calls Daniel by his Hebrew name. Of Daniel it is said “*the spirit of the holy gods is in him*” (vs. 8). It is debatable whether “*gods*” is singular or plural, as it could be translated either way.

Daniel, addressed by his heathen name, is further described as the “*chief of the magicians*” (vs 9). This was intended by Nebuchadnezzar to be a compliment in recognition of the genius of Daniel. Leupold suggests that “*magicians*” should be translated “*scholars*” to give the true meaning and avoid the implication of mere magic.

Of interest is the statement concerning the prince of Tyrus, “*Are you wiser than Daniel; Is no secret hidden from you?*” (Ezekiel 28:3). This statement, which the critics find hard to explain, as it confirms a sixth century Daniel, also supports the idea that Daniel's fame had spread far and wide among his contemporaries.

Young states, “*among the commentators Haevernick particularly has illustrated the fondness with which the Orientals depicted the rise and fall of human power by means of a symbol of a tree.*” Nebuchadnezzar probably anticipated that the tree represented himself, and this added to his concern.

### III. DANIEL TOLD THE KING'S DREAM (4:8-18)(Contd.)

As Nebuchadnezzar observed the scene, an actor appeared in the form of "*a messenger (watcher - KJV) and an holy one*" (vs 13) who is described as "*coming down from heaven.*" In the light of the full revelation of the Word of God, the most natural conclusion is that this person was an angel sent from God even though the word is not used.

That angels are messengers or watchers, or better translated "*vigilant, making a sleepless watch,*" is not foreign to the concept of angels in other parts of the Scriptures. He probably didn't understand what an angel was even though he used the word in 3:28.

The heavenly messenger cries aloud, literally cries "*with might.*" To the unnamed listeners, he calls for the tree to be cut down, its branches cut off, its leaves to be shaken off, and its fruit to be scattered. The beasts under it and the fowls in its branches were instructed to flee.

Special instructions were given regarding the stump; and these indicate that the tree would be revived later. The stump was to be bound with a band of iron and brass. Such a band would prevent the stump from rotting; and it is probable here that it is symbolic of the madness which would inflict Nebuchadnezzar and hold him symbolically, if not in reality, in chains.

The prophecy concludes with the expression, "*till seven times pass by for him.*" (16). This may refer to seven years or merely to a long period of time. Probably the most common interpretation is to consider it seven years as in the Septuagint. The messenger then concludes that the decree proceeds from "*the messengers*" NIV or "*watchers*" KJV and by the "*holy ones.*" That God can set up in a position of power the lowliest of men is a common truth of Scripture (cf.- I Samuel 2:7,8; Job 5:11; Psalm 113:7-8; Luke 1:52; as well as the story of Joseph).



### III. DANIEL TOLD THE KING'S DREAM (4:8-18)(Contd.)

\*\*\* A woman visiting Switzerland came to a sheepfold on one of her daily walks. Venturing in she saw a shepherd seated on the ground with his flock around him. Nearby, on a pile of straw lay a single sheep which seemed to be suffering. Looking closely, the woman saw that its leg was broken. Her sympathy went out to the suffering sheep and she looked up inquiringly to the shepherd, asking how it happened.

*"I broke it myself," said the shepherd sadly, and then explained. "Of all the sheep in the flock this was the most wayward. It would not obey my voice and would not follow when I was leading the flock. On more than one occasion it wandered to the edge of a perilous cliff. And not only was it disobedient itself, but it was leading other sheep astray. Based on my experience,*

*I had no choice but to brake its leg. The next day I tried to take it food but it tried to bite me. After letting it lie alone for a couple of days, I went back and it not only eagerly took the food but licked my hand and showed every sign of submission and affection. When this sheep is well it will be the model of my entire flock. Instead of leading others astray, it will be an example of devotion and obedience learned through its suffering."* \*\*\*

### IV. DANIEL INTERPRETS THE DREAM (4:19-27)

No doubt Daniel was not only troubled by the content of the dream but by the need to tell Nebuchadnezzar the interpretation in an appropriate way. Daniel's consternation at the interpretation of the dream is indicated in that he was **"was greatly perplexed for a time"** (vs 19) to be understood as being in a state of great concern for a period of time. An accurate translation would be he **"was stricken dumb for a while"** (ASV). Daniel finally interprets the statement as meaning that the dream would please the king's enemies. Daniel had a high regard for the king and undoubtedly wished the interpretation of the dream could have been different.

Having begun the interpretation, Daniel immediately identifies the tree as representing Nebuchadnezzar. The meaning of the tree being cut down and the circumstances that followed were defined. The king was to be driven from his ordinary association with men and made to dwell with the beasts of the field. In this condition he would eat grass like an oxen of the field and suffer the dew of heaven until he understood that God gives to men the power to rule as He wills. The interpretation of the bands of iron and brass was that the kingdom would be restored to the king after he came back to his senses.

#### IV. DANIEL INTERPRETS THE DREAM (4:19-27)(Contd.)

The expression, "*that Heaven rules,*" (vs 26) is of particular interest for it is the only time in the Old Testament where the word "*Heaven*" is substituted for "*God*." The usage became prominent in later literature as in I Maccabees as well as in the book of Matthew where the term "*kingdom of heaven*" is similar to "*kingdom of God*."

With upmost courtesy, he urges the king to replace his sins with righteousness and his iniquities with showing mercy to the poor, if perchance God would lengthen the period of tranquillity. This passage has created some controversy because of the mistranslation in the Latin Vulgate which reads, "*Cancel thy sins by deeds of charity and thine iniquities by deeds of kindness to the poor.*"

This, of course, is not what is recorded in the Book of Daniel. Nebuchadnezzar is not promised forgiveness on the grounds of good works or alms to the poor. It is rather that if he is a wise and benevolent king, he would alleviate the necessity of God's intervention with immediate judgement because of Nebuchadnezzar's pride.

#### V. THE DREAM FULFILLED (4:28-33)

Although the fulfilment was not immediate, the decree sums up concisely, "*All this happened to King Nebuchadnezzar.*" The time of his judgement was fulfilled twelve months later as he walked in the palace of Babylon admiring his accomplishments. Montgomery finds this description of Nebuchadnezzar precisely fitting with historical context:

"The setting of the scene and the king's self complaisance in his glorious Babylon are strikingly true to history. Every student of history recalls these proud words in reading Nebuchadnezzar's own records of his creation of the new Babylon; for instance (Grotesfend Cylinder KB iii, 2, p.39): *'Then I built the palace the seat of my royalty, the bond of the race of men, the dwelling of joy and rejoicing;* and (East India House Inscr. vii, 34, KB ib.,p.25): *In Babylon, my dear city, which I love was the palace, the house of wonder of the people, the bond of the land, the brilliant place, the abode of the majesty in Babylon.'*"

## V. THE DREAM FULFILLED (4:28-33) (Contd.)

Among the wonders of Nebuchadnezzar's creation were the hanging gardens of Semiraris regarded as one of the Seven Wonders of the World. These gardens, of such height to be seen outside the walls, were said to have been built by Nebuchadnezzar to gratify the desire of his wife Amytis to gaze upon mountains like those of her native Media.

In reference to the sickness which overcame the king, Raymond Harrison recites a personal experience with a modern case similar to that of Nebuchadnezzar, which he observed in a British mental institution in 1946. Harrison writes,

\*\*\* "The present writer, therefore, considers himself particular fortunate to have observed a clinical case of Boanthropy in the British mental institution in 1946. The patient was in his early 20's, who reportedly had been hospitalized for five years ...

His mental symptoms included pronounced anti-social tendencies, and because of this he spent the entire day from dawn to dusk outdoors, in the grounds of the institution . . . and it was his custom to pluck up and eat handfuls of grass as he went along. On observation he was seen to discriminate carefully between grass and weeds.

On inquiry from the attendant the writer was told the diet of his patient consisted exclusively of grass from the hospital lawns ...

The writer was able to examine him cursorily, and the only physical abnormality noted consisted of a lengthening of the hair and a coarse, thickening condition of the fingernails. Without institutional care, the patient would have manifested precisely the same physical conditions as those mentioned in Daniel 4:33 .\*\*\*

The experience of Nebuchadnezzar has been compared by liberal critics to the "*prayer of Nabonidus*," in Cave IV Document of the Qumran literature. The prayer describes Nabonidus as being afflicted with a "*dread disease by the decree of the most High God*," which required his segregation at the Arabian oasis of Teima for a period of seven years.

An unnamed Jewish seer is said to have advised Nabonidus to repent and give glory to God instead of the idols her formerly worshipped. Conservative scholars, who recognize that the book of Daniel is genuine as a sixth century BC. writing, see no conflict in accepting both Daniel 4 as it is written and the "*Prayer of Nabonidus*" as having some elements of truth, although apocryphal. In fact, as the discussion of Daniel 5 brings out, the fact that Nabonidus lived in Teima for extended periods, well attested in tradition, gives plausible explanation as to why Belshazzar was in charge in Babylon during the writing of Daniel 5.

## V. THE DREAM FULFILLED (4:28-33)(Contd.)

\*\*\* In reference to the king's pride and subsequent fall there is a story in Greek mythology of one Daedalus and his son Icarus. Daedalus wished that he and his son might have the pleasure of flying.

He made wings for both, and carefully fitted them on with wax. They took their flight from the island of Crete. The son who was not humble-minded made the flight to fly a great deal higher than his father, and went soaring up into the heavens.

But he got too near the sun, which melted the wax causing the wings to fall off. He fell head over heels into the sea. The part of the Mediterranean he fell into was named Icarian Sea after him, as a warning to the spirit of pride. \*\*\*

## VI. NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S RESTORATION (4:34-37)

Although the previous narrative had been couched in the third person, Nebuchadnezzar now returns and takes his position in the first person. He records how he lifted up his eyes toward heaven and his understanding returned. Looking up to heaven was probably the first step in his recognition of the God of Heaven and subsequently gaining a sensible perspective on the whole situation. What effect this had on his belief of other deities is not stated, but at least it opens the door to the possibility that Nebuchadnezzar had now placed his true faith in the God of Israel.

In praising and honouring God, he attributes to God the quality of living forever, and having everlasting dominion, and of directing a kingdom which is from generation to generation. These qualities of eternity and sovereignty are far greater than those attributed to Babylonian deities.

No doubt his counsellors had maintained some sort of watch over him, and due to the sudden change a report was given. They immediately sought his return to his former position of honour. It was in this role that he was able to issue the decree and make his public confession. Nebuchadnezzar's experience brings the obvious spiritual lesson that even the greatest of earthly sovereigns are completely subject to the Sovereign Power of God.

His issuance of a decree somewhat humiliating to his pride and a full recognition of the power of God whom he identified as "*the King of heaven*" (4:37) would give us some basis for believing that Nebuchadnezzar had a true confession. Certainly God is no respecter of persons and can save the high and mighty in this world as well as the lowly.

**VI. NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S RESTORATION (4:34-37)(Contd.)**

A few timely truths of this chapter are:

- 1.** God alone is sovereign and supreme in the affairs of even the most powerful men, and man's place before Him is always that humility.
- 2.** God hates pride and will deal with it. Pride led to the downfall of Lucifer, the highest of God's angels, and it will ultimately destroy the unsaved.
- 3.** God's judgment on Nebuchadnezzar is a prophetic pattern of what will happen to all the proud and arrogant world leaders, whether an ancient Pharaoh, Haman, or Nebuchadnezzar, or a modern Hitler, Stalin, or Saddam Hussein.
- 4.** The Lord God expects the leaders of this world to express:
  - a. Him as the most high God (3:26;4:2,17,24,25,32:5:18,21)
  - b. His dominion and kingdom are everlasting (2:44;7:14,27)
  - c. His infiniteness (Job 34:14,15, 18-24; Isaiah 40:15-17)
  - d. His supremacy over all (Psalm 33:9-11; Isaiah 14:24-27)
  - e. His almightiness (Job 9:4,13; Acts 5:39)
  - f. His justice (4:37; Deuteronomy 32:4; I Samuel 2:3; Psalm 145:17)

## THE BOOK OF DANIEL

### CHAPTER 5 BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST AND THE FALL OF BABYLON

Almost seventy years pass between the events of chapter 1 of Daniel and this chapter. Nebuchadnezzar himself died in 562 BC. An account of Berosus, in his third book found in a fragment preserved by Josephus summarized the history between Nebuchadnezzar's death in 562 BC. and the fall of Babylon in 539 BC.

According to Berosus, Nebuchadnezzar died after a reign of 43 years and was followed by his son Evil-merodach. Because his rule was arbitrary and licentious, he was assassinated by Neriglissar after he had reigned only two years. Neriglissar occupied the throne for the next four years. After his death, Laborosorarchod, who was his only child, reigned for six months until a conspiracy resulted in him being beaten to death.

The conspirators appointed Nabonidus, one of their number, who reigned for 17 years before being defeated by Cyrus the Persian. Nabonidus fled Babylon and went to Borsippa but was forced to surrender to Cyrus the Persian. Nabonidus was allowed to live in Carmania until the time of his death, but he was not allowed to go back to Babylonia.

According to J.A. Brinkman, "*Probably the first mention of Belshazzar, Prince of Babylonia under Nabonnedus*" is in a cuneiform text 135 in a collection at the Archaeological Museum in Florence published in 1958-60 by Professor Karl Oberhuber. Therefore the argument that Belshazzar never existed because he could not be found ancient literature was remedied with the discovery of the name Bel-shar-usur (Belshazzar) on cylinders which he is called the son of Nabonidus. Since Rowley's support, even liberal scholars have tended to accept the explanation that Belshazzar acted as a regent under his father.

#### I. BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST IN HONOUR OF THE GODS OF BABYLON (5:1-4)

Approximately 23 years elapse between chapter 4 and 5. During this time the revelations recorded in chapters 7 & 8 occur.

Verse 1 of chapter 5 introduces the fact that Belshazzar as king of Babylon had made a great feast to which a thousand of his lords had been invited with their wives. Leupold cites the ancient historian Ktesias to the effect that the Persian monarchs frequently were known to dine daily with 15,000 people. Mallowan mentions the great feast that Ashurnasirpal II gave to 69,574 guests when he dedicated his new capital city of Calah (Nimrud) in 879 B.C.

## I. BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST IN HONOUR OF THE GODS OF BABYLON (5:1-4)(Contd.)

Although the size of the banquet is not amazing, the circumstances surrounding it was most unusual. Nabonidus had previously been conquered by the Medes and Persians. The whole surrounding territory of the city of Babylon and the related provinces had also been conquered. Only Babylon with its massive walls and fortifications remained intact and undefeated.

Possibly to reassert their faith in their Babylonian gods and to bolster their own courage, this feast in the form of a festival had been ordered. The expression "*drank wine before the thousand*" (KJV) indicates that Belshazzar was probably on a platform at a higher level than the other guests and led them in drinking toasts to their own deities.

The implication in the clause "*While Belshazzar was drinking his wine*" (vs 2) is that Belshazzar in a sober mind probably would not have committed this sacrilegious act. The reference to "*father*" (vs 2) may be understood as "*grandfather*." A Pusey states "*Neither in Hebrew, nor in Chaldee, is there any word for grandfather or grandson.*" Forefathers are called "*fathers*" or "*fathers fathers*." But the single grandfather or grandmother is never called "*father's father*" but always "*father*" only.

The sacred vessels taken from Jerusalem had apparently been kept in storage without sacrilegious use from Nebuchadnezzar's day until the occasion of the feast. Now these vessels were distributed among the crowd and used from which to drink wine.

The act of sacrilege was an intentioned religious gesture in praise of the gods of Babylon mentioned in order of importance as "gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone." Belshazzar both knew Daniel (5:13) and the history of Nebuchadnezzar's experience (5:22) yet he continued.

Some have found, in the six materials mentioned, a typical reference to "*the number of the world amendable to judgement because of its hostility to God.*" Whatever it may suggest we do know that Belshazzar was challenging the God whose vessels he was using to stop him, if He could! God accepted the challenge!

## II. THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL (5:5-9)

While the feast was in progress suddenly there appeared the fingers of a man's hand which wrote on the plastered wall of the palace. With only the fingers of the hand visible and producing writing on the wall, the spectacle immediately attracted attention.

In the ruins of Nebuchadnezzar's palace archaeologists have uncovered a large throne room 56 feet wide and 173 feet long which probably was the scene of the banquet. Midway in the long wall opposite the entrance there was a niche in front of which the king may well have been seated. Interestingly, the wall behind the niche was covered with white plaster as described by Daniel, which would make an excellent background for such a writing.

The effect on the king was immediate. His countenance changed, that is, changed colour and became pale. His thin courage which had been bolstered by his wine drinking quickly vanished him.

Only three classes of wise men are mentioned in verse 7, but it is doubtful whether any class was intentionally omitted as verse 8 mentions, "*Then all the king's wise men came in.*" These men were supposed to be able to read such heavenly signs and predict the future. The opportunity was afforded them but they once again stood helpless. The world has nothing to offer a convicted conscience!

Much speculation has arisen concerning the expression that he offered them the position of being "*the third highest ruler in the kingdom*" (vs. 7) Belshazzar under Nabonidus was considered the second ruler, so therefore, the position of the third ruler would be the highest he could offer at the time. The large amount that was offered however, was to no avail, for the wise men could not read the writing or interpret it.

The difficulty of reading the writing may have been that it was written in an Aramaic script without vowels being supplied; but if written in cuneiform, the vowels would have been included.

## III. DANIEL SUGGESTED AS THE INTERPRETER (5:10-12)

The "queen" mentioned in verse 10 is believed to be the wife of Nebuchadnezzar and the mother of Belshazzar according to Keil and Leupold. She had not attended the banquet. This would be understandable if she was elderly and the widow of Nebuchadnezzar. Hearing the unusual noise and learning of the distress of her son, because of her position she was able to enter the banquet hall freely and speak to the king. Like a mother, she told her son in effect to pull himself together because there must be a solution to the problem. As one holding her position and respect, she could speak in a way that no other person could do.



### III. DANIEL SUGGESTED AS THE INTERPRETER (5:10-12) (Contd.)

The queen used the very words which presumably she had heard Nebuchadnezzar express (Daniel 4:8,9,18) earlier in time. Daniel's qualities manifested themselves in "an excellent spirit" (vs 12 - KJV) or unusual knowledge and understanding, and the ability to interpret dreams, difficult sentences, and "dissolving of doubts" (vs 12 - KJV) that is finding solutions to difficult problems. Daniel had probably not been assembled with the other wise men because he probably was in semi-retirement and was no longer the chief of the wise men.

### IV. DANIEL CALLED BEFORE THE KING (5:13-16)

Dr. Joseph Parker comments movingly on this event:

"Preachers of the Word, you will be wanted some day Belshazzar; you were not at the beginning of the feast, but you will be there before the banquet hall is closed; the king will not ask you to drink wine, but he will ask you to tell the secret of his pain and heal the sickness of his heart.

Abide your time. You are nobody now . . . Midway down the program to mention the pulpit, or preacher, or Bible, would be to violate the harmony of the occasion. But the preacher, as we have often had the occasion to say, will have his opportunity.

They will send for him when all other friends have failed; may he then come fearlessly, independently asking only to be made a servant through which divine communications can be addressed to the listening trouble of the world . . .

O Daniel, preacher, speaker, teacher, thunder out God's Word, if it be in the case of judgement and doom; or whisper it or rain in gracious tears, if it be a message of sympathy and love and welcome."

It seems clear that Belshazzar knew something of Daniel, for his form of address in verse 13 goes beyond the information supplied by his mother. It may well be that because of his ancestry and religious convictions that Daniel had been demoted by Belshazzar himself.

As in the previous instances in Daniel 2 and 4, the wisdom of the world is demonstrated to be totally unable to solve major problems and to understand either the present or the future. Too often the world, like Belshazzar, is not willing to seek the wisdom of God until its own bankruptcy becomes evident. Help is often sought too late, as in the case of Belshazzar, and cumulative sin and unbelief which precipitated the crisis in the first place becomes the occasion of one's downfall.

## V. DANIEL'S REBUKE OF BELSHAZZAR (5:17-23)

Daniel's replay to the king is properly a sermon. Daniel begins by disavowing any interest in the gifts and rewards which the king was offering. What Daniel was saying was that he would give an unprejudiced interpretation with no attempt to seek favour from the king.

The way that Daniel addressed the king (without formal salutation as he does for instance with Darius in Daniel 6:21 where he says, "**O king, live forever**") seems to indicate that Daniel holds Belshazzar in contempt for his desecration of the sacred vessels. Daniel had awaited his time to speak of God before the king and now that time had arrived. There is none of the tenderness towards this king as there was towards Nebuchadnezzar. This king had most profanely mocked the God of Heaven, and Daniel justly rebukes him for it. He accuses him of pride, presumption, blasphemy, profanity, idolatry and base ingratitude. The prophet brought three charges before the king.

**FIRST**, he charged the king of sinning in the light of knowledge (v.22). Belshazzar knew all about his grandfather's experience, but he didn't learn from it. He didn't profit in any way, he didn't heed the word, he did not learn from history and humble himself before God.

**SECONDLY**, the king was charged with deliberately defying God (v. 23). It was plainly the case of a man who willfully exalted himself against the Lord of Heaven. The king demonstrated his defiance by purposely desecrating the sacred vessels, perhaps in an attempt to show that he would not be intimidated by the God of the Hebrews as was his ancestor Nebuchadnezzar. A similar defiant spirit is expressed in a poem written by the American poetess, Sara Teasdale:

I would not have a God come in to shield me from sin,  
 And set my house of life to rights;  
 Nor angels with bright burning wings  
 Ordering my thoughts and things:  
 Rather my own frail guttering lights  
 Windblown and nearly beaten out,  
 Rather the terror of the nights  
 And long sick groping after doubt.  
 Rather be lost than let my soul  
 Slip vaguely from my own control --  
 Of my own spirit let me be in sole, though feeble, mastery.

Sara Teasdale  
 Appeared in "Our Hope Magazine"  
 Nov. 1938

**V. DANIEL'S REBUKE OF BELSHAZZAR (5:17-23) (Contd.)**

**THIRDLY**, Belshazzar was charged with worshipping idols. Courageously, and with scorching sarcasm, Daniel accused the king of worshipping idols "*which cannot see or hear or understand.*" As a consequence of worshipping false gods, the king forsook acknowledging the true God (Romans 1:21-25).

There are also two statements concerning God made by Daniel which must be noted.

**FIRST**, is the statement, "*you did not honor the God who holds in his hand your life*" (vs 23). It is a vital statement which applies to all mankind. See Job 12:10: "*In his hand is the life of every living creature, and the breath of all mankind.*" Also Job 34:14,15 "*If it were his intention and he withdrew his spirit and breath, all mankind would perish together and man would return to the dust*" These statements show how we all are entirely dependent upon God.

The **SECOND** statement is "*and all your ways*" (vs 23). It means that all our ways are opened to him. See Job 31:4 "*Does he not see my ways, and count my every step?*" Psalm 130:3 "*If you, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?*" In the time of judgement, God does not need to call witnesses. He knows all about us.

**VI. DANIEL'S INTERPRETATION OF THE WRITING (5:24-28)**

In beginning this explanation of the handwriting on the wall, Daniel first of all reads the writing; and for the first time, the lettering produced by the fingers are introduced into the chapter. Translated into English, they are as given, "**MENE, MENE, TEKEL, PARSIN or U-PHARSIN (meaning "AND PARSON."**

There has been almost endless discussion as to what the meaning of the inscription is, and the interpretation is complicated by a number of factors. In the book of Daniel the words are given in an Aramaic script, but some have questioned this. If it was written in Aramaic script, however, only the consonants may have appeared. If in cuneiform, the vowels would be included. The inscription on the wall may have appeared like this, "**MN' MN' TQL UPRSN.**" The order of the letters in the Aramaic form, of course, would be the reverse of this, that is, from right to left.

Young suggests, after discussion with some of the Rabbis, that the characters may have been written vertically, and they would have appeared as follows:

<b>P</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>
<b>R</b>	<b>Q</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>S</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>'</b>	<b>'</b>

## VI. DANIEL'S INTERPRETATION OF THE WRITING (5:24-28) (Contd.)

Yet leaving all the different interpretations, there seems to be one which is generally agreed with and this is the one we wish to look at a little closer. It has been said that Daniel could read it because he knew his Father's handwriting.

"MENE" means "*numbered*," and Daniel interprets this to mean (v.26) "*God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end.*" Note that the word "*God*" does not appear in the word "MENE," but Daniel puts God in it because this book is to show that God rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to "*anyone he wishes*" (v 21). Today the message might have read "*Belshazzar, your number is up.*"

TEKEL means "*weighed*" with the thought that Belshazzar had been put into the weighing balances and had been found wanting, that is, short of a true weight. The Bible has something to say about our spiritual weight and the weight of our character. Hannah said of Him, "*For the LORD is a God who knows, and by him deeds are weighed*" (I Samuel 2:3b).

Solomon went even deeper into this matter of our spiritual weight. He wrote, "*All a man's ways seem innocent to him, but motives are weighed by the LORD*" (Proverbs 16:2). How much do you weigh spiritually? Have you ever asked God to weigh you spiritually? Job did. "*Let God weigh me in honest scales, and he will know that I am blameless (that God may know mine integrity - KJV)*" (Job 31:6). It is a sad thing to say, but Belshazzar, the king of one of the greatest empires did not measure up and it cost him his kingdom and the lives of many he led.

"PERES" means "*divided*" and is merely another form of "U-PHARSIN" used in verse 25. The difference is that the "U" which is an equivalent for the English word "*and*" has been removed since it merely joins the last words with the others. Also the word "PHARSIN" is simply the plural of the word "PERES." The interpretation is made very clear by Daniel. Belshazzar is made to understand that Babylon will be given to the Medes and the Persians. Even while Daniel was interpreting the writing on the wall, the prophecy was being fulfilled as the Medes and the Persians poured into the city.

## VII. DANIEL'S REWARD AND THE PROPHECY FULFILLED (5:29-31)

The drama of the writing on the wall is now brought to its fulfilment as Belshazzar keeps his promise. Daniel is clothed with scarlet, a chain of gold is put about his neck, and a proclamation is issued that Daniel should be the third ruler of the kingdom. All these honours, however, are short lived and useless, as Daniel well knew, and typical of the honours of this world as compared to God's eternal, everlasting rewards.

**VII. DANIEL'S REWARD AND THE PROPHECY FULFILLED (5:29-31) (Contd.)**

Its interesting that in the rise of Babylonian empire they had conquered Jerusalem, and taken its people as captives. Yet as its last official act we see the honouring of one of these captives. This captive by divine revelation not only predicted the downfall of the Babylonian empire but also the course of the times of the Gentiles until the Son of God should come again. Man may have the first word, but God will have the last word.

Scriptures to be read in connection with the taking of Babylon are Isaiah 21:1-10; 45:1; Jeremiah 50, 50. The following items may be noted.

1. Isaiah 21:2 - Media would go against Babylon
2. Isaiah 21:5 - There would be a drunken feast in Babylon at the time
3. Isaiah 21:5 - There would be a sudden call to arms because of the surprise invasion
4. Isaiah 21:9 - Babylon would fall and her images would be broken
5. Isaiah 45:1 - God would loosen the loins of the king (weaken so they could not fight)
6. Isaiah 45:1 - The gates of the city would not be closed, but left open
7. Jeremiah 51:30 - The mighty men of Babylon would be unable to fight (city taken quickly)
8. Jeremiah 51:31 - The king would be informed that his city was already taken, when he thought it was secure

Herodotus, called the father of history, has written a full account of the taking of Babylon. All of what he has said cannot be repeated due to the lack of space, but some of it bears repeating. This account is found in Herodotus 1:190-191:

## VII. DANIEL'S REWARD AND THE PROPHECY FULFILLED (5:29-31) (Contd.)

\*\*\* Cyrus . . . then advanced against Babylon. But the Babylonians having taken the field, awaited his coming; and when he had advanced near the city, the Babylonians gave battle, and, being defeated, were shut up in the city. . . they laid up provisions for many years, and therefore were under no apprehensions about the siege.

On the other hand, Cyrus found himself in difficulty, since much time had elapsed, and his affairs were not at all advanced. Whether, therefore, someone else made the suggestion to him in his perplexity, or whether he himself devised the plan, he had recourse to the following.

Having stationed the bulk of his army near the passage of the river where the river makes its exit, he gave order to his forces to enter the city as soon as they could see the stream fordable. Having stationed his forces and given these directions, he himself marched away with the ineffective part of his army; and having come to the lake, Cyrus did the same with respect to the river and the lake as the queen of the Babylonians had done; for having diverted the river, by means of a canal, into the lake, which was before a swamp, he made the ancient channel fordable by sinking the river.

If, however, the Babylonians had been aware of it beforehand, or had known what Cyrus was all about, they would not have suffered the Persians to enter the city, but would have utterly destroyed them; for, having shut all the little gates that led to the river, they would have caught them as a net: . . . but they were dancing at the time, and enjoying themselves, till they received certain information of the truth. And thus Babylon was taken for the first time." \*\*\*

The downfall of Babylon is a topology of the downfall of our unbelieving world. In many respects, modern civilization is much like ancient Babylon, with its monuments of architectural triumph, as secure as human hands and ingenuity can make it, and yet defenceless against the judgement of God at the proper hour. The disaster of the world, however, does not overtake the child of God.; Daniel survives the purge and emerges triumphant as one of the presidents of the new kingdom in chapter 6.

**VII. DANIEL'S REWARD AND THE PROPHECY FULFILLED (5:29-31) (Contd.)**

The concluding verse of this chapter records how Darius the Median became ruler of Babylon at 62 years of age . The identity of the this ruler, unknown outside of the Bible, has touched off endless controversies and discussions which will be considered in the next chapter.

**THE BOOK OF DANIEL**

**CHAPTER 5 (Supplement)  
THE WORKER'S DREAM**

**\*\*\*** I sat down in an armchair wearied with my work. My toil had been severe and protracted. Many were seeking Christ, and many found Him. As for myself I was joyous in my work. My brethren were united. My sermons and exhortations were evidently telling on my hearers. My church was crowded.

Tired with my work, I soon lost myself in a sort of half-forgotten state. Suddenly a stranger entered the room, without the preliminary "tap" or "come in." He carried about his person, measures, chemical agents, and implements, which gave him a very strange appearance.

The stranger came toward me, and, extending his hand, said,"

***"How is your zeal?"***

I supposed that the query was to be for my health, but was pleased to hear his final words; for I was quite well with my zeal, and doubted not that the stranger would smile when he should know its proportions.

Instantly, I conceived of it as a physical quantity and putting my hand into my bosom, brought it forth and presented it to him for inspection. He took it, and placing it in his scale, weighed it carefully. Then I heard him say,

***"One hundred pounds"***

I could scarce express an audible note of satisfaction: but I caught his honest look as he noted down the weight; and I saw at once that he had drawn no final conclusion, but was intent on pushing his investigation. He broke the mass into atoms, put it into his crucible, and put the crucible into the fire. When the mass was fused, he took it out and set it to cool.

It congealed in cooling, and when turned out on the hearth exhibited a series of layers or strata: which all, at the touch of a hammer, fell apart, and were severally tested and weighed, the stranger making minutes notes as the process went on. When he had finished, he handed the notes to me, and gave me a look of mingled sorrow and compassion, as without a word, except ***"May God save you!"*** and he left the room.

**\*\*\***

(Contd.)



The "notes" read as follows:

**ANALYSIS OF THE ZEAL OF JUNIUS**

A candidate for a Crown of Glory  
 Weight en masse, or total weight, 100 lbs.  
 Of this, on analysis, there proves to be --

<b>Bigotry .....</b>	<b>11 Parts</b>
<b>Personal Ambition .....</b>	<b>22 " Wood, Hay</b>
<b>Love of Praise .....</b>	<b>19 " &amp; Stubble</b>
<b>Pride of Denomination .....</b>	<b>15 " I Corinthians</b>
<b>Pride of Talent .....</b>	<b>14 " 3:10-16</b>
<b>Love of Authority .....</b>	<b>12 "</b>
<b>Love of God .....</b>	<b>4 " Pure Zeal</b>
<b>Love of Man .....</b>	<b>3 "</b>
	<b>100 Parts</b>

I became troubled at the peculiar manner of the stranger, and especially at his parting look and manner; but when I looked at the figures, my heart sank like lead within me.

I made a mental effort to dispute the correctness of the record. But I was startled into a more honest mood by an audible sigh from the stranger (who paused in the hall). I cried out "*Lord, save me*" and knelt down at my chair, with the paper in my hand, and my eyes fixed upon it.

At once it became a mirror, and I saw my heart reflected in it. The record was true. I saw it! I felt it! I confessed it! I deplored it! and I besought God with many tears to save me from myself. With a loud cry of anguish I awoke.

I had once prayed to be saved from hell, but prayer to be saved from myself now was immeasurably more fervent; not did I rest or pause till the refining fire came down and went through my heart, searching, probing, melting, burning, filling all its chambers with light and hallowing my whole heart to God.

When the toil of my pilgrimage shall be at an end, I shall kneel in heaven, at the feet of the Alchemist and bless Him for the revelation of that day. \*\*\*

## CHAPTER 5

The believer is responsible to the Master as a servant in the household is to his own steward in administrating the affairs put into his charge; in other words, full and implicit obedience to the commands of the Lord as revealed in His Word is expected of him.

\*\*\*

The Millennium and Judgements  
*"Ages and Dispensations"*  
pp. 102-105

## THE BOOK OF DANIEL

### CHAPTER 6 DANIEL IN THE LION'S DEN

The account of Daniel being thrown into the den of lions is one of the most familiar stories in the Old Testament. This story is referred to in the book of Hebrews in the words,

*"who through faith . . . shut the mouths of lions."*

*Hebrews 11:33*

Since the original word for "*shut*" or "*stopped*" is plural, it must refer to others who conquered lions through faith as well. Perhaps it was in reference to either Samson or David (cf. Judges 14:5; I Samuel 17:34).

From the standpoint of biblical scholarship however, more attention has been directed towards Darius the Mede, the king of Babylon at this time, than to the events recorded in the chapter itself. The reason for this is that much of the critical unbelief in relation to the book of Daniel is based upon what is claimed to be a historical error, for it is claimed that history allows no room for such a person by the name of Darius.

As D. J. Wiseman has itemized, basing his findings on the "*Nabonidus Chronicle*," the actual events went something like this. Babylon was conquered by Ugbara, the governor of Gutium, who led the army of Cyrus and entered the city of Babylon on the night of Belshazzar's feast. Nabonidus, who was Belshazzar's father, had fled Babylon the day before only to be captured and later die in exile.

When Babylon fell to Ugbara on October 11, 539 BC., Cyrus himself had remained with the other troops at Opis, and not until 18 days later, October 29, 539 BC. did he actually arrive at Babylon. A man by the name of Gubara was appointed by Cyrus to rule in Babylon. Eight days after Cyrus arrived, Ugbara died.

If this precise history of the events following the fall of Babylon is correct, it is obvious there is no room for Darius the Mede to reign over Babylon. Although there are several explanations, three seem to dominate.

**First**, the book of Daniel is here historically in error, and the writer has confused Darius the Mede with some other important personage. Therefore, H.H. Rowley who is one of the most supportive advocates of this explanation, believes that Daniel's book is not reliable historically in its reference to Darius the Mede.

**Second**, is that Darius the Mede is the same as Gubara, the governor who was appointed over Babylon by Cyrus. The sources outside the Bible do not call Gubaru a Median or the king of Babylon, nor do they give his age.

**Third**, is the claim that Darius the Mede is another name for Cyrus the Persian. This is based upon a translation of Daniel 6:28 which the Aramaic permits to read,

*"Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, even the reign of Cyrus the Persian."*

The fact that monarchs had more than one name is common in ancient literature. It must be emphasized that there is no established fact that contradicts a person by the name of Darius the Mede reigning over Babylon if Darius is an alternate name for a known ruler.

### **I. DANIEL EXALTED BY DARIUS (6:1-3)**

With the successful conquest of Babylon and the surrounding territory, it now is appropriate for the new kingdom to re-organize, both from the standpoint of law and order as well as from the benefit of taxation which this would allow. In such an organization it would not be unsuitable to use qualified men who had previously served in the Babylonian kingdom. Even some of the gods of Babylon were honoured by the conquerors!

The organization with 120 satraps (princes) has been taught by some such as Montgomery to be an exaggeration. Montgomery goes on however to admit that according to Esther 1:1 there were 127 provinces. The fact is that the appointment of 120 officials to rule such a vast territory and of the three presidents to rule over them was not at all unreasonable. In such a function, an honest and capable administrator familiar with the territory and problems of taxation would undoubtedly be of immeasurable benefit to Darius.

### **II. THE PLOT AGAINST DANIEL (6:4-5)**

The excellent services and integrity of Daniel soon became a barrier to the ambitions of the princes and presidents with whom he was associated. Daniel's integrity made impossible any corruption, and his favour with Darius aroused the jealousy of his fellow officials. But how could they devise a scheme to eliminate him since he was faithful, dependable and could be trusted. The record is that

*"They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt or negligent"*

*Daniel 6:4*

## II. THE PLOT AGAINST DANIEL (6:4-5)(Contd.)

Daniel let his light shine in the heathen court. The outstanding thing about him focussed around what his enemies called "*the law of his God*" (vs 5). His religion was his life. He took it with him everywhere; it influenced all his actions; his enemies knew about it. They had to plan their attack on the basis of his faithfulness to what he believed if they were to overcome Daniel.

## III. THE CONSPIRATORS SECURE A BAN ON PRAYER (6:6-9)

The conspirators, having conceived a plan, lost no time in putting it into effect. It seems to indicated (vs 6) that they were all there, which was an unusual occasion. Under the psychological impact of these officials assembling themselves in such force and presenting such an unusual petition designed to honour Darius and recognize in him divine powers, Darius signed the decree. It became a law which could not be changed.

The book of Esther (1:19;8:8) and Diodorus Siculus (XVII. 30) also established the fact that the Medo-Persian law stipulated that a royal edict could not be revoked. The verb translated "*signed*" - KJV (rshm) in verses 8,9 and 10 can be understood to mean "*to draw, to draw up, to inscribe, to write,*" and hence "*to draft*" which would be more comprehensive than merely signing.

It appears that Darius regarded this act as a pledge of loyalty to himself and a token of their desire to respect his authority to the utmost.

\*\*\* Alexander McLaren described the court of Darius where Daniel worked as "half shambles and half pigsty. Luxury, sensuality, lust, self-seeking, idolatry, ruthlessness, cruelty and the like were the environment of this man. And in the middle of these there grew a fair flower of a character, pure and stainless, by the acknowledgement of enemies, and in which not even accusers could find a speck or a spot.

There are no circumstances which a man MUST have his garments spotted by the world. However deep the filth through which he has to wade, if God sent him there, and if he keeps hold of God's hand, his purity will be more stainless by reason of impurity round about him. \*\*\*

#### IV. DANIEL'S FAITHFULNESS IN TESTING (6:10-11)

Daniel knew the decree and deliberately went to his house to act as he always acted. He had a true regard for the king, but chose to obey God rather than men. The epitaph of a great man buried in Westminster Abbey, England, reads,

"He feared man so little because he feared God so much."

Also the account of Polycarp the Bishop of Smyrna in Asia Minor sets forth the same standing in the face of death. When approached by the pro-consul in the final attempt to save his life they charged him:

"Swear, and I will set thee at liberty; reproach Christ." It was then that Polycarp made his statement. He answered: "Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He never did me any injury; how then can I blaspheme my King and my Saviour."

Daniel in his prayer life followed the inspired instructions of Jeremiah addressed to elders, priests, prophets, and all the people of the captivity (Jeremiah 29:1). Jeremiah had assured them,

*"Then you will call upon me, and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.  
13. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart."*

*Jeremiah 29:12*

The custom of praying towards the temple in Jerusalem was adopted by Solomon (cf. II Chronicles 6:34-39) and continued until the new instruction was given by Jesus to the Samaritan woman in John 4:20-24. Prayer three times daily (evening, morning, noon) is mentioned in the Psalms (Psalm 55:16-17).

In spite of the pressures of being a busy executive with many demands on his time, Daniel retired to his house three times a day to offer prayers for the peace of Jerusalem as well as for his personal needs. This was NOT the act of a person courting martyrdom but the continuation of a ministry in prayer which had characterized his long life. Some habits are not to be broken.

**IV. DANIEL'S FAITHFULNESS IN TESTING (6:10-11)(Contd.)**

The opening of the windows toward Jerusalem was symbolic of his hope that some day the children of Israel would be able to return to this city of God. Of great significance is the fact that even his enemies depended upon Daniel's usual commitment. What a testimony! Even Daniel's enemies knew that he would be faithful to God even though it would cost him his life.

**V. DANIEL ACCUSED BEFORE DARIUS (6:12-15)**

The conspirators, with the evidence that Daniel had violated the decree, now crowded once again into the king's courtroom. A better translation for the word "**God**" (vs. 12) in the KJV should probably be "**god**," that is, any deity.

Instead of being angry with Daniel as Nebuchadnezzar had been with Daniel's companions in chapter 3, the king realized that he had made a mistake and attempted every legal way to find a loophole by which Daniel could be delivered. The officials once again assembled themselves before the king at the evening of the day and reminded the king that the law could not be changed according to their customs and beliefs. As representative of the gods, the king, having issued the decree, would have to execute it.

**VI. DANIEL CAST INTO THE LION'S DEN (6:16-17)**

Prior to the execution, it is remarkable to hear the words of the king.

*"May your God whom you serve continually, rescue you."*

*Daniel 6:16*

This may be translated,

"The God whom you serve continually, he must deliver you."

The idea that the king is saying is, "I have tried to save you but have failed. Now your God must save you."

Host in his book on Fez and Morocco, p.77 described the lion's dens as they had been found in Morocco. According to this account, they consist of a large square cavern under the earth, having a partitioned wall in the middle of it, which is furnished with a door, which the keeper can open and close from above.

**VI. DANIEL CAST INTO THE LION'S DEN (6:16-17)(Contd.)**

By throwing in food, the keepers can entice the lions from one chamber to another, and then, having shut the door, they enter the vacant space for the purpose of cleaning it. The cavern is open above, its mouth being surrounded by a wall of a yard and a half high, over which one can look down into the den.

Keil goes on to explain that there was a door in the wall surrounding the cavern through which both the keepers and the lions could enter except when the stone was in place. This accounts for the fact that Darius was able to converse freely with Daniel before the stone was removed from the door.

The den was sealed after the stone had been brought and laid on the mouth of it. We are reminded of other places where God's servants were placed and watched that they not escape. A stone was placed at the entrance of our Saviour's tomb, and sealed (Matthew 27:60-66); Peter was well guarded by soldiers, but escaped (Acts 12:4); Paul and Silas were well guarded in the inner prison, and their feet secured in stocks, but they also escaped (Acts 16:23,24).

\*\*\* A persecuted saint once, in running from his pursuers, ran into a cave, and went deep into it. His pursuers came into the cave, looked in, and went away without entering.

The saint at first didn't understand this, but when he came to the mouth of the cave to go on his way he found a spider's web across it.

The pursuers had seen it, and concluded that if he had been in the cave this web would have been broken. The web had been spun after the saint had entered. Going on his way the saint said,

*"With God a web is a wall; without God a wall is a spider's web."*

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**VI. THE KING'S LAMENT FOR DANIEL (6:18-20)**

Quite in contrast to Nebuchadnezzar who showed no compassion for Daniel's three companion's when they were cast into the furnace, Darius manifests unusual concern. Although he was accustomed to brutality and execution of criminals and ordinarily did not have a second thought about them, in this case there was something about Daniel that had involved the king emotionally. It was most unusual for the king to spend a night quite like this one. Probably he never before experienced such a thing over the normal executions.



## VI. THE KING'S LAMENT FOR DANIEL (6:18-20)(Contd.)

Probably being unable to see because of the mere early morning light and the shadows of the lion's den, the king called out to Daniel. The form of the address is also most remarkable. He describes Daniel as the "*servant of the living God*" (vs. 20) and raises the question again, "*has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions*" (vs. 20).

That he had little actual faith, however, is shown in the "*anguished or lamentable voice*" (vs. 20) in which he called to Daniel. The Aramaic for "*anguished or lamentable*" is "*asib*," meaning "*sad*" hence the Revised version reads "*tone of anguish*." He feared that there would only be silence and the growl of the lions in response to his call.

## VII. DANIEL'S DELIVERANCE

Most people in Daniel's predicament would have immediately cried out for deliverance from the lions. But Daniel after his greeting, informs the king that the lion's mouths have been shut by an angel sent by God so that the lions were not able to hurt him. Daniel attributes this not only to the power of God but to the fact that Daniel was innocent of any crime either to God or to the king.

Although the Scriptures are not explicit, it may have been that Daniel was lifted up by means of ropes directly out of the den, without taking the time to remove the stone or to entice the lions to another part of the cavern. Just as the flames were not allowed to even leave a trace of their smell upon Daniel's companions in chapter 3, the lions were not permitted to touch the prophet of God.

## VIII. DANIEL'S ENEMIES DESTROYED (6:24)

Such barbarity is common in the ancient world, and not without parallel even in God's judgment upon the wicked as illustrated in the judgement of the Lord upon Dathan, Abiram and Korah when they and their families were swallowed up in an opening of the earth caused by an earthquake (Numbers 16). The punishment handed out conforms to the injunction about treatment of false witnesses in the law (Deuteronomy 19:16-21). The principle is also illustrated in the case of Haman (Esther 7:9-10).

Some critics have pointed out with ridicule the impossibility of casting 120 officials and their families into one lion's den. The Septuagint, apparently in an effort to counter this criticism, makes the victims only the two men who were presidents with Daniel, and, therefore, his principle accusers. The Scriptures do not say that all the princes and presidents were cast into the den of lions, but only those who accused Daniel, that is, the ringleaders.

**IX. THE DECREE OF DARIUS (6:25-28)**

Much like Nebuchadnezzar had done in chapter 3 and again in chapter 4, Darius issued a new decree to be sent throughout his entire domain calling on men everywhere to fear the God of Daniel. The expression "**May you prosper greatly**" (NIV - vs 25) or "**Peace be multiplied unto you**" (KJV) is identical to Daniel 4:1. It also reminds one of the letters of Paul in the New Testament.

The decree was short and to the point calling upon men everywhere to "**fear and reverence the God of Daniel**" (NIV) or "**tremble and fear before the God of Daniel**" (KJV). Daniel's God is described as the living God, One who is steadfast, whose kingdom shall not be destroyed and whose dominion continues to the end. The RSV rendering "**enduring forever**" is probably more explicit than "**steadfast forever**." The point is that in the rapidly changing situation, that is the Medo-Persian overtaking of the Babylonians, that God does not change.

Verses 26-27 are in the form of a hymn in the original. Once again throughout the world of Daniel's day, tidings were carried of the great God who is living, powerful everlasting, and greater than the gods of the pagans.

The chapter closes with a brief historical note that Daniel continued to prosper in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian. Here again critics have attempted to claim inaccuracy. The probable explanation is, as has been previously noted, is that either Darius was a governor under Cyrus who later delivered the kingdom to him, possibly at his death, or that Darius and Cyrus were the same person with the word "**and**" understood as meaning "**even**."

Some of the timely truths from this familiar story are:

1. God is able to deliver His people from the hands of their enemies especially when they are innocent.
2. The character of Daniel is a constant reminder of how we need to walk with God. He had integrity and a constant life (v. 4-5); had stark courage (v. 10); singular faith (v. 23); discipline and devotion (v. 10).
3. The people of God today are not exempt from the "lion's den" and need to be reminded that God is able to deliver from the "lions of adversity."

What lions are you facing? Do you believe God is able to deliver you? Are you willing to surrender to God's will no matter what the outcome?

**THE BOOK OF DANIEL**  
**CHAPTER 7**

**DANIEL'S VISION OF FUTURE WORLD HISTORY**

In the interpretation of Biblical prophecy, the seventh chapter of Daniel occupies a unique place. Although the interpretation varies widely, conservative scholars generally are agreed, with few exceptions, that Daniel traces the course of four great empires, namely, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. It concludes with the second coming of Jesus Christ and the inauguration of the eternal kingdom of God, represented as the fifth and final kingdom which is from heaven.

**I. DANIEL'S FIRST VISION: THE FOUR GREAT BEASTS (7:1-3)**

The year of this vision was probably 553 BC., fourteen years before the fall of Babylon. Nabonidus, the actual king of Babylon who began reigning in 556 BC., had appointed Belshazzar as his co-regent to control Babylonia itself while he (Nabonidus) conducted military manoeuvres in Arabia. The events of chapter 7 occur chronologically between chapters 4 and 5 of Daniel. In the first six chapters generalities are revealed. In the last six chapters, specifics are given.

Also to be noted is the sharp contrast in the introduction of chapter 7 to the vision given to Nebuchadnezzar in chapter 2. On the one hand, in chapter 2, a wicked heathen king is used as a vehicle of divine revelation. It pictures world history as a majestic image in the form of a man. In chapter 7, the vision is given through a godly prophet, Daniel. World history with this viewpoint is depicted as four horrible beasts, the last which almost defies description. In chapter 2, Daniel is the interpreter. In chapter 7, an angel is the interpreter. **Chapter 2 considers world's history from man's viewpoint as a glorious and imposing spectacle. Chapter 7 views world history from God's standpoint in its immorality, brutality and depravity.**

In the vision, four winds are seen striving upon a great sea. Symbolically, the sea may represent the mass of humanity, or the nations of the world, as in Matthew 13:47 and Revelation 13:1 (cf Isaiah 8:6-8; Jeremiah 46:7,8; Revelation 17:1,15). The turbulence of the sea may well represent the strife of Gentile history (Isaiah 17:12,13; 57:20; Jeremiah 6:23).

Keil continues, "*The 'four winds of heavens' represent the heavenly powers and forces by which God sets the nations of the world in motion.*" Keil also finds that the number four has the symbolic meaning of representing people from all four corners of the earth, that is, all peoples and all regions (cf. Revelation 9:13-16).

## I. DANIEL'S FIRST VISION: THE FOUR GREAT BEASTS (7:1-3)(contd)

It seems clear that the four beasts represent the four great world empires which are given subsequent revelation.

Of the more than 120 references to "*wind*" in the Bible (more than 90 in the O.T. and about 30 in the N.T.), well over half are related to events and ideas which reflect the sovereignty and power of God.

## II. THE FIRST BEAST: BABYLON - THE LION (7:4)

There is agreement that the first empire represents the reign of Nebuchadnezzar or the Neo-Babylon Empire. **The lion is the common representation of royal power.** The national symbol of Babylon was the winged lion and these guarded the gates of the royal palaces of the Babylonians. Solomon also had twelve lions on either side of the steps leading up to his throne (I Kings 10:20; II Chronicles 9:19). **The lion was indeed the king of the beasts.** In like manner, **the eagle was the king of the birds of the air. In Ezekiel 17:3,7, a great eagle is used as a picture first of Babylon and then Egypt.**

In spite of the power in the symbolism of the lion and the eagle's wings, Daniel in his vision sees the wings plucked and the lion made to stand upon his feet as a man, with a man's heart given to it. This is the commonly interpreted as the symbolic representation of Nebuchadnezzar's experience in chapter 4 when he was humbled before God and made to realize that, even though he was a great ruler, he was only a man. His lion-like character, or royal power was only at God's pleasure.

## III. THE SECOND BEAST: MEDO-PERSIA - THE BEAR (7:5)

**Although conservative scholars are outnumbered, it is significant that most scholars who attribute accuracy to the book of Daniel also regard the second kingdom as the Medo-Persian empire (539-331 BC.).** Recent discoveries have proven beyond all doubt that the second empire was in fact Medo-Persia. The Persian ruler Cyrus himself came to conquer Babylon in less than a month, and a myth of a second Median empire at this time is not supported by the facts. In chapter 6 of Daniel, a combined kingdom of the Medes and Persians is mentioned (6:8,12,15).

If Daniel's revelation is true prophecy, the question has been raised, "*What is the symbolism of the bear?*" Normally this kind of animal is not related to symbolism in the Old Testament. **The meaning seems to be that the second empire will be powerful like a bear, ferocious (Isaiah 13:17,18), but less majestic, less swift, and less glorious.**

### III. THE SECOND BEAST: MEDO-PERSIA - THE BEAR (7:5)(Contd.)

Why does the bear raise itself on the one side? Although Scriptures do not answer this directly, probably the best explanation is that it represented the one-sided union of the Persian and Median Empires. Persia, although coming up last, was by far the greater and more powerful and absorbed the Medes in their conquest. This is represented also in chapter 8 by the two horns of the ram with the horn that comes up last being higher and greater.

The bear is described as having three ribs in its mouth. Normally a bear lives mostly on fruits, vegetables and roots, but will eat flesh when hungry and has been known during this time to attack other animals and men. Scripture does not tell us the meaning of the three ribs. Many scholars such as Young believe that they represent Babylon, Libya and Egypt. An alternative is that they represent Media, Persia, and Babylon as comprising the three major components of the Medo-Babylonian Empire.

**The bear however, is the symbol of government and military conquest and the ribs are the people subdued.** The bear is instructed to continue its conquest and to "*eat your fill of flesh*" (vs. 5). This apparently refers to the additional conquests of the Medes and the Persians in the years that followed the fall of Babylon.

Taken as a whole, the prophecy of the second beast accurately portrays the characteristics and history of the Medo-Persian Empire which, although beginning in Daniel's day, continued for over 200 years until the time of Alexander the Great.

### IV. THE THIRD BEAST: GREECE - LEOPARD (7:6)

Daniel in describing the third beast tells us that it differs from the previous ones in that it is like a leopard with four wings on its back and four heads. **The third beast is commonly identified as the empire of Greece.** The only thing said about this beast is that dominion was given to it.

**The leopard in contrast to the lion, the first beast, is less grand and majestic, but it is swifter and much feared as an animal of prey in the Old Testament.** Young refers to a translation of it being a "*panther*" instead of a leopard, indicating a leopard of unusual size and power.

The impression of the great speed inherent in a leopard is further enhanced by the attachment of four wings on its back. Although these wings were not declared to be the wings of an eagle as in the case of the first beast, their presence emphasises the thought of the leopard attaining a greater speed. The important point is that there are only four wings keeping with the four heads.

#### IV. THE THIRD BEAST: GREECE - LEOPARD (7:6)(Contd.)

The four heads obviously refer to an intelligent direction of the beast and indicate in contrast to the earlier beast which only had one head, that **the third empire would have four governmental divisions with corresponding heads.**

With the swiftness of a leopard, Alexander the Great conquered most of the civilized world all the way from Macedonia to Africa and eastward to India.

It is a well established fact that Alexander had four principle successors. Calvin after Jerome, considered these as Ptolemy, Seleucus, Philip and Antigonus. Yet Keil and most modern commentaries prefers to recognize the four kings who merge about twenty-two years after the death of Alexander at the overthrow of Antigonus at the battle of Ipsus (310 BC.) These four kings and their regions were, according to Keil,

1. Lysimachus, who held Thrace and Bithynia
2. Cassander, who help Macedonia and Greece
3. Seleucus, who controlled Syria, Babylonia, and territories as far east as India
4. Ptolemy, who controlled Egypt, Palestine, and Arabia Petrea

#### V. THE FOURTH BEAST: ROME - A VICIOUS BEAST (7:7-8)

The crucial issue in the interpretation of the entire book of Daniel, and especially of chapter 7, is the identification of the fourth beast. **Conservative scholars with few exceptions generally refer to the fourth beast as Rome.**

The dominion of Rome, beginning with the occupation of Sicily in 241 BC. as a result of a victory in the first Punic conflict, rapidly made the Mediterranean Sea a Roman lake by the beginning of the second century BC. Spain was conquered first, and then Carthage at the battle of Zama in North Africa in 202 BC.

Beginning with the area north of Italy, Rome then moved east, conquering Macedonia, Greece, and Asia Minor. The Roman General, Pompey, swept into Jerusalem in 63 BC. after destroying the remnants of the Seleucid Empire (Syria). During the following decades, Rome extended control to southern Britain, France, Belgium, Switzerland, and Germany west of the Rhine River.

## V. THE FOURTH BEAST: ROME - A VICIOUS BEAST (7:7-8)(Contd.)

The Roman Empire continued to grow gradually for four centuries or more (reaching its height in 117 AD.), in contrast to the sudden rise of the other empires which preceded it. It likewise declined slowly, beginning in the third century. The decline became obvious in the fifth century AD., with the Romans leaving Britain in 407 AD. and suffering a defeat in 410 AD. by the Visigoths. It was not until 1453 AD. that the last Roman or Byzantine ruler was killed in battle and Mohammed II conquered the chief city of Constantinople.

The description of the beast more obviously corresponds to the Roman empire than that of the empire of Alexander the Great. Alexander conquered by the rapidity of his troop movements and seldom crushed the people whom he conquered.

By contrast, the Roman empire was ruthless in its destruction of civilizations and peoples, killing captives by the thousands and selling them into slavery by the hundreds of thousands. Rome had no interest in raising conquered nations to any high level of development. All her designs were imperial; let the nations be crushed and stamped under foot. The description of Daniel 7:7 clearly is more appropriate for the empire of Rome than for the Macedonian kingdom or any of its derived divisions.

The interpretation of identifying this as Rome immediately has a major problem in that there is no real correspondence to the Roman Empire historically in the phrase, "*and it had ten horns.*" Amillennial scholars like Young and Leupold tend to spiritualise it, and thus escape the necessity of finding any literal fulfilment. Both of them find literal fulfilment impossible because there are no ten kings reigning simultaneously in the Roman period. **Premillennialists, for the most part, believe in a literal fulfilment: ten actual kingdoms will exist simultaneously in the future consummation.**

In verse 8, as Daniel gazed intently upon the vision, he saw another little horn emerging from the head of the beast, and in the process, uprooting three of the first horns, that is, three of the ten horns previously described. The little horn is described as having eyes like the eyes of man and mouth speaking great things.

Commentators have been quick to point out that in chapter 8 there is also a little horn. **The little horn of chapter 8, however, comes out of an entirely different context than the little horn of chapter 7.** It seems that the only correct interpretation of these horns is that since there is no direct fulfilment in history, that Daniel must have been given a vision of future events in reference to chapter 7.

## VI. THE VISION OF THE ANCIENT OF DAYS (7:9-10)

The scene changes abruptly from earth to heaven. Now we are given a heavenly perspective on these things, and given a glimpse into the realm of heaven to assure us that, after all, God is in control. Three major facts must be kept in perspective when considering verses 9-14.

**First**, in verses 9 and 10, Daniel has a vision of heaven at the time of the final judgement of all nations.

**Second**, in verses 11 and 12, the little horn representing the last ruler of the “Time of the Gentiles” is destroyed and with it his entire worldwide empire.

**Third**, the fifth kingdom, the kingdom of the Son of man Who comes with the clouds of heaven is ushered in, beginning the everlasting dominion of God.

The expression in the KJV that *"the thrones were cast down"* (vs. 9) is better interpreted *"the thrones were set in place"* (NIV). This is the establishment not the destruction of a throne in heaven. The scene, as a whole, corresponds to what John saw and recorded in the Book of Revelation 4-5.

*"Ancient of Days"* (vs. 9) seems to correspond to God the Father, as distinct from God the Son who is introduced in Daniel 7:13 as the Son of man. The expression *"Ancient of Days"* is used of God only in this chapter where the title is repeated in verses 13 and 22. His garments were said to be *"white as snow"* (vs. 9) and His hair was *"(pure or) white like wool"* (vs. 9) The emphasis is on purity rather than on age, although it also may imply that our God is eternal.

The Ancient of Days is described as sitting upon a throne (vs. 9), one of many, as indicated in the contrast between the plurality used early in verse 9 and the singular in the latter part of verse 9. The major characteristic of this throne is that it is *"flaming with fire."* The word *"like"* (KJV) is not used in the original Aramaic, and the *"wheels,"* possibly in reference to the revolution of time, are also burning (cf. Ezekiel 1:13-21). Fire is a biblical symbol of judgement and is associated with the theophanies (appearances of God) in the Old Testament (Psalm 97:2,3). It is apparent that this is referring to the final hour of decision as far as the nations of the world are concerned.

Daniel does not enlarge on the concept of *"the books"* (vs 10). The implication, however, from Revelation 20:12 is that this is a record of the works of men (cf. Isaiah 65:6 for record of evil deeds, and Malachi 3:16 for remembrance of good deeds). As Leupold states it, *"In them are written, not the names, but the deeds of men, a record of their ungodly acts, on the basis of which they will be judged."*



## VII. THE DESTRUCTION OF THE FOURTH BEAST (7:11-12)

As Daniel kept looking intently upon the vision that was before him, the scene shifted once again to earth. The passage is an obvious parallel to Revelation 19:20 where the beast and the false prophet are cast alive into the Lake of Fire burning with brimstone at the time of the Second Coming of Christ.

Verse 12 has been a stumbling block to many in understanding how the rest of the beasts have their lives prolonged even though their dominion is taken away. If the earlier beasts are empires which were succeeded by the fourth beast, how can they be prolonged after the destruction of the fourth beast? What verse 12 is saying is that the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, and Grecian empires were to some extent continued in their successors; that is, Gentile powers shifted as through their rulership but continued more or less in their same pattern.

By contrast, at the second coming of Christ, the fourth beast will be completely destroyed, and a totally different kingdom which is from heaven will succeed the fourth empire. It should be noted that the spirit of Babylon carried into Medo-Persia. Then the combined spirit of Babylon and Medo-Persia carried on into Greece and so-forth. Today, we have the combined spirits which controlled these empires actively at work in our world.

## VIII. THE FIFTH KINGDOM OF THE SON OF MAN FROM HEAVEN (7:13-14)

The climax of the vision is now seen by Daniel. Again, it is heaven rather than earth that is in view. Verse 13 follows verse 10 chronologically. The purpose of this heavenly presentation is indicated in verse 14 where the Son of man is given *"dominion, and glory, and sovereign power."* This kingdom will be a worldwide kingdom involving *"all peoples, nations, and men of every language."* In contrast to the preceding kingdoms, it will be an *"everlasting"* kingdom which shall not pass away or be destroyed.

Conservative scholars agree that the Son of man is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ rather than any angelic agency. The description of Him as being worthy of ruling all the nations is obviously in keeping with many passages in the Bible concerning the millennial rule of Jesus Christ, such as those found in Psalm 2:6-9; Isaiah 11.

A parallel appears in Revelation 1:7, which states, *"Look, he is coming with the clouds,"* and in Acts 1:9 where in His ascension He was received by a cloud and the angels said that He would *"come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."* Clouds are frequently characteristic of a revelation of deity (Exodus 13:21-22; 19:9,16; I Kings 8:10-11; Isaiah 19:1; Jeremiah 4:13; Ezekiel 10:4; Matthew 24:30; 26:64; Mark 13:26).

### VIII. THE FIFTH KINGDOM OF THE SON OF MAN FROM HEAVEN (7:13-14)(Contd.)

Some have considered the fifth kingdom to be the church, in that the church was responsible for the downfall of the Roman empire. Yet nothing is stranger to church history than this interpretation. Edward Gibbon in his classic work on the Roman Empire enumerates "*four principles causes of the ruin of Rome, which continued to operate in a period of more than a thousand years:*"

1. **The injuries of time and nature.**
2. **The hostile attacks of the barbarians and Christians.**
3. **The use and abuse of materials.**
4. **The domestic quarrels of the Romans.**

### IX. THE INTERPRETATION OF THE FOUR BEASTS (7:15-18)

Daniel indicates his distress by being "*troubled in spirit*" (vs. 15) which affects his whole personality. The expression "*that passed through my mind*" (vs. 15) literally means "*in the midst of the sheath,*" which compares the soul of our body to a sword in its sheath.

In verse 16, Daniel becomes an actor in the scene by addressing a question to one who stands by, generally considered to be an angel. Almost exact parallels can be found in the Book of Revelation where John, frequently experiencing a vision, is given the interpretation of what he saw. The interpreter of Daniel's vision first of all gives a general interpretation in verses 17 and 18. In the verses which follow, more details are given.

The expression in verse 18 that the saints "*shall take the kingdom*" (KJV) can be also translated "*receive the kingdom*" (NIV) as in most revised versions. The thought is, as Young expresses it, "*They are not to establish or found the kingdom by their own power.*" The kingdom possessed by the saints of the Most High God, while eternal in its characteristics and sovereignty, may without difficulty include the millennial kingdom and the eternal rule of God which follows.

### X. DANIEL REQUESTS INTERPRETATION OF THE FOURTH BEAST (7:19-22)

Daniel by making this request, adds particulars not previously indicated in his recital of the vision. He mentions that it has "*iron teeth and bronze claws;*" that the little horn was stronger than the other horns; that the little horn was "*waging war against the saints and defeating them*" (cf. Revelation 11:7; 13:7) and that the judgement was made "*in favor the saints of the Most High.*"

## X. DANIEL REQUESTS INTERPRETATION OF THE FOURTH BEAST (7:19-22) (Contd.)

Whereas only three verses are given to the first three beasts, the remaining twenty one verses of the chapter concern the fourth beast and his era; and Daniel, in his recital of the vision, uses eight verses to describe the details.

The expression "**judgement was given to the saints of the most High,**" (KJV in verse 22) probably means that judgement was given on their behalf or executed for them, rather than to make the saints judges themselves.

## XI. THE INTERPRETATION OF THE VISION OF THE FOURTH BEAST (7:23-25)

The interpreter of the vision states plainly that the fourth beast represents the fourth kingdom, and earthly kingdom which will be different from the preceding kingdoms and will devour the whole earth, that is, be worldwide in its sway. In the process, it will tread down and break in pieces the preceding kingdoms.

The ten horns in verse 24 are declared to be ten kings that shall arise. They clearly are simultaneous in their reign because three of them are disrupted by the little horn which is another ruler, but not given the title of king here. If the ten kings are in power at the end of the age, which also seems to be supported by the ten kings of Revelation 13:1; 17:12, it follows that they must be still in the future.

Not only is there special emphasis given to the fourth beast but also particular attention is given to the little horn. He is described as a blasphemer who "**shall speak against the Most High**" and as a persecutor of the saints who "**shall wear out the saints of the most high.**" (KJV) He will also attempt to "**change the set times and the laws,**" (vs. 25) that is, to change times of religious observances and traditions such as characterize those who worship God.

The duration of power of the little horn over the saints and the world is described as continuing "**for a time, times and half a time**" (26). This expression, also found in Daniel 12:7, has been incorrectly identified as "*the times of the Gentiles.*"

Montgomery points out, however, the traditional explanation is that the expression means **three and one half years.** The term is identical with the half-year week of Daniel 9:27 [which] equals three and one-half years. The three and one-half year computation is confirmed by the forty-two months, or three and one-half years, in Revelation 11:2 and 13:5, and the 1260 days of Revelation 11:3. Daniel also refers to 1290 days in 12:11 and 1335 days in 12:12 which apparently includes the establishment of the fifth kingdom as well as the final destruction of the fourth beast.

## **XII. THE DESTRUCTION OF THE FOURTH EMPIRE AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE EVERLASTING KINGDOM (7:26-28)**

At the destruction of the fourth empire, the kingdom then becomes the possession of "*the saints, the people of the Most High*" (vs. 27). This does not mean that God will not rule, as verse 14 plainly states that dominion is given to the Son of man, but it does indicate that the kingdom will be for the benefit and welfare of the saints in stark contrast to their previous experience of bitter persecution.

Also in contrast to the preceding kingdoms, which terminated abruptly by God's judgement, the final kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom and in it all powers and people will serve and obey God.

We find that at the end of the word given, Daniel expresses again how his thoughts troubled him, his countenance changed (Montgomery translates it "*and my colour changed*"), but he kept the matter in his heart, that is he did not reveal it to others. Thus ends one of the greatest chapters of the Bible which conservative scholars recognize as a panoramic view of future events revealed to Daniel during the sixth century BC.

**THE BOOK OF DANIEL**  
**CHAPTER 8**

**THE VISION OF THE RAM AND THE GOAT**

Two important factors mark Daniel 8 as the beginning of a new section. **First**, beginning with this chapter, the language returns to Hebrew instead of Aramaic which was used by Daniel from 2:4 through 7:28. **Second**, the change of language is in keeping with the change of thought introduced by this chapter. From here to the end of the Book of Daniel, the prophecy, even though it concerns the Gentiles, is focussing upon human history as it relates to Israel.

**I. THE VISION AT SUSAN (8:1-2)**

The second vision of Daniel occurred, according to verse 1, "*in the third year of king Belshazzar reign*" in other words, about two years after the vision of chapter 7. Because it took place in the reign of Belshazzar, it is clear that both chapter 7 and 8 chronologically occur before chapter 5, the night of Belshazzar's feast.

On the basis of the "*Babylonian Chronicle*," it is now known that Nabonidus began his reign in 556 BC., and Belshazzar became co-regent three years later, 553 BC., when Nabonidus took residence at Tame. Accordingly, if the vision of chapter 7 occurred in 553 BC., the vision of chapter 8 occurred in 551 BC., or twelve years before Belshazzar's feast in chapter 5.

Whether Daniel was in the palace at Shushan in the province of Elam, by the river Ulai (as v. 2 indicates) or was transported there in vision and actually was in Babylon at the time, is questioned by expositors. Most expositors, though, understand chapter 8 to teach that Daniel was actually in Babylon and in vision only was introduced to Shushan. Ezekiel was also believed to be transported in vision (Ezekiel 8:3; 40:1 ff). Ancient Susa (called Shushan in the KJV), about 150 miles north of the present head of the Persian Gulf, was situated midway between Ecbatana and Persepolis, and later became one of the main residences of the Persian kings.

The probability is that Babylon did not control this city or area at this time, and this perhaps accounts for Daniel's astonishment as he contemplated the vision. The king's residence, which was more in the form of a castle or fortress than merely a luxurious building was referred to as "*the citadel (or palace)*" (vs. 2). Shushan the palace, nevertheless, was destined in the Persian Empire to become the new capital of Persia rather than Babylon.

In a words, Daniel finds himself projected in the vision to a town little known at the time and unsuspected for future grandeur, but yet destined to be the important capital city of Persia, the home of Esther (Esther 1:2; 2:8), and the city from which Nehemiah left to go to Jerusalem (Nehemiah 1:2). Remains of its magnificence can still be seen near the modern village of Shush.

## II. THE RAM WITH THE TWO HORNS - MEDO-PERSIA (8:3-4)

Daniel, in his vision, sees a ram with two horns which are unequal, one higher than the other, and the higher one growing out of the ram's head last. As Daniel watches, he sees the ram pushing westward, northward, and southward; but no mention is made of the ram pushing toward the east. No other beast is found to stand before the ram nor was anyone, whether man or beast, able to deliver from his power.

The interpretation is provided in Daniel 8:20 that the ram is Medo-Persia, with the two horns representing its major kings. Historically, it was the combination of the Medes and the Persians that proved to be irresistible for almost two hundred years, until Alexander the Great came on the scene.

The Persians, represented, by the higher horn, historically came up last and were more prominent and powerful. Although Persia did expand to the east, its principle movement was to the west, north and south.

In regard to the use of the ram to represent the great empire, Keil observes, "In the 'Bundehesch' the guardian spirit of the Persian kingdom appears under the form of a ram with clean feet and sharp-pointed horns, and . . . the Persian king, when he stood at the head of his army, bore, instead of a diadem, the head of a ram."

Also Persia is thought of as under the zodiacal sign of Aries, the "ram," and Greece as sharing with Syria, the principle territory of the Selucid monarchy, uses the zodiacal sign of Capricorn, the "goat." The word "Capricorn" is derived from the Latin, "caper," a goat and "cornu," a horn.

## III. THE HE GOAT FROM THE WEST - GREECE (8:5-7)

Interpreters of Daniel are generally agreed that the "he goat" or literally, "buck of goats" represents the king of Greece, and more particularly the single important horn between his eyes, as stated in Daniel 8:21, is "the first king," that is, Alexander the Great. Like Alexander, the he goat "*came from the west, crossing the whole earth*" (vs. 5) that is, his conquests beginning in Greece moved east to cover the entire territory. The expression of tremendous speed, which characterized the conquest of Alexander, is indicated that he travelled "*without touching the ground*" (vs. 5).

There is considerable resentment based upon the historical background in which the Persians had attacked Greece earlier in history. Now it was time for Greek retaliation against the Persians. The goat accordingly, "*charged at him with great rage*" (vs. 6), butting the ram, and breaking "*shattering*" (vs 7) the ram's two horns.

### III. THE HE GOAT FROM THE WEST - GREECE (8:5-7) (Contd.)

All this of course, was fulfilled dramatically in history. The forces of Alexander first met and defeated the Persians at the Grandicus River in Asia Minor in May, 334 BC., which was the beginning of the complete conquest of the entire Persian Empire. A year and a half later a battle occurred at Issus (Nov., 333 BC.) near the northeastern tip of the Mediterranean Sea. The power of Persia was finally broken at Gaugamela near Nineveh in Oct., 331 BC.

The divine view of Greece is less complimentary than that of secular historians. William Tarn for instance, gives high praise of Alexander.

"He [Alexander] was one of the supreme fertilizing forces in history. He lifted the civilized world out of one groove and set it in another; he started a new epoch; nothing could again be as it had been . . . Particularism was replaced by the idea of the *"Inhabited world,"* the common possession of civilized men . . . Greek culture, heretofore practically confined to the Greeks, spread throughout the world; and for the use of its inhabitants, in place of the many dialects of Greece, there grew up the form of Greek known as the *"koine,"* the *"common speech."*

William Woothrope Tarn  
*"Alexander the Great"* 2 Vols.  
 Cambridge, 1948

Porteous comments on Tarn's praise, *"not a glimmer of all this appears in the book of Daniel."* God's view is vastly different from man's viewpoint when it comes to world history.

### IV. THE GREAT HORN BROKEN (8:8)

As Daniel contemplates in his vision the triumph of the he goat, an unexpected development takes place. The great horn between the eyes of the he goat is broken just when the he goat reached the pinnacle of his victories. Out of this grows four notable horns described as being *"toward the four winds of heaven."* Expositors have interpreted this verse as representing the untimely death of Alexander and the division of his empire into four major sections.

Alexander, who had conquered more of the world than any other ruler, was not able to conquer himself. Partly due to strenuous exertion, his life dissipated in a raging fever. Alexander died in a drunken state at Babylon, just before he turned 33 years of age. Alexander's death left the great conquest without an effective single leader, and it took about 23 years for the empire to be successfully divided.

#### IV. THE GREAT HORN BROKEN (8:8) (Contd.)

Practically all commentators recognize the four horns as symbolic of the four kingdoms of the Diadochi as follows:

- 1). Cassander assumed rule over Macedonia and Greece
- 2). Lysimachus took control of Thrace, Bithnia, and most of Asia Minor
- 3). Seleucus took Syria and the lands to the east including Babylonia.
- 4). Ptolemy established rule over Egypt and possibly Palestine and Arabia Petraea.

A fifth contender for political power, Antigonus, was soon defeated. Thus Daniel, with remarkable accuracy predicted the rise and fall of the empire of Alexander the Great.

#### V. THE EMERGENCE OF THE LITTLE HORN (8:9,10)

While there is little controversy as to the identity of the ram and the he goat, practically all the arguments over this vision have centred upon the meaning of the little horn described in verses 9 and 10. The "*small (or little) horn*" (vs 9) grows exceeding great in three directions: towards the south, toward the east and toward the Beautiful land. The implication is that the point of reference is Syria; that the "*south*" is equal to Egypt, and the "*east*" is the direction of ancient Medo-Persia or Armenia, and "*the Beautiful land,*" or "*glorious land*" refers to Palestine or Canaan, which lies between Syria and Egypt. The original for "*pleasant land*" (KJV) means "*beauty.*" Actually the meaning here may mean Jerusalem in particular rather than the land in general.

These conquests, are confirmed in the history of Syria, especially under Antiochus Epiphanes, the eighth king in the Syrian dynasty who reigned from 175-164 BC. (I Maccabees 1:10; 6:16). According to I Maccabees 1:20, Antiochus first invaded Egypt and then Jerusalem: "*after subduing Egypt, Antiochus returned in the one hundred and forty third year. He went up against Israel and came to Jerusalem with a strong force.*"

As a result of his military conquests, the little horn is said to grow great "*until it reached the host of heaven*" (vs. 10). He is pictured as casting down some of the host of the stars to the ground and stamping upon them. As Leupold says, "*that stars should signify God's holy people is not strange when one considers as a background the words that were spoken to Abraham concerning the numerical increase of God's people (Genesis 15:5; 22:17).*" That Antiochus Epiphanes blasphemed God and heavenly power as well as persecuted the people of Israel, the people of God, is all too evident from history.



## VI. THE DESOLATION OF THE SANCTUARY (8:11-14)

Up to Daniel 8:11, it is not difficult to find fulfilment of this vision in the history of the Medo-Persian, Alexandrian, and post Alexandrian periods. Beginning with verse 11, however, expositors have widely differing viewpoints. In the many divergent views we can find basically three general classifications.

**First**, the critical view that Daniel was a second century forgery written by a pseudo-Daniel regards this prophecy as simply history written after the fact and completely fulfilled in Antiochus Epiphanes. This, of course, is rejected by the great majority of conservative scholars.

**Second**, the view that this is a genuine sixth century BC. prophecy, but completely fulfilled historically in Antiochus Epiphanes.

**Third**, the view that the prophecy is genuine prediction fulfilled in the second century BC. but typical and anticipatory of the final conflict between God and the Gentile rulers at the time of the persecution of Israel prior to the second advent of Christ.

According to verse 11, the little horn, magnifies himself even to the "**Prince of the host.**" This means he exalted himself up to the point of claiming divine honour, as is brought out in his name "*Epiphanes*" which refers to "*glorious manifestation*" such as belongs to God. The Jews, though, bitterly referred to him as "*Epimanes*" which means "*madman!*"

A supreme illustration of his exalted acts stated when he took away the daily sacrifices and desecrated the sanctuary. The term "**took away the daily sacrifices**" (vs. 11) means literally "*from him,*" that is from God. Antiochus stopped the morning and evening sacrifices, taking away from God what were daily tokens of Israel's monotheistic worship. The expression "**daily sacrifices**" is from the Hebrew "*tamid*" meaning "**constant**" as applying to the daily sacrifices. This is further brought out in I Maccabees 1:44-49, referring to the command of Antiochus Epiphanes to depart from the worship of the law of Moses.

"And the king sent letters by messengers to Jerusalem and the cities of Judah; he directed them to follow the customs strange to the land, to forbid burnt offerings and sacrifices and drink offerings in the sanctuary, to profane Sabbaths and feasts, to defile the sanctuary and priests, to build altars in sacred precincts and shrines for idols, to sacrifice swine and unclean animals, and to leave their sons uncircumcised. They were to make themselves abominable by everything and profane, so that they should forget the law and change all the ordinances and whoever does not obey the command of the king shall die."

RSV

## VI. THE DESOLATION OF THE SANCTUARY (8:11-14) (Contd.)

Although it is not necessary to take away the expression "*the place of his sanctuary was brought low*" (vs 11) as meaning destruction by Antiochus of the temple itself, it is of interest that in I Maccabees 4:42 ff, they literally tore down the altar and built a new one, "*they also rebuilt the sanctuary and the interior of the temple, and consecrated the courts.*" (I Maccabees 4:48). As Young comments, "Apparently Antiochus did not actually tear down the temple, although eventually he desecrated it to the point that it was hardly fit for use."

Verse 12 is a recapping of Antiochus Epiphanes' activities against God. The statement, "*the host of the saints, . . . were given over to him*" apparently refers to the fact that the people of Israel were under his power with permission. The phrase "*and the daily sacrifice*" indicates that the daily sacrifices were also under his power and he was able to substitute a heathen worship in the place of the Levitical sacrifices.

The phrase "*Because of rebellion*" (NIV) (vs. 12) or "*by reason of transgression*" (KJV) can be understood as an extension of this, that is, the daily sacrifices are given in his power in order to permit him to transgress against God. The result is that he cast down the law of Moses and practised his activities, and seemingly prospered for a time.

Having described the activities of Antiochus Epiphanes, Daniel now records a conversation between two "*saints*" or "*holy one,*" apparently angels, concerning the duration of the desecration of the sanctuary. The question brought forth was "*How long will it take for the vision to be fulfilled - the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, the rebellion that causes desolation, and the surrender of the sanctuary and of the host that will be trampled underfoot?*" (vs. 13).

The answer in verse 14 has touched off an endless amount of controversy. Daniel is informed that the answer is "*It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings; then shall the sanctuary be reconsecrated.*"

The Seventh Day Adventists have understood that the 2300 days referred to years which, on the basis of their interpretation would have culminated in the year 1884 with the second coming of Christ. The year-day theory has been excluded by the fact that Christ did not come in 1884 in any way or in any real fulfilment.

Another theory which was based upon the thought that the daily sacrifice suggested both evening and morning sacrifices, concluded that the days would refer to 1150 days or half the 2300 days interpretation. Obviously, the interpretation is not sound because as Keil says, "A Hebrew reader could not possibly understand the period of 2300 evening-mornings of 2300 half days or 1150 whole days, because evening and morning at the creation constituted not half but the whole day."

## VI. THE DESOLATION OF THE SANCTUARY (8:11-14) (Contd.)

Generally, expositors even of different schools of interpretation follow the idea that these are 2300 literal days. If then they are 2300 literal days, what is their fulfilment? The attempts to relate this to the last seven years of the Gentile period referred to in Daniel 9:27 have confused rather than helped the interpretation. We find that the 2300 days is less than 7 years (2520 days), and the half figure of 1150 days is short of the three and one half years of time during the great tribulation.

Most expositors, therefore, believe the termination date of the 2300 days was in 164 BC, when Antiochus Epiphanes died during a military campaign in Media. This permitted the purging of the sanctuary and the return to Jewish worship. Figuring from this date backward 2300 days would fix the beginning at 171 BC. In that year, Onais III, the legitimate priest, was murdered and a pseudo line of priests assumed power. This would give adequate fulfilment in time for the 2300 days to elapse at the time of the death of Antiochus Epiphanes. This prophecy may safely be said to have been fulfilled and therefore does not have any future significance.

## VII. VISION INTERPRETED IN RELATION TO THE TIME OF THE END (8:15-19)

With the entire vision recorded, and, to some extent, already interpreted, Daniel now enters into active participation in the vision and, as in chapter 7 he sought an interpretation. A personage stood before him described as one "*who looked like a man,*" but obviously was an angel. In verse 16, the angel Gabriel is mentioned specifically, and a man's voice is addressed to Gabriel instructing him to explain the vision to Daniel.

The man's voice may be that of Michael the Archangel or even the voice of God. Of interest is the fact that this is the first mention in the Bible of an angel by name. The only other angel mentioned by name, aside from Satan, is Michael mentioned in Daniel 10:13, 21; 12:1; Jude 9; Revelation 12:7; see also Daniel 9:21; Luke 1:19,26).

Although Daniel had apparently been awake in the earlier part of the vision, we now learn that as Gabriel was speaking, Daniel had fallen into a deep sleep with his face toward the ground. It was not a natural sleep. He slept as a result of his fear as mentioned in verse 17. As in the case of Ezekiel (1:28-2:2) Daniel is aroused: as stated in verse 18, Gabriel "*touched me, and raised me to my feet.*"

In verse 19, Gabriel then began a further explanation of what he introduced in verse 17 concerning the time of the end, making clear his intention to let Daniel know "*what will happen later in the time of wrath: because the vision concerns the appointed time of the end.*"

## VII. VISION INTERPRETED IN RELATION TO THE TIME OF THE END (8:15-19) (Contd.)

Although there is a great deal of variation in the interpretation of this term depicting end times, four major views emerge.

1. The historical view that all of Daniel has been fulfilled.
2. The futuristic view, the idea that it is entirely future.
3. The dual fulfilment view that Daniel 8 is intentionally a prophetic reference both to Antiochus Epiphanes, now fulfilled, and to the end of age and the final world ruler who will persecute Israel before the second advent.
4. The view that the passage is prophecy, historically fulfilled but intentionally typical of similar events and personages at the end of the age.

## VIII. THE INTERPRETATION OF THE RAM AND THE ROUGH GOAT (8:20-22)

The interpretation of the ram and the he goat vision in verses 20-21 makes explicit what has been assumed in the preceding exegesis. Most significant is the fact that Media and Persia are regarded as one empire.

The he goat described as "*shaggy*" (NIV) or "*rough*" (KJV) although "*the king of Greece,*" is an obvious reference to the kingdom as a whole, as the great horn between the eyes is identified as the first king. Practically everyone agrees that this is Alexander the Great.

The four kingdoms represented by the four horns which replaced the great horn that was broken are identified as four kingdoms arising from the he-goat nation. They are described as not having the same power as the great horn. Aside from expositors who attempt to relate this to the Roman Empire, where there is no reasonable parallel, the four kingdoms are obviously the four generals whose empire was partitioned after the death of Alexander the Great.

## IX. THE LATER TIME OF THE KINGDOM (8;23-26)

An individual is pictured who is said to have the following characteristics:

1. He will appear in "*the latter time of their reign*" that is, of the four kingdoms.
2. He will appear "*when rebels have become completely wicked.*"
3. He will be "*a stern-faced king a master of intrigue,*" that is having a strong or bold countenance and able to interpret riddles, a mark of intelligence (I Kings 10:1).
4. He will "*become very strong, but not by his own power.*" His great power will come from another (either God, Satan, Alexander the Great).
5. He will "*cause astounding devastation and will succeed in whatever he does. He will destroy the mighty men and the holy people.*" He accomplish great exploits including overcoming powerful leaders and destroying Israel, God's holy people.
6. By his policies "*he shall cause deceit to prosper*" always busy hatching plots (I Maccabees 1:16-51), that is, wickedness and deceit shall be on the increase.
7. He will "*consider himself superior,* exalt himself, as did Antiochus Epiphanes
8. "*When they feel secure, he will destroy many*" By means of a false peace, he shall massacre many people.
9. He shall oppose "*the Prince of princes.*" He will be foolish enough to even attempt to overcome God.
10. In the end "*he will be destroyed, but not by human power*" (Antiochus Epiphanes died of a foul disease), that is, his power shall be destroyed without human intervention.

A careful study of these points will justify the conclusion that it is possible (although not exhaustive) to explain all these elements as fulfilled historically in Antiochus Epiphanes. Others have suggested that this portion of Scripture refers to Mohammedism and its rise in the world scene in the 600's AD.

Yet it may be concluded that this difficult passage goes beyond that which is historically fulfilled to foreshadow a future personage identified as the world ruler of the end of time. In concluding the interpretation, Gabriel makes plain that the vision will not come immediately and that what was told is true. This should remove all doubt from anyone who would question the validity of this prophecy.

**X. THE EFFECT UPON DANIEL (8:27)**

As a result of the tremendous vision given to Daniel and his subsequent exhaustion because of it, Daniel records that he fainted and was sick for several days. Upon his recovery, he was able to resume his conduct of the king's business. Jeffrey notes that by Daniel's immediate resumption of his work in the king's service proves that he had been in Babylon all the time, and that his presence in Susa was purely visionary.

Since Daniel could not find someone to give him the complete interpretation, it seems the intent of the vision was to record the vision for the benefit of future generations. Unlike the previous instances where Daniel was the interpreter of divine revelation, here Daniel becomes the recorder of it without understanding all that he wrote or experienced.

\*\*\* Dr. H. A. Ironside was to preach a prophetic message in a certain church. A godless man entered the service late and took a seat near the front. After the meeting the man approached Dr. Ironside and said, *"I'm glad you agree with me."*

Dr. Ironside replied, *"Oh, you hold to the Second Coming, do you?"*

*"Oh, yes,"* was the quick answer.

*"Well does it hold to you?"* asked Dr. Ironside.

*"What do you mean?"* asked the man.

*"I mean has it gripped you - has it made a difference in your life?"* explained Dr. Ironside.

The man shot back in reply, *"Who has been telling you about me?"* \*\*\*

All Biblical truth, prophecy included, is intended to make every believer a mature person, fully equipped unto good works (II Timothy 3:16,17).

How has this study of the prophetic Scriptures affected you?

**THE BOOK OF DANIEL**  
**CHAPTER 9**

**THE PROPHECY OF THE SEVENTY WEEKS**

The third vision of Daniel the prophet, following the two preceding visions of chapter 7 and 8, concerns the prophecy of God for Israel culminating with the second coming of their Messiah to the earth to rule and reign.

This chapter begins with Jeremiah's prophecy of seventy years of desolations of Jerusalem and quickly moves to the intercessory prayer of Daniel. This chapter concludes with the third vision of Daniel given through the agency of the angel Gabriel, which provides one of the most important keys to understanding the prophetic Scriptures as a whole. In many respects this is the high point of the book of Daniel. Although previously the Gentile history and prophecy recorded in Daniel was related to the people of Israel, the ninth chapter specifically takes up prophecy as it applies to God's chosen people alone.

**I. THE SEVENTY YEARS OF THE DESOLATIONS OF JERUSALEM (9:1-2)**

According to the opening verse of chapter 9, the third vision of Daniel occurred *"In the first year of Darius the son of Xeres (also known as Artaxerxes or Ahasuerus - KJV), (a Mede by descent"* Therefore, the events of Belshazzar's feast in chapter 5 occurred between the visions recorded in chapters 8 and 9.

The reason for this chapter was the understanding by Daniel of the prophecy of Jeremiah that the seventy years of desolation of Jerusalem for would soon expire. The expression *"by books"* (KJV) may be understood to mean *"in books"* or as in the NIV *"understood from the Scriptures."*

Jeremiah the prophet, in addition to his oral prophetic announcements, had written his prophecies in the closing days of Jerusalem before the Babylonians destroyed it. Although the first record was destroyed (Jeremiah 36:23), Jeremiah had it rewrote as he was directed from the LORD (36:28).

How long Daniel had been in possession of these prophecies is not known, but the implication is that Daniel had come into a full comprehension of Jeremiah's prediction and realized that the seventy years prophesied had about run their course. The time of the vision of Daniel 9 was 538 BC., about 67 years after Jerusalem had been captured and Daniel carried off to Babylon (605 BC.).

**I. THE SEVENTY YEARS OF THE DESOLATIONS OF JERUSALEM (9:1-2) (Contd.)**

On the basis of the remarkable prophecies of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 25:11-12; 29:10-14), Daniel was encouraged to pray for the restoration of Jerusalem and the re-gathering of the people of Israel. This occurred "*In the first of Cyrus king of Persia*" (Ezra 1:1), and Daniel lived at least until "*the third year of Cyrus king of Persia*" (Daniel 10:1) and probably even some years longer.

Some interpreters seem to find a difference between the two passages in Jeremiah stating that they are speaking of two different events. Yet we feel the best interpretation of the expression "*desolation of Jerusalem,*" in Daniel 9:2, is that it is referring to the period of 605 BC. to 539 BC. for the judgement on Babylon, and to the date of 538 BC. for the return to the land. Several principles emerge from Daniel's reference to Jeremiah's prophecy.

**First**, Daniel took the seventy years to be a literal time period to be fulfilled.

**Second**, Daniel realized that the Word of God would be fulfilled only on the basis of prayer, and that is why he entered into a fervent plea as recorded in this chapter. On the one hand, Daniel realized the certainty of divine purposes as well as the sovereignty of God which would surely fulfil His prophetic Word. On the other hand, he recognized the need for human agency, the necessity of faith and prayer, and the urgency to respond to this human responsibility as it related to the divine prophecy. There is often a God part and a man part in the fulfilment of prophecy.

**Third**, he recognized the need of confession of sin as a prelude to this time of restoration. In this prayer, Daniel, for the first time used the word "*LORD*" or Jehovah and repeated it several times (9:2,4,10,13,14,20).

**\*\*\*** Some years ago a seminary student met with his fellow classmates for a prayer meeting in the dormitory. Though he had memorized a great many Scriptures, he seemed to have difficulty retaining them.

As he prayed, he started to quote one of the great promises of God because he wanted to claim it for his own. But he soon began to stumble and stammer, forgetting the verse halfway through.

Finally he said, "*Just wait a minute, Lord!*" He went over to his desk, turned to the reference in his Bible and said, "*Here it is Lord, right here!*" God's promises are challenges to prayer. **\*\*\***



## II. DANIEL'S PREPARATION FOR PRAYER (9:3-4)

Encouraged by his clear understanding of God's intention to restore Jerusalem, Daniel made adequate preparation to present his confessions and petitions to the Lord. Concerning this prayer a few particulars need to be noted:

**A. It was a Purposeful Prayer** - Daniel said "*I turned to the LORD and pleaded with him in prayer and petition.*" The literal Hebrew is, "*to seek prayer.*" It is as though he didn't know just what he ought to pray for, so he went before the Lord to seek after prayer. He seemed assured that he would be assisted in his prayer to pray as he needed to. This was a formal beginning in which Daniel turned from other things to concentrate on his prayer to the Lord. It implied his total faith, devotion, and worship of God.

**B. It was an Intense Prayer** - He sought the LORD by "*prayer and petition (supplication - KJV).*" These two words indicate the intense earnestness of his desire to pray. Such praying has been done by people of God in every day and age. Such praying was done even by our Lord Jesus (Hebrews 5:7). Christians are also commanded to pray in this manner (Philippians 4:6; I Timothy 2:1).

**C. It was a Penitential Prayer** - It was with "*fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes.*" Therefore, this was done with every known aid to prayer: namely, **fasting**, that he might not be diverted from prayer by food; **sackcloth**, a putting aside of ordinary garments in favour of a rough cloth speaking of his abject need; and **ashes**, the traditional symbol of grief and humility. Daniel left nothing undone that might possibly make his prayer more effective or more persuasive.

**D. It was a Directed Prayer** - He states that he "*prayed to the LORD my God.*" He directed it to God Himself. He kept his thoughts on the Lord and wouldn't allow them to wander off into a blissful state. He quite possibly thought of himself as being ushered right into the very presence of God - and after all wasn't he? Do we dare let our minds wander at this important time in OUR history?

Effective prayer requires faith in the Word of God; a proper attitude of mind and heart, privacy, and an unhurried confession and petition. Daniel's humility, reverence, and earnestness are the hallmarks of an effective prayer life.

### III. DANIEL'S PRAYER OF CONFESSION (9:5-14)

Having reminded himself of God's covenant mercy, Daniel began his prayer of confession. Daniel himself was one of the few major characters of the Old Testament to whom some sin was not recorded. He was not dealing with his personal sins, but with his identification with the sin of his nation and the collective responsibility which Daniel shared both in the promises of God's blessings as well as His warnings of divine judgement. Daniel did not spare himself or his people in his confession of sin.

As John Calvin pointed out in his exposition, there was a fourfold description of the extent of their sin:

**First, "We have sinned"** (Heb - "hata'nu"), meaning *"a serious crime or offence;"*

**Second, "and done wrong"** (NIV) *"and have committed iniquity"* (KJV) that is, *"acted unjustly";*

**Third, "we have been wicked"** or *"conducted ourselves wickedly";*

**Fourth, sinning in this way, "we have turned away from your commands and laws."** The variety of verbs here, indicates that Daniel wished to confess sin of every kind in its full extent.

The heinousness of their sin was amplified in verse 6 by the fact that they had disregarded the prophets which God had sent to them. It characterized all the classes of Israel, including their king, their princes, other leaders referred to as *"our fathers"* and finally *"all the people of the land."*

In verses 7-8, Daniel contrasted the righteousness of God and the shame belonging to Israel. Daniel itemized those who were especially responsible:

**First, "the men of Judah, and to the people of Jerusalem,"** that is, the kingdom of Judah which was carried into captivity by the Babylonians, and

**Second, "and all Israel, both near, and far"** that was also the ten tribes of the kingdom of Israel which were carried off by the Assyrians in 721 BC. The scattering of the children of Israel *"in all the countries where you have scattered us,"* was not based upon one sin, but by generation after generation of failures to obey the Law or to give heed to the warnings of the prophets.

### III. DANIEL'S PRAYER OF CONFESSION (9:5-14)(Contd)

Having contrasted the righteousness of God to the sins of Israel, Daniel turned to verse 9 to contrast the mercies and forgiveness of God as compared to the sin of Israel. Although God is a God of righteousness, He is also the God of mercy. It is on this ground, of course, that Daniel is basing his petition. As Stuart observes, *"the plural form of these nouns [mercies and forgiveness] denotes intensity in the manifestation, or the continued and extended exercise of these qualities or attributes."*

Over against the reminder of the mercies and forgiveness of God, Daniel plunged into a recital of the extent of Israel's sin in verses 10-11. Daniel restated that Israel had not obeyed the voice of the Lord their God. The word translated *"laws"* in verse 10 literally means, *"instructions,"* (cf. Isaiah 1:10 ff.). The rebellion was not on the part of a few but *"All Israel has transgressed your law and turned away."* Because of their persistent failure and rebellion against God, the prophesied curse pronounced upon Israel as *"written in the Law of Moses, the servant of God"* was applied (cf. - Deuteronomy 28:15-68).

In verses 12-14, Daniel itemized the evil which God had brought upon them as a result of their sin. In thus bringing judgement upon them, God had *"fulfilled the words spoken against us, and against our rulers."* Above all else, the other terrible judgement was that of the destruction of Jerusalem itself which was the final blow to Israel's pride and security.

Adding to the earlier sins, Israel in their extremity did not turn to the Lord in prayer; *"yet we have not sought the favor of the LORD our God, by turning from our sins, and giving attention to your truth."* What Daniel was saying was that God had no alternative, even though He was a God of mercy; for when mercy is spurned, judgement is inevitable.

Daniel accordingly concluded in verse 14. Porteous notes that the word *"watched,"* (KJV) which can be translated *"keep ready"* or *"vigilant"* or *"did not hesitate"* (NIV) is the same word Jeremiah used when he told how God was watchful over His Word to perform it (Jeremiah 1:12; cf. 31:28; 44:27). Jehovah was being faithful to His Word both in blessings and in cursings, which must have encouraged Daniel in anticipating the end of their captivity.

### IV. DANIEL'S PETITION FOR FORGIVENESS AND RESTORATION (9:15-19)

In his procession of thought, having laid fully the groundwork by this intensive confession of sin and recognition of the righteousness and mercies of God, Daniel turned to the burden of his prayer - that God, in keeping with His righteousness and according to His mercies, would forgive and restore the people of Israel.

#### IV. DANIEL'S PETITION FOR FORGIVENESS AND RESTORATION (9:15-19) (Contd.)

The deliverance of the people of Israel from Egypt was, in many respects, the Old Testament's standard illustration of the power of God and His ability to deliver His people. Having introduced the thought of God's deliverance of Israel from the land of Egypt, Daniel once again was overwhelmed by the wickedness of Israel which seemed to block the way for any restoration. He injected, "*We have sinned, we have done wrong*" which was his theme up to this point in the prayer - but, nevertheless, Daniel proceeded with his petition for Israel's forgiveness and restoration.

In making his petition in verses 15-19, Daniel addressed God only as "*Adonai*" and "*Elohim*" and no longer used the term "*Jehovah*" as he did in verses 4-14. The explanation seems to be that Daniel was recognizing God's absolute sovereignty over him as Lord. It also moved away from seeing God in His covenant perspective.

In presenting the petition, Daniel was significantly appealing to the righteousness of God again in verse 16. Although anticipating that the hope of the restoration of Israel depended on the mercies of God, Daniel recognized, nevertheless, that it must be "*in keeping with all your righteous acts.*" Here was implied that the whole system of reconciliation to God was by sacrifice, which was to be supremely fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Daniel recognized that there was no contradiction between the righteousness of God and His mercies and forgiveness. The appeal was to the fact that restoration would not only be an act of mercy but also that which would bring honour and glory to God as well as a testimony to the nations before whom Israel was "*an object of scorn.*"

With his petition now grounded on the fact that an answer would be to the glory of God, Daniel added one further item, namely, that the sanctuary itself, the place where God met man through his sacrifice, was in desolation and that the whole sacrificial system had fallen into disuse. Ultimately, it was not simply the restoration of Israel which Daniel sought, nor the restoration of Jerusalem or even the temple, but specifically the sanctuary with its altar of sacrifice and its holy of holies.

The eloquence of Daniel's prayer reached its crescendo in verse 18. How it must have moved the heart of God to have heard Daniel say, "*Give ear, O God, and hear; open your eyes and see the desolation of the city that bears your Name. We do not make requests of you because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy.*" If any prayer to God can be called persuasive, Daniel's prayer certainly merited this kind of description.

#### IV. DANIEL'S PETITION FOR FORGIVENESS AND RESTORATION (9:15-19)(Contd)

Daniel in his holy life, his careful preparation in approaching God, his uncompromising confession of sin, and his appeal to God's holy character as the One who was both righteous and merciful, illustrated the kind of prayer that God delights to answer. Daniel, led by the Spirit of God, had expressed precisely the kind of prayer that God wanted to hear and desired to answer.

In closing his prayer, Daniel once again beseeched God to hear, to forgive, to do, to defer not, all for God's own sake, for God's city Jerusalem, for God's people Israel, who were called by the name of the Lord. As Talford has well said, *"The prayer is one of the most remarkable in the pages of Holy Writ."*

#### V. THE COMING OF THE ANGEL GABRIEL (9:20-23)

While Daniel was offering his petition to the Lord, the answer was already on the way by means of the heavenly messenger, the angel Gabriel. Daniel implied in verse 20 that the angel was sent at the very beginning of his prayer. It seems that the prayer of Daniel recorded here was only a summary of the actual oral prayer which was probably much more lengthy and culminated at the time of the evening oblation (3 o'clock).

The reference to **"Gabriel, the man"** was not a denial that he was an angel, but served to identify him with the vision of Daniel 8:15-16. The term **"man"** (Heb 'ish) was also used in the sense of **"a servant."** Leupold notes: *"The term 'Gabriel' means 'man of God' but with this difference: the first root, 'gebher,' means 'man' as the strong one, and the second root, 'el,' means the 'Strong God.' "In other words the expression "the man Gabriel" could be translated "the servant, the strong one of the strong God."*

The sacrifice usually began about 3 p.m. and consisted of a perfect yearling lamb offered as a whole burnt offering accompanied by both meal and drink offerings, which typified the future sacrifice of Jesus Christ upon the cross as the spotless Lamb of God (Hebrews 9:14).

Daniel did not speak specifically of that sacrifice but only of **"the evening sacrifice,"** that would be, the meal and drink offering. As God in a sense met the spiritual need of His people at the time of the sacrifice and oblation, so Gabriel was sent by God to meet Daniel's special need at this time and remind him of the mercies of God.

Gabriel bore witness to the special relationship which Daniel had to the Lord in that he was one who was **"highly esteemed,"** in many spiritual and moral characteristics like that Apostle John whom Jesus loved (John 13:23). The long preamble of these 23 verses lead up to the great revelation. The prayer of Daniel should speak even louder when we consider that it set the stage for the unveiling of one of the greatest prophecies recorded in the Word of God.

## VI. THE REVELATION OF THE SEVENTY SEVENS OF ISRAEL (9:24)

One of the most important prophecies of the Old Testament is contained in the concluding four verses of Daniel 9. The prophecy as a whole was presented in verse 24. The 1st sixty-nine sevens were described in verse 25. The events between the sixty-ninth seventh and the seventieth seventh were detailed in verse 26. The final period of the seventieth seventh was described in verse 27.

Depending upon your interpretation of the "*seventy sevens (or weeks)*" you might see it as a period of day-weeks or week-weeks. But the general conservative interpretation of Daniel 9:24-27 usually regards the time units as years. The decision however, is by no means unanimous. Some believe the passage does not say "*years*" because it is indefinite so they consider the question somewhat open. Others are dogmatic such as Leupold who finds a mark of divine work in the symbolism of numbers. He feels "*seventy*" contains seven multiplied by ten, which, being a round number, signifies perfection, completion. Therefore, "*seventy heptads*" - 7 x 7 x 10 - is the period in which the divine work of greatest moment is brought into perfection.

Amillenarians generally regard the seventieth seventh as following immediately after the sixty-ninth seventh and, therefore would have already been fulfilled in history. The other point of view regards the seventieth seven as separated from the earlier sequence of years and scheduled for fulfilment in the future in the seven years preceding the second advent of Christ.

In the Christological interpretation of Daniel 9:24-27, it is generally assumed that the time unit indicated is years. The English word "*weeks*" (KJV) is misleading as the Hebrew is actually the plural of the word for "*seven*," without specifying whether it is day, months, or years. The only system of interpretation that gives any literal meaning to this prophecy is to regard the time units as prophetic years of 360 days per year according to the Jewish custom with an occasion extra month inserted to correct the calendar as needed.

A very important aspect of the prophecy given at the start is that the period of time in question relates to "*your people*" and "*your holy city*." Even in ruins, Jerusalem remained the city set apart in the heart of God. To read into this verse, the church composed of Jews and Gentiles alike is to add something foreign to the whole thinking of Daniel. Once it has been established that the prophecy related to the people of Israel and the holy city of Jerusalem, six important purposes of God were clearly discerned in verse 24:

- 1) ***"to finish the transgression;"***
- 2) ***"to put an end to sin;"***
- 3) ***"to atone for wickedness;"***
- 4) ***"to bring in everlasting righteousness;"***
- 5) ***"to seal up the vision and prophecy;"***
- 6) ***"to anoint the most holy."***

## VI. THE REVELATION OF THE SEVENTY SEVENS OF ISRAEL (9:24)(Contd.)

These six items, to be completed in the seventy sevens of Daniel 9:24 are comprehensive in nature. The **first three**, deal with sin named in three ways: "*the transgression*," "*sin*," and "*wickedness*." The expression "*to finish*" is derived from a root meaning "*to finish in the sense of bringing to an end*." The most obvious meaning is that Israel's course of apostasy and sin and wandering over the face of the earth will be brought to an end before the completion of the seventy sevens.

The **second** aspect of the program, "*to put an end to sin*," may be taken either in the sense of taking away sins or bringing sin to its final place judgement. Due to a variation of textual reading, another possibility is to translate it "*to seal up sin*." The final explanation may include bringing an end to Israel's previous transgressions, bringing their sin into judgement, and also introducing an element of forgiveness.

The **third** aspect of the program, "*to atone for wickedness*," seems to be a rather clear picture of the cross of Christ in which Christ reconciled Israel as well as the world to Himself (II Corinthians 5:19). The Hebrew word here "*kipper*" when used in relation to sin means to "*cover*," to "*wipe out*," to "*make ... as harmless, nonexistent, or inoperative, to annul, to withdraw from God's sight*." While the basic provision for reconciliation was made at the cross, the actual and final application of it is again associated with the second advent of Christ as far as Israel is concerned.

The **fourth** aspect of the program is "*to bring in everlasting righteousness*" There is a sense in which this also was accomplished by Christ at His first coming in that He provided a righteous cornerstone for God's justification of a sinner. The many Messianic passages, however, which view righteousness as being applied to the earth at the time of the second coming of Christ seem to be the most likely explanation of this phrase (cf. - Jeremiah 23:5,6; Isaiah 11:2-5; 53:11; Jeremiah 33:15-18).

The **fifth** aspect of the program, "*to seal up the vision and prophecy*" is probably best understood to mean the termination of unusual direct revelation by means of a vision or oral prophecy. The expression "*to seal up*" indicates that no more is to be added and that which has been predicted will receive divine confirmation and recognition in the form of an actual fulfilment. Once a letter was sealed, its contents were irreversible (cf. Daniel 6:8)

The **sixth** aspect of the vision of prophecy, "*to anoint the most Holy*," has been referred to the dedication of the temple built by Zerubbabel, to the sanctification of the altar which had previously been desecrated by Antiochus Epiphanes (1 Maccabees 4:52-56), and even (yet unlikely) to the new Jerusalem (Revelation 21:1-27).

## VI. THE REVELATION OF THE SEVENTY SEVENS OF ISRAEL (9:24)(Contd.)

Young suggests that it refers to Christ Himself as anointed by the Spirit. Keil and Leupold prefer to refer it to the new holy of holies in the new Jerusalem (Revelation 21:1-3). Some of the more recent commentators such as McKeever say,

"In my own spirit I believe that Jesus Christ very beautifully fulfilled and completed all seven of these [dividing point 5 above into 2 aspects] at His crucifixion. He is now anointed most Holy King, He has already made reconciliation (atonement) for iniquity, He has made an end to sins reign over the human race and He fulfilled (sealed up) the Old Testament Law and prophecies."

## VII. THE FULFILMENT OF THE SIXTY-NINE SEVENS (9:25)

The key to the interpretation of the entire passage is found in the phrase "*from the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem.*" The question of the date on which to begin the seventy sevens, is obviously most important in interpreting the prophecy and in finding suitable fulfilment.

There are at least four decrees concerning the rebuilding of Jerusalem recorded in Scripture:

- 1) The decree of Cyrus to rebuild the temple (2 Chronicles 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1; 6:1-5)
- 2) The decree of Darius confirming the decree of Cyrus (Ezra 6:6-12)
- 3) The decree of Artaxerxes (Ezra 7:11-26)
- 4) The decree of Artaxerxes given to Nehemiah authorizing the rebuilding of the city (Nehemiah 2:1-8)

All agree that there was a decree to rebuild the temple, given by Cyrus approx. 538 BC. The question is whether this decree also authorized the rebuilding of the city. The precise wording of the three decrees as recorded in II Chronicles 36 and Ezra seems to deal only with the temple, the rebuilding of the city was not fulfilled until the time of Nehemiah where the decree in Nehemiah 2:1-8 clearly referred to the city as a whole.



## VII. THE FULFILMENT OF THE SIXTY-NINE SEVENS (9:25) (Contd.)

The Amillennial view of this passage considers the decree of Cyrus in 538 BC. as the decree to rebuild the city and the wall. Reference is made to the prophecy of Isaiah 44:28 and 45:13, which are remarkable prophecies concerning Cyrus 150 years before he came on the scene of world history.

According to Isaiah 44:28, God *"who says of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and will accomplish all that I please: he will say of Jerusalem, Let it be rebuilt; and of the temple, Let its foundations be laid."*

Additional prophecies are given concerning Cyrus in Isaiah 45:1-4. Although Cyrus is not specifically mentioned in some translations, most have taken Isaiah 45:13 as another reference to him, *"I will raise up Cyrus (him - KJV) in my righteousness. I will make all his ways straight. He will rebuild my city, and set my exiles free, but not for a price or reward, says the LORD Almighty."*

Young finds confirmation in the statement of Ezra 4:12, where the enemies of Israel accuse the Jews of *"rebuilding that rebellious and wicked city. They are restoring the walls and repairing the foundations."*

The question of whether Jerusalem was rebuilt is answered in graphic description in the Book of Nehemiah (which Young does not mention) which pictures the city in utter ruins (Nehemiah 2:12-15). Further, in Nehemiah 11, the expediency is resorted to in the casting of lots so that one in ten would have to move to Jerusalem and build a house there (Nehemiah 11:1).

One other important point is that if we consider 538 BC. as the time that the decree went forth then the 483 years would also have to begin, which would have the time period ending in the middle of the first century when there was no significant event whatever to mark its close.

Accordingly, the best explanation is that the decree relating to the rebuilding of the city itself was that given to Nehemiah in 445 BC., about ninety years after the first captives returned and started the building of the temple.

Many of the older commentators, interpret the reference of the commandment as indicating the royal edict of Artaxerxes Longimanus, who reigned over Persia 465-425 BC., and who not only commanded the rebuilding of Jerusalem in 445 BC. but earlier had commissioned Ezra to return to Jerusalem in 457 BC., (Ezra 7:11-26). **The date of 445 BC. is based on the reference in Nehemiah 2:1 ff. stating that the decree went forth in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes. As his reign began in 465 BC., twenty years later would be 445 BC.**

## VII. THE FULFILMENT OF THE SIXTY-NINE SEVENS (9:25) (Contd.)

In verse 25, two periods of time were introduced which are immediately consecutive. First, a period of seven sevens, or forty-nine years, and then a period of sixty-two sevens, or four hundred and thirty-four years. There is no clear indication given as to the reason for distinguishing between the two periods except that he adds *"it will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble."*

The best explanation seems to be that beginning with Artaxerxes's decree and the building of the wall took a whole generation to clear out all the debris in Jerusalem and restore it as a thriving city. This might well be the fulfilment of the 49 years. This was accomplished in troublesome times (delaying the time) as is fully documented by the book of Nehemiah itself.

Sir Robert Anderson has made a detailed study of a possible chronology for this period beginning with the well established date of 445 BC. when Artaxerxes's decree was issued and culminating in AD. 32 on the very day of Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem shortly before the crucifixion. Sir Robert Anderson specifies that the seventy sevens began on the first Nisan, March 14, 445 BC. and ended on April 6, AD. 32, the totalling of 173,880 days. This would be exactly 483 years according to biblical chronology.

It is customary for the Jews to have twelve months of 360 days each and then to insert a thirteenth month occasionally when necessary to correct the calendar. The continued use of a 360-day year in the future is confirmed by the forty-two months of the great tribulation (Revelation 11:2'13:5) being equated with 1,260 days (Revelation 12:6;11:3).

## VIII. PROPHESED EVENTS AFTER THE SIXTY-NINTH SEVENTH (9:26)

In summarizing the period of the sixty-nine sevens, a statement is made in verse 25 that the period will be after *"the Anointed One will be cut off."* This "Messiah" is now reinstated in verse 26. As Young expresses it, *"The old evangelical interpretation is that which alone satisfies the requirements of the case. The 'anointed one' is Jesus Christ, who was cut off by His death upon the Cross of Calvary."*

If this interpretation of verse 25 is correct, it provides the key to verse 26 which states that after *"sixty-two sevens"* that is, the 7 plus 62 sevens, or after the end of the sixty-ninth seven, the Messiah shall be *"cut off."* The verb rendered "to cut off" has the meaning, "to destroy, to kill," (cf. - Genesis 9:11; Deuteronomy 20:20; Jeremiah 11:19; Psalms 37:9).

### VIII. PROPHESED EVENTS AFTER THE SIXTY-NINTH SEVENTH (9:26)

Christ was indeed not only "*cut off*" from man and from life, but in His cry on the cross indicated that He was forsaken of God. The plaintive cry "*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*" reveals not only the awfulness of separation from God but points also to the answer - the redemptive purpose. The additional information "*but not for himself*" is probably best translated, "*There is nothing for him,*" in that He died for others. He was the sacrificial lamb of God sent to take away the sins of the world.

Although evangelical expositors have agreed that the reference is to Jesus Christ, a division occurred as to whether the event here comes in the seventieth seventh described in the next verse, or whether it occurs in an interim period between the sixty-ninth seventh and the seventieth seventh.

Two theories have emerged, namely, the continuous fulfilment theory which hold that the seventieth seven immediately follows the sixty-ninth, and the gap theory which holds that there is a period of time between the sixty-ninth seven and the seventieth seven. If the fulfilment is continuous, then the seventieth seventh is already historically fulfilled. If there is a gap, the seventieth week is to be a future event.

The centre of verse 26 offers a key to the interpretation when it states, "*The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary.*" Historically the destruction of the city occurred in AD. 70 almost forty years after the death of Christ. Although some expositors, like Young, hold that the sacrifices were caused to cease by Christ in His death which they consider fulfilled in the middle of the last seven years, it is clear that this does not provide in any way for the fulfilment of an event thirty-eight years or more after the end of the sixty-ninth seven.

Those referred to as "*The people of the ruler who will come*" are obviously the Roman people and in no sense do these people belong to Messiah the ruler. Hence it follows that there are two rulers/princes: (1) the Messiah of verses 25 and 26, and (2) "*the ruler who will come*" who is related to the Roman people. That a second prince is required who is Roman in character and destructive to the Jewish people is confirmed in verse 27.

The closing portion of verse 26, although not entirely clear, indicates that the destruction of the city will be like the destruction of a flood and that desolations are sovereignly determined along with war until the time of the end. Because of the reference to "*the end*" twice in verse 26, it would be contextually possible to refer this to the end of the end which will be a future destruction of Jerusalem.

**VIII. PROPHESED EVENTS AFTER THE SIXTY-NINTH SEVENTH (9:26) (Contd.)**

According to Revelation 11:2, "*They will trample on the holy city for 42 months*" probably refers to the great tribulation just before the second advent of Christ. However, there is no complete destruction of Jerusalem at the end of the age as Zechariah 14:1-3 indicates that the holy city is in existence although overtaken by war at the very moment Christ comes back in power and glory. Accordingly, it is probably better to consider all of verse 26 as already fulfilled historically.

Thus we have the end of one of the most important chapters of prophecy ever recorded in the Word of God. Its detailed accuracy should make every Christian rejoice, knowing that everything which has happened and is about to happen is all guided by God.

## THE VISION OF THE GLORY OF GOD

### DANIEL CHAPTER 10

**THE FINAL THREE CHAPTERS OF THE BOOK OF DANIEL** record an extensive revelation of future prophecy which is without parallel anywhere in scripture. Chapter 10 has been called the Prologue, chapter 11 the Prophecy, and chapter 12 the Epilogue.

The last three chapters constitute the fourth vision of Daniel which gathers together the significant threads of prophecy, especially as they relate to the Holy Land and to the people of Israel. The introduction of Chap. 10 actually extends into the first verse of Chapter 11. The next section, 11:2-12:4 is divided into two major sections. The **first** 11:2-35, deals with the immediate future, from Darius to Antiochus; and the **second**, 11:36-12:4, with the far future, and end times just before the second advent of Christ. A **final** message and revelation is given in 12:5-13.

According to the Canadian Army Journal, a conscientious study of history has revealed the following fantastic figures concerning man's evil, warlike nature:

"Since 3600 BC the world has known only 292 years of peace. During this time there have been 14,531 wars, large and small, in which 3 billion 640 million people have been killed. The value of the destruction would pay for a golden belt around the world about a hundred miles wide and 33 feet thick! Since 650 BC there have been 1,656 arms races, only 16 of which have not ended in war! The remainder have terminated in the economic collapse of the countries concerned." Since the world has cast out the "*Prince of Peace*," the Lord Jesus Christ, by crucifying Him almost 2,000 years ago, there has not been one year without a war. In fact, in the last 500 years England has engaged in 78 wars; France 71 wars; the Netherlands, 23; Italy, 25; China, 11; Denmark, 20; Sweden, 26; Poland, 30; Russia, 61; Turkey, 43, and Japan, 9. European nations alone engaged in 74 wars during the lifetime of the first generation born in the 20th century. Even in America's short history have there been 13 wars. And so, "man's inhumanity to man" continues.

*"Our Daily Bread"*  
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## I. THE SETTING OF DANIEL'S FOURTH VISION (10:1)

From the very beginning of this chapter, the critics have lost no time in attacking the authenticity of its truth. **First**, as mentioned earlier in our study they find a discrepancy comparing Daniel 1:21 with Daniel 10:1 "*In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia.*" **Secondly**, some have criticised the term "*Cyrus king of Persia,*" stating that this was not the normal way of addressing any king of the Persian Empire. These have been answered earlier.

It was in the third year of Cyrus king of Persia, late in Daniel's career, about seventy-two years after he had been carried into captivity to Babylon, that "*a thing,*" (KJV) better translated "*a word,*" that is, "*a revelation*" (NIV), was revealed unto Daniel.

Daniel **first** of all declares that the thing or the word is true, as would be expected of a revelation from God. The **second** fact concerning the prophecy as translated in the King James Version is that "*the time appointed was long.*" The Hebrew here, has been translated "*great warfare*" or "*a great task*" or, more freely, "*involved great suffering.*" The implication is that the period in view is long and strenuous one involving great conflict and trouble for the people of God.

In contrast to the previous visions, Daniel states that "*the understanding came to him in the vision.*" It is doubtful whether he completely understood all the vision, but he would at least have understood its general characteristics.

## II. DANIEL'S PREPARATION FOR THE VISION (10:2-3)

In preparation for the great revelation to follow, Daniel spent three weeks in mourning during which he did not eat the dainties of the king's table. The term "*choice food*" (NIV) or "*pleasant bread*" (KJV) is literally, "*bread of pleasures, of desires,*" in contrast to "*bread of affliction*" in Deuteronomy 16:3, that is, the unleavened bread which was eaten during the Passover.

The three weeks included the normal week for the Passover season, as can be learned from a comparison with Daniel 10:4. The week of Passover occurred in the first month, the fourteenth day, and was followed by seven days in which unleavened bread was eaten.

The occasion for the fast was probably Daniel's concern for the pilgrims who had returned to Jerusalem two years earlier. As the book of Ezra makes plain, the children of Israel had encountered great difficulty in getting settled in the land. Although the altar had been set up and the foundation for the temple was laid (Ezra 3), the work had been suspended because of the opposition of the people of the land (Ezra 4:1-5, 24).

## II. DANIEL'S PREPARATION FOR THE VISION (10:2-3) (Contd.)

While the saint of God may be concerned over what seems to be a defeat of God's purposes, the suffering saint should never forget the majesty and the sovereignty of God which ultimately proves *"that all things work together for good to them that love God."* (Romans 8:28).

An example of spiritual concern in recent times has been that of the late Andrew Bonar.

\*\*\* After his death, his daughter led a Welsh evangelist into her father's church in Glasgow, Scotland. She pointed out the pew in the rear where as a small girl her father had seated her one day as he went into the empty church. After a long while she stood up to look for her father. He was seated in a pew, with his head bent forward. Soon he moved to another pew, then another, and another. Sometimes she would see him examine carefully the nameplates to find the pews he desired. When she grew older she understood what her father had been doing on that day - he had been praying for his parishioners in the very spot where each worshipped. Such was the burden of Daniel for his people. \*\*\*

## III. DANIEL'S GLORIOUS VISION OF GOD (10:4-6)

According to verse 4, the time of the vision was *"the twenty-fourth day of the first month"* that is, April or the month of Abid (Exodus 23:15), known later in the Old Testament as Nisan (Nehemiah 2:1). The new year normally began with a festival of two days celebrating the advent of the new moon (I Samuel 20:18-19, 34). Daniel probably had observed the Passover on the fourteenth day as well as the Feast of Unleavened Bread which followed from the fifteenth day to the twenty-first day of the month.

The place of the vision is declared to be *"on the bank of the great river, the Tigris" or "Hiddekel"* (KJV). Here we learn for the first time that Daniel did not accompany the pilgrims who returned to Jerusalem. Young concludes, *"The fact that Daniel does not return to Palestine is a strong argument that the book is not a product of the Maccabean age."* Some have suggested that Daniel was mistaken in calling the *"great river," "Hiddekel or Tigris."* They feel the *"great river"* has always been used to describe the *"Euphrates River."* Yet conservative scholars agree that the river is the Tigris. No great amount of travel need be assumed here because just above Babylon, the Euphrates and Tigris are only about thirty-five miles apart.

### III. DANIEL'S GLORIOUS VISION OF GOD (10:4-6) (Contd.)

There have been several opinions as to who it was that appeared unto Daniel. Yet the conclusion by most commentators is that the personage was not a man, but either a glorious angel or a Theophany, that is, an appearance of God Himself. In this case the man of 10:5-6 is to be distinguished from the angel of 10:10-14 as well as Michael mentioned in 10:13.

The description that Daniel attributes to the man in the vision is one of a glorious appearance. The "**linen**" was probably the fine white linen which characterized garments of the priests (Exodus 28:39-43). The "**belt**" was also probably linen embroidered with fine gold. The reference to the "**fine gold of Uphaz**," (KJV) has only one other similar reference in the Bible (Jeremiah 10:9), and it is not clear whether Uphaz is geographic or poetic. It was a way to say that the girdle was embroidered with the finest gold of unusual quality.

The appearance of the body as a jewel called "**chrysolite**" (NIV) or "**beryl**" (NIV) from the Hebrew "**tarshish**" is translated "**chrysolite**" in the Septuagint and is considered by Diver as "**topaz.**" He states, "*the topaz of the moderns - a flashing stone.*" The impression given by Daniel was that the entire body of the man in the vision was like a gigantic transparent jewel reflecting the glory of the rest of the vision.

The description of the face illumined as it were by lightning, with "**eyes like flaming torches**," is quite similar to the reference of Christ in Revelation 1:14-16. The polished brass of the arms and feet is similar to the "**feet were like unto bronze glowing in a furnace**" of Christ (Revelation 1:15). And "**the lightning**" compares to the countenance of Christ likened unto the sun in brilliance in Revelation 1:16 and Ezekiel 1:13-14. Accompanying the visual image of glory was "**his voice like the sound of a multitude**" apparently not words which could be understood, but giving the impression of great power (cf. Revelation 1:15).

### IV. THE EFFECT OF THE VISION ON DANIEL (10:7-9)

The vision which Daniel saw was apparent only to him and not to the men who accompanied him. The situation was somewhat similar to that of the men who accompanied Paul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:7; 22:9), except that here the men saw and heard nothing but apparently sensed something which gave them great fear.

Undoubtedly, Daniel alone was spiritually qualified to receive such a vision by divine will. The fact that the men did not see the vision and fled makes it clear that this was an actual event which occurred near the Tigris River and that Daniel was not there merely in vision.



#### IV. THE EFFECT OF THE VISION ON DANIEL (10:7-9) (Contd.)

The sight of the vision affected Daniel physically, robbing him of normal physical strength; and his normal appearance of health, described as "*my comeliness*," (KJV) was affected in a way similar to the appearance of Christ in Isaiah 52:14, the Hebrew of "*corruption*" (KJV) Daniel 10:8 and "*marred*" Isaiah 52:14 coming from the same root.

Daniel's experience illustrates the difficulty of mortal, sinful man, even a prophet like Daniel, of encountering the glory of God, in relation to which the holiest of men fall short (Romans 3:23). It was in this posture of weakness and semiconsciousness that Daniel was to be strengthened to receive additional revelation.

#### V. DANIEL'S STRENGTH RESTORED BY AN ANGEL (10:10-11)

\*\*\* Near the entrance to a large hospital in the eastern United States there stands a white marble statue of Christ. On its base are engraved the words, "*Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*"

One day a cynical man walked around the statue viewing it disapprovingly from every angle. A small girl watched him for a while and then rushed up to him. "*Oh, sir, you cannot see Him that way,*" she said. "*You must get very close and fall upon your knees and look up.*" \*\*\*

In verse 10, Daniel records that a hand touched him, raising him sufficiently so that now he was resting on his "*hands and knees.*" If the original vision was an appearance of God, it is apparent that this was another personage, probably an angel. It is said that the angel "*set me trembling upon my hands and knees,*" literally translated, "*shook me up upon my knees.*" The action was similar to arousing one from sleep.

The angel addresses Daniel and gives him the title, "*you are highly esteemed.*" Although God loves the entire world so much that He provided His Son as its Saviour, certain individuals, because of their special relationship to God, are objects of unusual love. David, in spite of his sins, was sought of the Lord as "*a man after His own heart*" (I Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22); and John the apostle was "one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved" (John 13:23).

The angel then exhorted Daniel to stand upright and understand the message, for this was the purpose of the angel's coming to Daniel. The message of the angel naturally tended to reassure Daniel that God's purpose in giving him the vision was gracious and loving, and that Daniel had nothing to fear.

## VI. THE PURPOSE OF THE ANGEL'S VISIT (10:12-14)

The angel further informed Daniel that from the very beginning of his intercession, three weeks before, God had undertaken to answer his prayers and send the angelic messenger to him. The delay is explained in verse 13 being the opposition of "*the prince of the Persian kingdom*" who "*resisted me twenty one days.*" The "*prince*" is not the king of Persia but rather the angelic leader of Persia, a fallen angel under the direction of Satan, in contrast to Michael the angelic prince who led and protected Israel.

All during the 21 days of Daniel's fasting and prayer, a spiritual conflict was underway. This was resolved by the coming of Michael described as "*one of the chief princes*" (cf. Daniel 10:21; 12:1; Jude 9; Revelation 12:7). The statement "*I was detained there with the king of Persia*" may be translated, "*I was left there with the kings of Persia,*" meaning, that having been delivered from the prince of Persia, the angelic messenger was permitted to go on his way, unattended. The Hebrew word translated "*I detained*" does not properly signify to "*remain behind*" but "*to remain over, to be superfluous.*"

Although the entire subject of the unseen struggle between the holy angels and the fallen angels is not clearly revealed in Scriptures, from the rare glimpses which are afforded, as in this instance, it is plain that behind the political and social conditions of the world there is angelic influence-good on the part of the holy angels, evil on the part of the angels under satanic control. This is the struggle that Paul speaks of in Ephesians 6:10-18.

The fact that the angelic messenger needed the help of Michael, however, refutes any idea that the speaker is the Angel of Jehovah or the Lord Himself.

## VII. DANIEL AGAIN STRENGTHENED BY THE ANGEL (10:15-17)

Daniel's weakness again overwhelms him. Calvin says of this passage, "*By becoming prostrate on the ground, he manifested his reverence, and by becoming dumb, he displayed his astonishment.*"

Once again Daniel experienced a strengthening from God. Whether or not this personage described as "*one who looked like a man*" is a Christophany, that is, Christ as the Angel of Jehovah, or it is another angel, is not clear. Probably it was another angel.

Daniel goes on to explain that he has difficulty in talking because he lacks both strength and breath. As Charles interprets it, "*The sense then is 'how can so mean [insignificant] a servant of my Lord talk with so great a one as my Lord?'*" Daniel was in great difficulty in carrying on a normal conversation with the angelic messenger.

### VIII. DANIEL STRENGTHENED FOR THE THIRD TIME (10:18-19)

For the third time in this chapter, Daniel is strengthened supernaturally by one who comes and touches him. In view of the plurality of the angelic ministry, there is no special reason why Daniel should not have the ministry of more than one angel. The context of verses 18 and 19, however, seems to link this angel as the one who addressed Daniel in verses 11-12.

The angel again exhorts Daniel with the reassuring salutation, "*O man highly esteemed,*" to not be afraid, to receive peace from God, and to be strong. Daniel was then strengthened and was able to say, "*Speak my lord; since you have given me strength.*"

The detail given to this experience of Daniel leaves the impression that the revelation to follow must be of tremendous character, as indeed it is. The triple strengthening of Daniel in this agonizing experience has sometimes been compared to that of our Lord's temptation in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:39-44; Mark 14:35-41; Luke 22:39-44). In both cases, an angel is sent as a source of strength from the Father in heaven.

### IX. THE ANGELIC REVELATION INTRODUCES (10:20-21)

It would be quite natural after Daniel's experience of swooning and being unable to speak, now to consider the purpose of the angelic message. The angel reveals that he is obligated to return to "*fight against the prince of Persia*" and by implication later with "*the prince of Greece.*"

This has been assailed as unnecessary due to the previous victory, but the implication is that there is constant warfare in spiritual victory, and this would require the further attention of the angel. From this we can learn that behind the many details of prophecy relating to the history of this period that there is the unseen struggle between angelic forces as the will of God was being accomplished.

An unusual phrase is found in verse 21, "*the Book of Truth.*" This term is literally "*the writing of truth,*" a reference to God's record of truth in general, of which the Bible is one of its main expressions.

In regard to the coming revelation and the spiritual struggle it records, the angelic messenger has been given unusual responsibility which is exceeded only by Michael, who is described as "*your prince.*" Daniel in this way is reminded of the special angelic ministry which God had provided for him all through life and again at this period of detailed revelation.

**IX. THE ANGELIC REVELATION INTRODUCES (10:20-21) (Contd.)**

The entire experience of Daniel in this chapter is on the one hand a reminder of human weakness and insufficiency, and on the other, of divine enablement which will strengthen Daniel for his responsible task of recording this great revelation. The fact that an entire chapter is devoted to this preparation makes clear that the revelation to follow is of upmost importance in the consummation of God's purposes in the world.

**\*\*\*** Robinson Crusoe taught his man Friday the doctrines of the Christian faith. When he came to the subject of the devil, he told Friday that he was God's enemy trying to defeat His purposes in the world.

Friday asked, *"Is God not as strong as the devil?"*

Crusoe assured him that God was stronger and that Christians prayed to God for victory over the devil.

*"But why can't God no kill devil so make him no more do wicked?"* asked Friday.

Crusoe was stumped and pretended not to hear, hoping Friday would forget the question. But he didn't, and finally Crusoe answered, *"Well, God will punish the devil in the end."*

Friday persisted, *"But why God not kill devil now?"* This is the question that may perplex many of us, and the answer lies with God alone. **\*\*\***

## WORLD HISTORY FROM DARIUS TO THE TIME OF THE END

### DANIEL CHAPTER 11

**THE LONG INTRODUCTION OF CHAPTER 10** now leads us into the chapter 11, which by revelation shows us important events beginning with Darius the Mede (539 BC.) and extending to the last great ruler in the time of the end. Chapter 11 naturally divides into two great section. The **first**, verses 1-35, describe the major rulers of the Persian Empire, and on to the events of the third empire following Alexander the Great, concluding with Antiochus Epiphanes (175 - 164 BC.). The **second**, verses 35-45, deals with the last Gentile ruler who will be in power when Christ comes in His second advent.

**\*\*\*** A professor in a theological seminary taught that the book of Daniel was written during the Maccabean period and not by the historic Daniel who lived in the sixth century B.C.

A student asked the teacher how he could say that when Christ said (Matthew 24:16) that Daniel wrote it. The professor replied sharply, *"I know more about the book of Daniel than Jesus did!"* **\*\*\***

This is only a sample of the attacks of the critics on the integrity of the Book of Daniel. Nowhere has the attack been more vicious than the ones in relation to chapter 11. The reason is obvious. In the first thirty-five verses, there are at least 135 prophecies which have been literally fulfilled. It was this chapter that prompted the heathen philosopher Porphyry (third century AD.) to attack the book of Daniel as a forgery. He was persuaded that the prophecies were so precise that no one could have prophesied these events with such accuracy.

#### I. FOUR IMPORTANT KINGS OF MEDO-PERSIA (11:1-2)

The opening verse of chapter 11 is often considered as the closing verse of chapter 10. In it, the angel, seen in 10:18, declares his support to confirm and strengthen Darius the Mede from the very beginning of his reign in Babylon. The statement that the angel *"took my stand"* (NIV) *"stood"* (KJV) in verse 1, is probably used as *"in a military conflict against the enemy."*

The survey of history provided in the opening verses of chapter 11 fixes the prophecy as dealing with a period later than Nebuchadnezzar's dream but coinciding with the prophecy of chapter 8 of the ram and the goat.

## I. FOUR IMPORTANT KINGS OF MEDO-PERSIA (11:1-2)(Contd)

The four kings mentioned in verse 2 are believed to be:

- A. Cambyses (529-522 B.C. - not mentioned in the O.T.)
- B. Pseudo-Smerdis or Gaumata (522-521 B.C.)
- C. Darius I Hystapes (521-486 B.C., Ezra 5,6)
- D. Xerxes I who attempted to conquer Greece in 480 B.C. (486-465 B.C., Ezra 4:6)

According to Daniel, the climax of the Persian rulers came with Xerxes I who in secular history used his great riches and a period of some four years to gather a great army amounting to hundreds of thousands; one of the largest armies in the ancient world. The expedition which he launched in 480 BC. against Greece was disastrous however, and Xerxes never recovered. The Ahasuerus (KJV) of Esther chapter 1 may be identified with Xerxes I, and the ill-fated expedition occurred maybe between chapters 1 and 2 of Esther.

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT (11:3-4)

One of the by-products of the attack on Greece by Xerxes I is that he incurred the undying hatred of Greece. Here we see the rise of Alexander the Great who was indeed "a mighty king" which Leupold translates "a hero king". The remaining description fits Alexander perfectly. He indeed had great power and dominion and was absolute ruler who did "as he pleases."

The expression in verse 4, "after he has appeared" (NIV) or "when he shall stand up," (KJV) may be translated "while he was growing strong," that is, while still ascending in power. The angel predicts that his kingdom shall be "broken up and parcelled out" by his four generals after his death. Alexander's empire was not given to his posterity seen by "It will not go to his decedents." Hercules, the son of Alexander at the time of his death, whose mother was Barsina, was murdered by Polysperchon. Also his young son, Alexander, born of Roxana, was murdered in 310 B.C.

## III. PTOLEMY I SOTER AND SELEUCUS I NICATOR (11:5)

Beginning in verse 5, the struggle between the various kings of the south (that is Egypt) and the kings of the north (that is Syria) begin and are traced to the time of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164 B.C.).

The king of the south is probably Ptolemy I Soter (323-285 BC.). The one referred to as "will become even stronger than he" is the king of Syria, Seleucus I Nicator (312-281 BC.). These rulers took the title of king in 306 BC.

### III. PTOLEMY I SOTER AND SELEUCUS I NICATOR (11:5) (Contd.)

They combined their strength and defeated Antigonus, thus paving the way for Seleucus to gain control of the entire area from Asia Minor to India; and in time, he became stronger than Ptolemy who ruled Egypt. Hence the Scripture says that Seleucus *"will become even stronger than he [Ptolemy] and will rule over his kingdom with great power."*

### IV. MARRIAGE OF THE DAUGHTER OF EGYPT TO THE KING OF SYRIA (11:6)

In the passage of time, *"after some years"* or *"after a lapse of several years"* intermarriages between Egypt and Syria took place for political reasons. The participants here were the king of the south Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246 BC.) and his daughter Berenice, who was married to Antiochus II Theos (261-246) around 252 BC. Passed over without mention is Antiochus I Soter (281-261 BC.).

The marriage was consummated at the demand of Ptolemy Philadelphus who required Antiochus to divorce his own wife, Laodiceia (or Laodice), in order to facilitate the marriage. The union was not successful in that *"she will not retain her power "* that is, physical or political power, and neither of the participants prospered.

*"And the one who supported her,"* means, *"he that obtained her in marriage."* Within a few years of the marriage, Ptolemy died; and Antiochus then took back his wife, Laodiceia. To gain revenge, however, Laodiceia murdered her husband as well as his Egyptian wife, Berenice, and the infant son of Antiochus and Berenice.

### V. PTOLEMY EUERGETES AND SELEUCUS CALLINICUS (11:7-9)

Subsequent to the events of verse 6, a new king of Egypt known as Ptolemy III Euergetes (246-221 BC.) succeeded in prevailing militarily over the king of the north, Seleucus Callinicus (247-226 BC.).

The expression *"One of her family line"* (NIV ) or *"out of the branch of her roots,"* (KJV) literally means, *"the sprouting of her roots,"* which signifies her lineage being of the immediate ancestry of Berenice. The person referred to was Berenice's brother Ptolemy III Euergetes, the successor of Ptolemy Philadelphus.

The Hebrew word translated *"princes"* (KJV) in verse 8 can be rendered *"molten or metal images."* We can see that by the transporting of these images that the northern kingdom was put in complete submission to the south. The expression *"shall continue more years than the king of the south"* (KJV) is best understood as meaning, he shall *"refrain from attacking the king of the north"* (RSV) or *"he will leave the king of the North alone"* (NIV)..

## V. PTOLEMY EUERGETES AND SELEUCUS CALLINICUS (11:7-9) (Contd.)

Jerome provides this description of the conquest by Ptolemy Euergetes:

“He came up with a great army and advanced into the province of the king of the north, that is Seleucus Callinicus, who together with his mother Loadice was ruling in Syria, and abused them, and not only did he seize Syria, but also took Cilicia and the remote regions beyond the Euphrates and nearly all of Asia as well. And then, when he heard that a rebellion was afoot in Egypt, he ravaged the kingdom of Seleucus and carried off as booty forty thousand talents of silver, and also precious vessels and images of the gods to the amount of two and a half thousand. Among them were the same images which Cambyses had brought to Persia at the time when he conquered Egypt. The Egyptian people were indeed devoted to idolatry, for when he had brought back their gods to them after so many years, they called him Euergetes (Benefactor).

The inclusion of this background material leads up to the important point, which is the burden of the prophecy in verses 10-19, the ascendance of Syria over Egypt and the return of the holy land to Syrian control. This sets the stage for the persecutions of Israel under Antiochus Epiphanes, which is the major concern of verses 21-35 of this prophecy.

## VI. THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN SELEUCUS AND ANTIOCHUS III (THE GREAT) AGAINST PTOLEMY PHILOPATOR (11:10-19)

Although Seleucus Callinicus was unsuccessful in his attack on Egypt, his successors described as "*his sons*" proved to be more successful. Seleucus III (226-223 BC.) came to an untimely end, having perished in battle in Asia Minor, but the task was ably carried on by Antiochus III the Great (223-187 BC.).

The approach of the armies of Antiochus aroused the Egyptian ruler who assembled a large army to combat Antiochus (11:11). In 217 BC., Antiochus met the Egyptian army at the Palestinian border at Raphia. The Egyptian army was directed by Ptolemy Philopator accompanied by his sister-wife, Arsinoe. There were about 70,000 soldiers on each side. The battle resulted in a complete victory for Egypt (11:11-12); and as Jerome comments, "Antiochus lost his entire army and was almost captured as he fled to the desert."

As verse 12 indicates, the Egyptian monarch was too indolent (bone-lazy) to pursue his advantage; and although the battle was disastrous for the Syrians, it tended to bring peace between the two nations, at least temporarily.



## VI. THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN SELEUCUS AND ANTIOCHUS III (THE GREAT) AGAINST PTOLEMY PHILOPATOR (11:10-19) (Contd.)

Meanwhile, Antiochus turned his attention to conquests in the east, and was quite successful, gathering strength and wealth. In the period between 212-204 BC. , he advanced east to the borders of India and as far north as the Caspian. Ptolemy Philopator and his queen died mysteriously in 203 BC. and were succeeded by their infant son, Ptolemy V Epiphanes.

In 201 BC., Antiochus managed to assemble another great army and again began a series of attacks on Egypt, as described in verse 13-16. The expression "*the robbers of thy people*" (KJV) (11:14) refers to persons who violate law and justice; hence, they are "*robbers*", or "*The violent men*" (NIV).

The reference to "*in fulfilment of the vision*" (NIV) or "*establish the vision*" (KJV) is probably a prophecy of the afflictions of the Jews under Antiochus Epiphanes already recorded in chapters 8 and 9.

The allusion to "*the forces of the South will be powerless*" (11:15) is in reference to the unsuccessful attempt by three Egyptian leaders, Eropas, Menacles, and Damoyenus to rescue the besieged Scopas from Sidon.

Threatened by Rome, Antiochus effected a diplomatic settlement with Egypt by marrying his daughter Cleopatra to the young king, Ptolemy V Epiphanes in 192 BC. in doing so, he fulfilled the prophecy "*he shall give him a daughter in marriage in order to overthrow the kingdom, but his plans will not succeed or help him.*" (11:17). Antiochus the Great purposed by this marriage of his young daughter to the seven-year old Ptolemy to ruin this his former opponent and present ally. As Young states, "*In this stratagem, however, Antiochus fails, because Cleopatra constantly sides with her husband over against her father.*"

Antiochus the Great begins to suffer reverses, as indicated by verse 18 where "*but a commander will put an end to his insolence*" refers to the Roman consul Lucius Scipio Asiaticus, who as Young expresses it, "*brought about the defeat of Antiochus*".

The defeat came about in the following manner. Having successfully defeated Scopas in Egypt, Antiochus turned his attention to the threat from the west and attempted to equal the conquests of Alexander the Great by conquering Greece.

In this he was unsuccessful, being defeated in 191 BC., at Thermopylae north of Athens and again in 189 BC. at Magnesia on the Meander River southeast of Ephesus by soldiers of Rome and Pergamum under the leadership of the Roman general Scipio. This fulfilled the prophecies of verses 18 and 19.

## VII. SELEUCUS IV PHILOPATOR, THE RAISER OF TAXES (11:20)

The Seleucid king ruling between Antiochus the Great and Antiochus Epiphanes, Seleucus IV Philopator, is mentioned here for his oppression by taxation of the people of Israel. Because of the rising power of Rome, he was forced to pay tribute to the Romans of a thousand talents annually. He taxed all the lands under his domain, including special taxes from the Jews secured by a tax collector named Heliodorus (2 Maccabees 3:7) who took treasures from the temple at Jerusalem.

As Zockler points out, "Soon after Heliodorus was dispatched to plunder the temple, Seleucus Philopator was suddenly and mysteriously removed." This explains the statement, "*within a few years (days - KJV), however, he shall be destroyed*" (11:20), possibly by poison administered to him by the same Heliodorus. This set the stage for the terrible persecutions by Antiochus Epiphanes which followed.

## VIII. THE RISE OF ANTIOCHUS IV EPIPHANES (11:21-23)

Beginning in verse 21, a major section of this chapter is devoted to a comparatively obscure Syrian ruler who was on the throne from 175 to 164 BC. By comparison with Seleucus IV Philopator, his predecessor, he is described as a "*contemptible person*" (11:21).

The title Epiphanes, meaning "*glorious*," was a title which Antiochus gave himself, in keeping with his desire to be regarded as a god. The expression "*who has not been given the honor of royalty*" has a reference to the fact that he seized the throne rather than obtaining it honourable. When scripture speaks of "*He will invade the kingdom when its people feel secure, and we will seize it through intrigue*" speaks of the plots that Antiochus set up to have the young son of Seleucus IV murdered by Andronicus, which opened the door for him to take the throne.

Verse 22 speaks of military activity including several campaigns against Egypt. The reference to "*an overwhelming army*" (NIV) or "*the arms of a flood*" (KJV) refers to his military victories over his enemies. When Antiochus learned that the Egyptians were about to attack him, he invaded Egypt in 170 BC. and defeated the Egyptians in a battle which occurred between Mt. Casius and Pelusium, an area on the southeast sea coast of the Mediterranean Sea half way between Gaza and the Nile delta.

The references to the "*prince of the covenant*" prophecies the murder of the high priest Onias. It was ordered by Antiochus in 172 BC., and indicates the troublesome times in his reign.

Verse 23 describes his various leagues with other nations, especially with Egypt which continues to involve considerable intrigue and deceit.

**IX. ANTIOCHUS' GROWTH AND POWER (11:24:26)**

Always active to enlarge his kingdom, by whatever method would achieve his goals, he robbed the rich places under his control. The prediction "*When the richest provinces feel secure*" means that he attacked when the enemy did not expect him. The expression "*he will distribute plunder, loot and wealth among his followers*" (11:24) indicates he did not secure the wealth for personal operation but rather he distributed the wealth among his soldiers.

Among his military maneuvers were several expeditions against Egypt which are indicated in verse 25. The outcome of the battle was that the king of Egypt was defeated as indicated in the statement "*but he will not be able to stand*" refers to the king of the south. Even those who should have supported the king of Egypt conspired against him as revealed in verse 26.

**X. THE WICKEDNESS OF ANTIOCHUS (11:27-28)**

The struggle against Egypt by Syria led to several agreements which did not prosper. Neither the rulers of Egypt nor Syria were honourable in their agreements as indicated in verse 27, "*will sit at the same table and lie to each other; but to no avail.*" As the last part of verse 27 makes clear, in spite of all Antiochus' intrigue, he was fulfilling prophecy right on schedule.

Antiochus, returned from Egypt with great riches and began to manifest his hatred against the people of Israel and his covetousness in relation to the wealth of the temple. This is indicated in the statement, "*His heart will be set against the holy covenant.*"

**XI. ANTIOCHUS OPPOSED BY ROME PERSECUTES THE JEWS (11:29-31)**

Another invasion of Egypt occurred in about 168 BC. This time, however, Antiochus was met near Alexander by a Roman consul, Gaius Popillius Laenas, who demanded that he leave Egypt or suffer attack.

It is reported that the Roman consul drew a circle about the king and told him that his decision had to be reached before he stepped out of the circle. Rather than risk a war with Rome, Antiochus, although greatly displeased, withdrew from Egypt immediately and conceded Egypt to Roman power.

Prophetically, this is indicated in verse 30a where "*Ships of the western coast*" or "*Chittim*" (KJV) (also spelled "*Kittim*") stand as a reference to the island of Cyprus which was now under Roman rule. In the Septuagint, the expression "*the ships of Chittim*" is translated "*the Romans*" giving the sense, if not, the exact translation.

**XI. ANTIOCHUS OPPOSED BY ROME PERSECUTES THE JEWS (11:29-31) (Contd.)**

Disgruntled by his defeat, Antiochus vented his wrath against the Jewish people as intimated in verse 30 "*and vent his fury against the holy covenant.*" Also by the statement "*and show favor to those who forsake the holy covenant*" indicates an affiliation with those who sided with Antiochus by denying their Jewish faith.

In the process of his opposition to the Jews (verse 31), Antiochus polluted the holy altar in the temple by offering a sow upon the altar and forbidding the continuance of the daily sacrifices (cf. I Maccabees 1:44-54).

He also issued a decree that the Jews should cease their worship and erected in the holy place an idol, probably the image of Zeus Olympius. This persecution to the Jewish faith and the desecration of the temple brought about the Maccabean revolt which was cruelly suppressed by Antiochus with tens of thousands of Israelites perishing.

**XII. THE RESULTING PERSECUTIONS OF ISRAEL (11:32-35)**

The resulting conflict brought much harm to the people of Israel; and though it caused a spiritual revival, many were killed, as indicated in verse 33 "*though for a time they will die by the sword or be burned or captured or plundered*" Some of the Jews succumbed to the flattery of the king and defected from their fellow Jews.

The purging process as indicated in verse 35 is to continue "*until the time of the end.*" This phrase leaps the centuries that intervene to the last generation prior to God's judgement of Gentile power and its rulers. **Beginning in verse 36, prophecy is unfolded that is yet to be fulfilled.**

**The amazing prophecies of the first 35 verses, containing as they do (approximately 135 prophetic statements all now fulfilled), constitute an impressive introduction to the events that are yet future, beginning in verse 36.**

**XII. THE RESULTING PERSECUTIONS OF ISRAEL (11:32-35) (Contd.)**

**\*\*\*** Dr. E. Schuyler English once told of a man on Long Island who was able to satisfy a lifelong ambition by purchasing a very fine barometer. When he unpacked the instrument he was dismayed to find that the needle appeared to be stuck pointing to the section marked "*Hurricane.*"

After shaking the barometer vigorously, the man wrote a scorching letter to the store from which he had purchased the store from which he had purchased the instrument and on his way to his office in New York the next morning mailed the protest.

That evening he returned to Long Island to find not only the barometer missing, but his house also. The barometer's needle had been right - there was a hurricane! The clear fingers of prophecy in the Word of God are likewise never to be treated with indifference or unbelief. To do so is to invite disaster. **\*\*\***

**XIII. THE KING OF THE END TIME (11:36)**

Beginning with verse 36, a sharp break in prophecy may be observed, introduced by the expression "*until the time of wrath is completed*" in verse 35. **Up to this point, the prophecy dealing with the Persian and Grecian Empires has been fulfilled minutely and with amazing precision.**

Although many variations of interpretations exist, in general, interpretations of Daniel 11:36-45 fall into three major categories:

- (1). **Historically fulfilled in Antiochus Epiphanes.**
- (2). **Fiction, the wishful thinking of the author which does not correspond with history precisely.**
- (3). **Genuine prophecy most fulfilled; some as yet unfulfilled.**

Liberal critics, following the thesis that Daniel was written by a second century B.C. writer, almost uniformly hold that this section was historically fulfilled in the life and death of Antiochus Epiphanes in its entirety. They do agree that this section is not nearly as accurate as the earlier section (to keep safe in their incorrect conclusions).

The **second possibility**, that the passage is fiction, does not seem to have seriously attracted even liberal scholars, preferring as they do to identify him with Antiochus. Other interpretations such as comparing him to Constantine the Great, the Roman Empire (Calvin), the Pope of Rome, the Papal system, or Herod the Great (Mauro), are not generally accepted today.

**XIII. THE KING OF THE END TIME (11:36) (Contd.)**

The conservative explanation considers it contemporaneous with the climax of chapter 2, the destruction of the little horn of chapter 7, the period in Revelation chapters 6-19 and therefore see it as future. Yet here also there has been two differing identifications of the king of verse 36.

The common identification is that offered by J. N. Darby that the king of Daniel 11:36 is none other than the Antichrist, who is an unregenerate Jew living in Palestine at the end but in league with the Roman world ruler. Darby, although not emphasizing the racial background of this king, identifies him with the man of sin of II Thessalonians 2:3-10 and with the false prophet of Revelation 13:11-18.

A.C. Gaebelien offers the same interpretation with more emphasis on the Jewish character of this ruler based upon verse 37, ***“he will show no regard the gods of his fathers,”*** which is identified as the God of Israel. It is assumed that the Jewish people will not accept even a false Messiah unless he is Jewish in background.

**A better identification is to relate him to the Roman world ruler, the same individual as the little horn of Daniel 7 and the beast of Revelation 13:1-10.** According to verse 36, the king is an absolute ruler who ***“will do as he pleases.”*** There can be only one king who will have this amount of authority, which, according to Daniel 7:23 ***“he will devour the whole earth, trampling it down, and crushing it.”*** Although other rulers will be associated with him, such as the ten horns of Revelation 17:12 and the false prophet of Revelation 13:11-18, none can be described as absolute rulers.

Further evidence is found in the fact that he not only assumes complete political rule but also attempts to take on the role of God Himself. According to verse 36, ***“he will exalt and magnify himself above every god.”*** He demands that all recognize him as such or face death (Revelation 13:15). According to verse 36, he shall also blaspheme against the true God and prosper for a time until he comes to an end.

**XIV. THE FINAL WORLD RELIGION (11:37-39)**

One of the most important arguments supporting the conclusion that this king is a Jew is found in the opening phrase of verse 37, ***“he will show no regard the gods of his fathers.”*** Gaebelien and others, however, overlook the most decisive fact that the word for ***“gods”*** here is ***“Elohim”*** a name for God in general, applying to both the one and only true God as well as to false gods. If the expression had been the usual one when referring to the God of Israel, ***“the Jehovah of his fathers,”*** would have been used. In keeping with the blasphemous character of this king who magnifies above every god, he disregards whatever deities his fathers worshipped.

#### XIV. THE FINAL WORLD RELIGION (11:37-39) (Contd.)

Another important key to his identity is found in the expression ***“or for the one desired by women.”*** This expression is the natural desire of the Jewish women to become the mother of the promised Messiah, the seed of the woman promised in Genesis 3:15. This king then hates God and hates His blessed Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Although the blasphemous character of this ruler is evident, the prophecy continues that ***“nor will he regard any god: but will exalt himself above them all.”*** His blasphemy is twofold: that of rejection of the true God as well as all false gods and therefore the assumption is that he considers himself alone to be deity.

In the place that God occupies in other men’s thinking, this king is stated to ***“honor the god of fortresses.”*** This god is stated to be different from the gods which his fathers knew, and the revelation continues, ***“a god unknown to his fathers he will honor with gold and silver, with precious stones, and costly gifts.”*** So here we find that the ***“god of fortresses”*** is not a person but the power to make war, symbolized by the word ***“fortresses.”*** The sole confidence of the final world leader will be in his military power.

His activities, in keeping with his complete materialism, are characterized by warfare and honoring those who honor him. Those who cooperate are given subsidiary rule expressed by, ***“he will distribute the land at a price.”*** He shall reapportion territories taken by his conquest.

Taking the passage of Daniel 11:36-39 as a whole, it is apparent that the revelation provides for a combination of materialism, militarism, and religion, all of which will be embodied in the final world ruler.

#### XV. THE FINAL WORLD WAR ERUPTS (11:40-43)

***“The time of the end,”*** as introduced in verse 35, is again mentioned in the opening portion of verse 40 to make clear that the military struggle here is that which will characterize the end of the age. The general nature and location of warfare is also mentioned.

Earlier in this chapter 11:36-39, the king of the south was that of Egypt. Here the ***“king of the South”*** is clearly a leader of a political and military force that comes from south of the Holy Land, but probably involves more than just Egypt. It is best to identify this king as a league of African nations.

The ***“king of the North”*** was identified as Syria in the earlier portion. Now it includes all the political and military force of the Holy Land area and yet somewhat excluding the far northern areas (comp. vs. 44).

**XV. THE FINAL WORLD WAR ERUPTS (11:40-43) (Contd.)**

A major problem is the reference in verse 40 to *“He will invade many countries and sweep through them like a flood.”* The question is whether *“He”* refers to the king of the south, the king of the north, or the former world ruler who is defending his empire. In the light of the context, it is preferable to understand the *“He”* as referring to the king of 11:36, the world ruler.

His counterattack on those who have assailed him results in his entering into their countries, occupying the *“Beautiful land,”* referring to the Holy Land, and many other countries including Egypt. It appears, however, that he does not completely restore the situation, as it is stated that *“Edom and Moab”* and the children escape (11:41). His victories are such that he is greatly able to increase his *“treasures of gold and silver and all the riches of Egypt.”* From this point on, however, his authority only extends as far as his military campaigns succeed.

**XVI. THE FINAL BATTLES (11:44-45)**

To add to the difficulties encountered by the king, occasioned by the invasion from the north and the south, word is received of a gigantic army from the east and another invasion from the north. It is clear that the warfare extends over a period of time and that more than one battle is involved. The *“tidings out of the east”* probably refer to the gigantic invasion described in Revelation 9:13-21; cf. 16:12. Here, according to Revelation 16:19, an army of two hundred million men will cross the Euphrates and descend upon the Holy Land. Red China alone now claims to have a militia numbering over two hundred million.

At the same time another invasion is reported from the north. Against both of these invaders, the king launches counterattacks which result in many perishing; and he succeeds in establishing his tent-palace *“between the seas at the beautiful holy mountain,”* best understood as being a reference to Jerusalem situated between the Mediterranean Sea and the Dead Sea. Actually, the struggle goes on right up to the day of the second advent of Christ as brought out in Zechariah 14:1-4. Daniel does not dwell on the details in the climax of this struggle.

In spite of his victories in a military way, the last world ruler, according to Daniel, *“he will come to his end, and no one will help him.”* If this is indeed the time of the end and this is the final world ruler of the times of the Gentiles, the best identification is to refer his doom to the second advent of Christ and the destruction of the beast and the armies described in Revelation 19:17-21. According to that passage, the beast and the false prophet associated with him are cast into the lake of fire alive. The armies which had assembled to contend against each other but had united in opposition to Christ in His second advent are destroyed. That the time of the second advent is in view is brought out clearly in the next chapter, where the time of the end is made definitely to include the great tribulation and the resurrection of the dead described in Revelation 20:4-6.



**XVI. THE FINAL BATTLES (11:44-45)(Contd)**

Taken as a whole, Daniel 11:36-45 is a description of the closing days of the “Time of the Gentiles,” especially, the great tribulation with its world ruler, world religion, and materialistic philosophy. In spite of satanic support, the world government will fragmentize into sectional disputes and a great world war, climaxing with the return of Christ.

This chapter concludes one of the most concise list of prophecies recorded in Scripture. It should encourage every believer to trust God’s Word. What He has already said has come to past in vivid detail. Why should we ever question what is still to take place? The hymn writer put it so concisely.

**Trust and obey  
For there’s no other way  
To be happy in Jesus  
But to trust and obey**

## THE TIME OF THE END

### DANIEL CHAPTER 12

**THE MATERIAL DESCRIBED** in the fourth vision of Daniel beginning in the 10th chapter has its climax in the great tribulation and the resurrection which follows. This is also the high point of the book of Daniel itself and the goal of Daniel's prophecies relating to both the Gentiles and to Israel. It is comparable to Revelation 19, the high point of the last book of the Bible.

All commentators agree that the chapter division at this point is unfortunate because the narrative of chapter 11 naturally extends through to the first three verses of chapter 12.

The entire section from Daniel 11:36 to 12:3 constitutes a revelation of the major factors of the time of the end which may be summarized as follows: **(1) a world ruler, (2) a world religion, (3) a world war, (4) a time of great tribulation for Israel, (5) deliverance for the people of God at the end of tribulation, (6) resurrection and judgement, and (7) reward of the righteous.**

**\*\*\*** A film entitled "*I am a Jerusalemite*" was recently showing in Israel. It featured a young Israeli born in Jerusalem about 1948. This young man asked to describe his feelings toward religion, particularly Orthodox Judaism and Christianity.

Concerning Judaism he said, "*I am impressed because many of the things prophesied in the Old Testament seem to be coming to pass. And now they tell me the Mount of Olives will be divided in two!*" "Christianity," he said, "*makes me very uneasy.*" And then he said slowly, "*there is something just around the corner. I can feel it but I don't know what it is.*" **\*\*\***

#### I. THE GREAT TRIBULATION (12:1)

The opening phrase of chapter 12, "At that time," makes it clear that this passage is talking about the same period of time as the previous context in 11:40. The action in verse one is not subsequent with those events but rather coincides with them chronologically. Chapter 11 had dealt primarily with the political and religious aspects of the time of the end. Chapter 12 relates this now to the people of Israel.

To take the expression "*your people*" in any other sense than that of Israel is to ignore the uniform meaning of throughout the book of Daniel. The people involved are a nation, that is, the nation of Israel.

## I. THE GREAT TRIBULATION (12:1)(Contd.)

Christ described the period of great tribulation as beginning with ***“the abomination that causes desolation, spoken of through the prophet Daniel”*** (Matthew 24:15), a reference to the breaking of the covenant and the desecration of the temple in Daniel 9:27. Christ’s warning to the children of Israel at that time was that they should ***“flee into the mountains,”*** not taking time to secure clothes or food. Christ graphically described the period in these words ***“For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now, - and never to be equalled again. If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.”*** (Matthew 24:21-22).

Also a further study of Revelation 6-19 will enhance our understanding, where the great catastrophes which overtake the world in the breaking of the seals, the blowing of the trumpets, and the emptying of the vials of divine judgement will decimate the world’s population.

In their distress, the children of Israel are especially aided by Michael, the archangel (Jude 9). As the head of the holy angels, Michael is given the special responsibility of protecting the children of Israel. Earlier in Daniel, Michael was indeed actively participating in the angelic warfare on behalf of the children of Israel in their time of trouble (Daniel 10:13-21). Michael was no doubt a great prince.

Because of the purpose of God and the ministry of Michael, it is revealed to Daniel that ***“at that time your people – everyone whose name is found written in the book. – will be delivered.”*** This refers to the end of the tribulation period, at which time some of the children of Israel, who by miraculous divine protection have been preserved, will be delivered from their persecutors (Daniel 7:18,27). The deliverance will not extend to all Israel in that the unbelieving or apostate Israel will be excluded.

The reference to ***“everyone whose name is found written in the book”*** further tells us that only those who still have their names written in the Book of Life will be delivered (Exodus 32:32,33; Psalms 69:28; Revelation 13:8; 17:8; 20:15; 21:27).

## II. THE RESURRECTIONS (12:2)

As a climax to the time of tribulation described in the preceding context, verse two reveals that there will be a resurrection from the dead. The resurrection is indeed an Old Testament teaching. It is clear that Abraham had confidence in the resurrection when he offered up Isaac (Genesis 22:5; Hebrews 11:19). Job (19:25-27), who probably lived before Moses, stated his belief in the resurrection, ***“I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed yet in my flesh I will see God. I myself will see him with my own eyes – I, and not another.”***

## II. THE RESURRECTIONS (12:2) (Contd.)

Isaiah, who lived a century before Daniel said, ***“But your dead will live, their bodies will they arise. You who dwell in the dust awake up and shout for joy. Your dew is like the dew of the morning; the earth will give birth to her dead.”*** (Isaiah 26:19).

Hosea, a contemporary of Isaiah, predicted, ***“I will ransom them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death.”*** (Hosea 13:14).

Even the resurrection of Christ is predicted in the words, ***“you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay”*** (Psalms 16:9-10).

Although both liberal and conservative scholars generally agree that this passage is in reference to resurrection, because of the wording, several questions have risen concerning (1) the character of the event, (2) the time of the event, and (3) the inclusion of the event. For example H.A. Ironside says, *“The second verse, does not, I believe, speak of an actual resurrection, but rather of a moral and national one . . . It is the same kind of language used both in Isaiah 26:12-19 and Ezekiel 37 . . .”*

It is significant that expositors who spiritualise the resurrection of Daniel 12:2 interpret the first part of the verse as applying to Israel’s restoration, but they pass over the last part of the verse referring to those who awake to shame and everlasting contempt. Certainly the wicked are literally raised from the dead for their final judgement (Revelation 20:12-13), and the same verb must mean resurrection for the righteous as well. The meaning of ***“awake”*** must be resurrection in both cases.

If this is a genuine resurrection, what is the time of the event? Some help is afforded by appealing to more accurate translations. Actually the Hebrew here seems to separate sharply the two classes of resurrection. Tregelles, following earlier Jewish commentators translated verse two as, *“And many from among the sleepers of the dust of the earth shall awake; these shall be unto everlasting life; but those of the rest of the sleepers, those who do not awake at this time, shall be unto shame and everlasting contempt.”*

Pretribulationists believe that the church, the saints of the present age, are raised before the tribulation. If Old Testament saints are not raised before the tribulation, they will be raised after the tribulation, prior to the millennial kingdom.

## II. THE RESURRECTIONS (12:2)(Contd.)

The problem arises in that the passage states that the resurrection will extend to *“others to shame and everlasting contempt.”* Here the premillenarians appeal to the clear distinction provided in Revelation 20 which states, after revealing the resurrection of the righteous, *“The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection.”* (v. 5). The resurrection of the wicked, the second resurrection, is revealed in Revelation 20:12-13.

For those who still might doubt the possibility of more than one resurrection, an interesting account is recorded at the resurrection of Christ. We find that a token resurrection of saints occurred as stated in Matthew 27:52-53, *“The tombs were broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs after Jesus’ resurrection they went into the holy city, and appeared to many people.”*

In understanding this passage, a further difficulty arises in the use of the term *“many”*. Here, expositors are divided as to whether the word means precisely what it indicates, that is, *“many, but not all,”* or whether the word is used here in the sense that all will be raised.

Leupold argues at some length that *“many”* means as a matter of fact in this passage *“all.”* He states, there are also other instances where *“many”* and *“all”* are used interchangeably, the one emphasizing the fact that there are numerically *“many”* the other the fact that *“all”* are involved. He cites passages such as Matthew 20:28; 26:28; and Romans 5:15,16 as cases in point. The fact is, however, that while in some cases *“all”* may be *“many”*, it is also true that in other cases *“many”* is not *“all.”*

In summary, from the standpoint of the pre tribulation interpretation of this prophecy, which holds to a resurrection of the church before the tribulation and therefore as preceding this resurrection, this passage can be taken quite literally.

### III. THE REWARD OF THE RIGHTEOUS (12:3)

Following the resurrection of the righteous, their faithfulness in witnessing will be rewarded. It is significant that no mention is made of the punishment of the wicked. Their resurrection will not occur until a thousand years later, according to Revelation 20.

From verse two, it is learned (as expected) that those of the first resurrection will receive everlasting life. As Young states, *“this is the first occurrence of the expression in the Old Testament.”* In addition to receiving everlasting life itself, those who are among this resurrection will be rewarded by glorification. They are described as *“wise”* in that they were able to see through unbelief and wickedness and put their trust and confidence in the unseen eternal values of their faith and were obedient to God.

Because of this, their reward is that they will shine with the same glory as the heavens and fulfill the same function to *“declare the glory of God”* (Psalms 19:1).

### IV. THE CONCLUSION OF THE REVELATION (12:4)

After experiencing the broad expanse of the revelation beginning as it did with the kings of Persia, extending through the Maccabean period, then leaping through to the end of the age and the great tribulation period, and including the resurrections and reward of the righteous, Daniel is now instructed to *“close up and seal the words of the scroll.”* The prophecies thus revealed were to have primary application to those living in *“the time of the end.”* In fact, the entire revelation, even the portions already fulfilled through Daniel 11:35, are designed to help the elect to trust in the Lord in their affliction at the climax of the age.

The close of verse four with its statement, *“many will go here and there to increase knowledge”* is difficult to translate; and commentators have not agreed as to its precise meaning. The familiar interpretation that this phrase refers to increased travel in modern days certainly makes sense, however, in the context the search for knowledge seems to be the main idea. Of the several interpretations the following ones offer a reasonable understanding of the main train of thought.

**Leupold** - *“Many shall diligently pursue it, and knowledge shall be increased.”*

**Adam Clarke** - *“Many shall endeavour to search out the sense; and knowledge shall be increased by these means; though the meaning shall not be fully known till the events take place: THEN the seal shall be broken, and the sense become plain.”*

#### IV. THE CONCLUSION OF THE REVELATION (12:4) (Contd.)

**Matthew Henry** - “Then this hidden treasure shall be opened, and many shall search into it, and dig for the knowledge of it, as for silver. They shall read it over and over, shall meditate upon it, and run it over in their minds. It is not knowledge in general, but knowledge of prophecy. . .”

**Gesenius, Maurer etc.** - “Many shall thoroughly go through this prophecy (turning over its pages again and again), and so knowledge it shall be great.”

**Klieforth** - “Many shall set out upon an investigation of this prophecy.”

**Nathaniel West** - “There is a beautiful figure in the Hebrew word. The root (shut, shoot) signifies to ‘rudder about’ or sail on the ocean in search of land; to make discoveries as do mariners on exploring expeditions; voyagers. Then, applied to land, spying out, prying into, and going through, inquiring, or serving, examining, and so increasing knowledge. So shall it be to this deep, wide prophecy, in the end time.”

**Gesenius** - “To run through and over the book; ie., to examine it thoroughly.”

**Calvin** - “Many shall investigate, and knowledge shall increase.”

In the Hebrew word for knowledge is literally, “**knowledge**,” that is, understanding of this long prophecy. Whether or not physical wandering and travel is involved, the implication is that any attempts to understand the truth will require considerable effort.

Young agrees with Montgomery in finding the key in Amos 8:12 and states, “*The verb appears to describe a vain travelling about in order to discover knowledge.*” As Young goes on to explain, what the angel is saying to Daniel is that for the immediate future, attempts to understand these prophecies will be in vain, but in the time of the end, when these prophecies will become especially pertinent, additional understanding is given.

There is also the indication that the ceaseless search for knowledge by men will often go unrewarded either because they do not look in the right place for it, or because their time and circumstance does not justify their understanding of prophecy that does not immediately concern them. No doubt, those living in the time of the end will have greater understanding of these things than is possible today.

## V. HOW LONG UNTIL THE TIME OF THE END (12:5-8)

At the conclusion of the vision, still observing the scene by the side of the river, Daniel observes two individuals (probably angelic creatures), one on one side of the river and the other on the other side. It may be assumed that the river is the Hiddekel (10:4), that is, the Tigris, its more modern name. One of these creatures asks the obvious question in the light of the great prophecies which have just preceded, ***“How long will it be before these astonishing things are fulfilled?”*** There are several ***“how long”*** passages in Scripture such as: Psalms 13:1,2; 35:17; 89:46; 90:14; 94:3,4; Zechariah 1:12.

As Daniel observes, the man clothed in linen holds up his right hand and his left to heaven and swears ***“by him who lives forever,”*** no doubt a reference to God. Although the second angel does not participate in this revelation, it may be in keeping with the concept of two witnesses establishing a point (Deuteronomy 19:15; 31:28; 2 Corinthians 13:1). The fact that the one raises both hands indicates the solemnity of the oath. Ordinarily, only one hand was raised (Genesis 14:22; Deuteronomy 32:40).

The revelation is further solemnized by the fact that the angel stands on the bank of a river, and the particular word for river is the word ordinarily used for the Nile River. As Young states, There must be a reason for the choice of the word translated ***“stream.”*** Possibly it is deliberately employed here to remind Daniel that just as the Lord once stood over Egypt, (the world-nation which was hostile to God’s people), so now does He stand over the world kingdom, represented symbolically by the Nile stream, actually the Tigris, ready again to deliver His people.

What is the meaning of the phrase ***“a time, times, and half a time”*** (vs 7). This expression, also occurring in Daniel 7:25, refers to the last period preceding the second coming of Christ which brings conclusion to the time of the end. In other words, it is the last half of the seven-year period of Daniel 9:27 which culminates with the second advent.

When the three and one half years are fulfilled, as the prophecy states, ***“When the power of the holy people has been finally broken,”*** that is, it will be the period of terrible persecution of the people of Israel. The verb translated ***“broken”*** means ***“to shatter,”*** allowing the translation, ***“when (they) finish shattering the hand of the holy people.”*** When the persecution has run its course in God’s time, and *“all these things shall be finished,”* the time of the end will be concluded.

Although Daniel heard the prophecy plainly, he states in verse 8 that he did not understand it. He rephrases the question of verse 6 by saying, ***“My Lord, what will the outcome of all this be?”***



## VI. THE CONCLUDING EXPLANATION OF THE ANGEL (12:9-13)

In verse 9, Daniel is told once again that the revelation given to him will not be completely understood until the time of the end. The primary purpose of the revelation was to inform those who would live in the time of the end.

However, in partial answer to Daniel's question, which concerned the purpose of the events revealed, the prophet is informed in verse 10 that the time of the end will have a twofold result:

**First**, it will result in the purification of the saints;

**Second**, it will manifest the true character of the human heart. Likewise, understanding the events of the time of the end will be possible for the "*wise*" who "*will understand*," but "*none of the wicked will understand.*" The understanding of prophecy required spiritual insight and the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Even though the Scriptures describe in detail the time of the end, the wicked will not gain from the divine revelation.

In verses 11 and 12, two important revelations are given by way of clarification of the duration of the time of the end. According to verse 11, a period of 1,290 days will elapse from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away until the time of the end is consummated. The time that the daily sacrifice is taken away is equated with "*the abomination that causes desolation.*"

This expression originating in Daniel 9:27, has reference to the stopping of sacrifices in the middle of the seven-year period. That this event is future and not a reference to the historic desecration of the temple by Antiochus is apparent from the prophecy of Christ in Matthew 24:15 where the "*abomination that causes desolation, spoken of through the prophet Daniel,*" is given as a sign of the time of great tribulation.

The three and a half years of Daniel 9:27, however, are normally taken to be three and a half years or the forty-two months of thirty days each, following the custom of the Jews. This would only be 1,260 days. The duration of the time of great tribulation as forty-two months is confirmed by Revelation 11:2; 13:5, which is considered to be equivalent to the "*time, times, and half a time*" of Daniel 7:25 and 12:7.

Why then are thirty days added to the 1,260 days? The question is further complicated by verse 12 which states that there is a special blessing for the one who attains to the 1,335 days. This is still another forty-five days beyond the limit of verse 11.

## VI. THE CONCLUDING EXPLANATION OF THE ANGEL (12:9-13) (Contd.)

Although Daniel does not explain these varying durations, it is obvious that the second coming of Christ and the establishment of His millennial kingdom requires time. The 1,260 day period or precisely forty-two months of thirty days each, can be regarded as the culminating period ending at the second coming of Christ. This is followed by several divine judgements such as the judgements of the nations (Matthew 25:31-46), and the re-gathering and judgement of Israel (Ezekiel 20:34-38).

These judgements beginning with the living on earth and the purging out of unbelievers who have worshiped the beast, although handled quickly, will require time. Therefore, seventy-five days after the second advent of Christ, these great judgements will have been accomplished and the millennial kingdom will be formally begun. Those who attain to this period are those who have been judged worthy to enter the kingdom. Hence, they are called *“blessed.”*

The explanation of the additional time required to complete the transfer from the time of the end to the time of the fifth kingdom no doubt did not help Daniel much. But in the light of New Testament revelation, it provides the background for the transition from the great tribulation to the kingdom of peace and righteousness on earth.

Anticipating that Daniel would not completely understand these additional revelations, the angel informs him, *“go your way till the end of days”* The angel predicts that Daniel will “rest”, that is, die, and “rise to receive your allotted inheritance,” that is, be resurrected (Daniel 12:2) and participant in the glorious triumph of Christ as the millennial kingdom is inaugurated.

For Christians living in the age of grace and searching for understanding of these difficult days, the book of Daniel, as never before, casts a broad light upon contemporary events foreshadowing the consummation which may not be too far distant. Many who look for the coming of the Lord anticipate their removal from the earth’s scene before the final days of the time of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

When the plan of God has run its full course, it will be evident then with even more clarity than at the present that God has not allowed a word to fall to the ground. As Christ said while on earth, *“Heaven and earth will pass away but my words will never pass away* (Matthew 24:35).

He also said *“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, nor the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished”* (Matthew 5:17-18).